

# Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

Huntingdonshire District Council

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# 1 Foreword

**1.1** The District Council wants Huntingdonshire to be a place where people can thrive, at work and at play, at home and in the community, in a safe and healthy environment, actively taking part in decisions, and continuing to learn and develop throughout their lives. The Core Strategy, as the primary element in the Local Development Framework (LDF), can help achieve these aims. It will set the spatial framework for Huntingdonshire's future to 2026, providing essential housing development, stable economic growth and environmental improvements.

**1.2** Huntingdonshire is an attractive place and year on year many people come to live and work here. Much of the economy has historically been based around agriculture and associated food production, there is a strong specialist manufacturing industry and more recently the economy has changed with more jobs in retail, leisure but particularly the office based sector. However, many households are in housing need. There are obvious development pressures and so it will be essential to safeguard the unique character of Huntingdonshire, its landscape, wildlife and the built environment of our market towns and villages.

**1.3** As well as these local issues, the Core Strategy will need to address matters of wider concern including climate change and the need to reduce our carbon footprint.

**1.4** There are a number of options which have been considered and consulted upon to address these issues. It is crucial that we make the right choices for the people of Huntingdonshire now and in the future.

**1.5** Everyone has ideas on where new development should go and what it should be like. Many people have already had a say in the way these choices will be taken. The Core Strategy will affect every community in Huntingdonshire, whether it is a major housing development or conversion of redundant farm buildings. This paper sets out the District Council's Preferred Options for the Core Strategy . Do you agree with these Preferred Options? Now is your chance to get involved and let the Council know what you think. There may be other issues that are important to you which you consider need to be addressed in the Core Strategy and the Council would welcome you raising them.

Councillor Peter Bucknell  
Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy  
Environment and Transport

## 2 Introduction

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## 2 Introduction

**2.1** In April 2006, the District Council published a Core Strategy as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF) which was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination, with a six week period allowed for representations to be made with regard to the document's soundness.

**2.2** However, following prolonged discussion on the Submission Core Strategy with the Government Office for the East of England and the Planning Inspectorate, and in the light of further guidance issued on the required spatial content of Core Strategies, the Secretary of State made a direction, under Section 22(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, for the Council to withdraw the document. The Council was advised to replace the Core Strategy (2006) with two separate documents: one to address the Core Strategy and one to provide Development Control Policies.

**2.3** The comments received during consultation periods for the withdrawn Core Strategy (2006) cannot be brought forward to the new document. However, they have been used to inform some of the options put forward in the consultation process so far.

**2.4** This Preferred Options Report for the new Core Strategy contains the options that the Council considers to be the best way to tackle the identified issues. It includes a spatial vision, objectives and policies for shaping Huntingdonshire over the period to 2026 and aims to guide strategic growth for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

**2.5** Issues and Options Stage (Regulation 25) consultation was undertaken throughout May and June 2007 with the public and other stakeholders. The representations received were considered and used to inform a further round of consultation with selected key stakeholders to aid further the preparation of the Preferred Options. The next stages are:

- Submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State (April 2008)
- A statutory 6 week consultation on the soundness of the submission document (April-May 2008)
- Independent Examination of the submitted document (November 2008)<sup>(i)</sup>
- Report of the Examination (April 2009)
- Adoption of the Core Strategy (June 2009)

**2.6** The Preferred Options have been set out in two volumes. This document, Volume 1 identifies the Preferred Options for policies and their reasoned justification. Volume 2, provides the strong evidence base for the development of the Preferred Options. It records how each Preferred Option was chosen and forms the audit trail for the development of the policy, setting out a precis of the alternatives that were also considered. This includes the Options which have been the subject of consultation, any further Options arising (this is only in respect of the Spatial Strategy), a summary of the results of Community Involvement, a summary of the Initial Sustainability Appraisal of the Options, the Council's response and how it performs against the Tests of Soundness as set out by Regulations. Appropriate Assessment as required by the European Directive on Habitats will be undertaken to test the Document when it is submitted to the Secretary of State.

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i Dates following the consultation on the submission document may be subject to change as they are dependent on the Planning Inspectorate.

### Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

**2.7** European Directive 2001/42/EC requires an 'environmental assessment' of plans and programmes prepared by public authorities that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. This process is known as 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA). This requirement applies to the documents that make up the Local Development Framework.

**2.8** At the same time, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all local development documents<sup>(ii)</sup>. The processes of SEA and SA are closely related and government guidance on SA in the LDF process incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive and so only one appraisal process needs to be carried out.

**2.9** The Scoping Report is the first stage of the SA process and provides baseline information and indicators as well as setting out the framework by which documents can be appraised. This was produced by the Council in 2007.

**2.10** Alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper an initial sustainability appraisal was undertaken by the Council which has informed the development of the Preferred Options. The Preferred Options have been subject to SA, the results of which can be found in the accompanying draft Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR). The draft SAR has been an important influence on the Preferred Options as the policies proposed consequently represent the most sustainable option possible.

**2.11** Appropriate Assessment (AA) is complementary to SA/SEA and is designed to protect sites of European importance (European Sites). AA refers to the assessment of the effects of a plan, or plans in combination on a European Site to enable a judgement to be made on whether there will be an adverse effect on the site's integrity. AA is required under amendments to Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC which were transposed into UK law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. As the Core Strategy will have a significant impact upon the potential scale, location and type of development to be accommodated in the District, the impact on European sites within and beyond the District needs to be assessed. The first stage in the process is to prepare a Screening Assessment, which is to be carried out by specialist external consultants Scott Wilson and will be published for the Core Strategy submission (Regulation 28) which is scheduled for April 2008.

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ii Section 19 para (5)(a)

## 3 Role of the Core Strategy

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### 3 Role of the Core Strategy

**3.1** The Core Strategy will set the strategic framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2026. It will contain strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development.

**3.2** The District Council will be preparing a series of companion planning documents, collectively known as the Local Development Framework, to guide growth and change in the District up to 2026. The Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which are subject to independent examination are:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document
- Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (Preferred Options to be published January 2008)
- Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (currently at Issues and Options Stage)
- Planning Proposals Development Plan Document (Work to commence in 2008)
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document (Work to commence in 2008)
- Proposals Map (Work to commence in 2008)

**3.3** These will be complemented by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) on specific issues, such as developer contributions to affordable housing and planning obligations. Further details of the stages involved in the preparation of DPDs and SPDs, including the timetables for production, can be found in the Huntingdonshire Local Development Scheme.

**3.4** The Core Strategy includes:

- a vision of how Huntingdonshire will develop to meet the needs of our residents and business communities, now and in the future
- spatial principles to support the vision giving more detail about the locations that will see the most change and how the Council seeks to address the key challenges
- strategic objectives for the area to achieve the vision - to help guide and manage the growth and mitigate adverse effects
- a spatial strategy which will help direct growth to locations where it can be sustainably accommodated and will identify any areas of significant change
- core policies to establish overall development principles and to provide a framework for more detailed policies for the Development Control DPD
- details of how the local development framework will be monitored and how the implementation of the Core Strategy will be assessed

**3.5** It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites. These will be dealt with separately by the Development Control DPD and the Planning Proposals DPD.

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

## 4 Links with Other Documents

**4.1** The Core Strategy is informed by the regional and local context set in other policy documents. The emerging East of England Plan, which is the Regional Spatial Strategy, will form part of the Development Plan together with the DPDs from the LDF. The other key document is the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

**4.2** The emerging East of England Plan sets specific targets and policy requirements which need to be incorporated into the Core Strategy, and this includes housing at District level. It requires Huntingdonshire to deliver 11,200 homes in the period 2001 to 2021, and in addition to provide a share of 75,000 net new jobs for Cambridgeshire over the same plan period.

**4.3** The East of England Plan also sets out a number of policies which seek to secure sustainable development through different measures. These policies include an expectation for authorities to set appropriate targets for affordable housing with the expectation that a minimum of 35% of all housing across the Region will come forward as affordable.

**4.4** As the emerging East of England Plan and the Core Strategy are key parts of the Development Plan they are required to be in conformity, and this is a key test of soundness.

**4.5** The Huntingdonshire Community Strategy was produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, in which the District Council works with its partners including the County Council, the Area Partnerships, Health Services, the Police, Town and Parish Councils and other key agencies. The original Community Strategy was adopted by the Council in 2004. The Community Strategy is currently being reviewed and updated during the preparation of the Core Strategy, into the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Huntingdonshire and revisions to the strategy will need to be taken into account at subsequent stages.

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

### **Supporting continued economic success**

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

### **Promoting opportunity for all**

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

### **Protecting and improving our environment**

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

## 4 Links with Other Documents

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**4.7** For each of these outcomes the Community Strategy sets out measures to assess success, headline targets, short term objectives to achieve the outcomes and priority actions needed. The vision will be delivered by public, private and voluntary organisations.

**4.8** The emerging Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the long-term vision for the development of communities in Huntingdonshire. The main underlying principle is that it should deal with the issues that the local community feel are important to their economic, social and environmental well-being.

**4.9** The Core Strategy has to have regard to the SCS. The Local Development Framework is the means of achieving the spatial elements of the SCS and therefore they have been developed together and have more than just regard to each other. Strong links between the LDF and the Community Strategy will help to ensure that the LDF is based on a greater understanding of the community's needs as well as establishing an integrated approach towards future development.

**4.10** Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire have prepared the Local Area Agreement (LAA), called Cambridgeshire Together, as the delivery contract with central Government for providing high quality cost effective public services. It is based on the priorities of the SCS supported by local planning policy to deliver the outcomes agreed.

### Other Plans and Strategies

**4.11** The Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies seek to address the spatial implications of a wide range of environmental, social and economic concerns, so that it provides an overall framework for managing the pattern of change in Huntingdonshire. This 'spatial planning' approach requires a wide range of other plans and programmes to be taken into account. The most significant include: the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan, the Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire, the Local Economic Strategy for Huntingdonshire which is currently being revised, the emerging Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy, the emerging Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy and the 50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In addition a series of visions, action plans and urban design frameworks for Huntingdonshire's market towns which contain proposals for the redevelopment and enhancement of selected areas have been taken into account. These have been produced by the Council in consultation with local communities (or, in Ramsey, by the coalition of local organisations that form the Ramsey Area Partnership). In rural areas Parish Plans provide detailed information on local aspirations.

### Supporting Documents

**4.12** The Core Strategy has been informed by a range of studies produced or commissioned by the Council, and show that the Preferred Options are backed by a strong evidence base. The documents of most relevance to the Core Strategy are listed below, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Housing Land Availability Study (2007)
- Employment Land Review (2007)
- Urban Capacity Study (2003)
- Housing Needs Survey (2003) and Update (2006)
- New Homes Survey (2003)
- Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2004)
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2004)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)
- Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005) and Update (2007)
- Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2006)
- Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (forthcoming 2007)
- Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper 2007



## 5 The Spatial Vision

### A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire

**5.1** Huntingdonshire is still predominantly rural in character with an area of approximately 350 square miles. The population is currently around 160,000 people (2005), with approximately half living in the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and most of the remainder in almost 100 villages. The District's towns, villages and countryside offer diverse and attractive environments in which to live and work, and each has its own distinctive character and role.

**5.2** The District lies within the designated London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough Growth Area and in the East of England Region. It is a transitional area between London and the Home Counties and East Anglia and the East Midlands. 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 which has experienced significant growth over recent years and continues to do so. The St Neots area also looks towards Bedford as a higher order centre.

**5.3** The District has experienced considerable pressures for growth, originating with Town Development schemes for Huntingdon and St Neots in the 1960s and continuing in the 1980's and 1990's. Regeneration opportunities in the old estates and in town centres is now appropriate. The District has a strong net out-commuting pattern to London and Cambridge but also has a buoyant local economy which now contains the largest cluster of high-technology firms in Cambridgeshire outside the immediate area of Cambridge.

#### Huntingdon

**5.4** Huntingdon is the administrative centre and is located toward the centre of the District on the northern valley slopes of the River Great Ouse. It is accessible from the A14, which passes around the southern perimeter of the town. The south eastern edge of the town has a strong association with the river. Parts of the town centre are undergoing redevelopment and regeneration. Much of the historic core based on the Market Hill and High Street remains largely intact. Huntingdon is a major housing and employment centre with a good jobs to employment ratio. It is well served by the main road network and the east coast mainline railway. It also has a relatively strong retail sector and functions as the primary shopping centre for the District. The night time economy in Huntingdon has particular potential for growth.

#### St Neots

**5.5** St Neots is, in population terms, the largest settlement in the District. It is a market town which established on the banks of the River Great Ouse. This settlement has expanded significantly over recent years and the smaller and previously independent settlements of Eaton Socon, Eaton Ford and Eynesbury to the south and west have been largely assimilated into the urban fabric of St Neots, although their historic and separate character is still recognisable within the town. Housing development is now taking place to the east of the railway and north of Cambridge Road. St Neots has its own railway station located in the north eastern quarter of the town, and has easy access to the A1. It is connected to Cambridge via the A428. Attracting retail, leisure and employment development to St Neots is challenging due to competition from Bedford and Cambridge.

#### St Ives

**5.6** St Ives is an historic market town situated on the northern bank of the River Great Ouse. The town centre contains many original buildings and retains its distinctive medieval street pattern. The town has grown asymmetrically to the north of the river; the extensive floodplain to the south being retained as open land. The

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historic core of the town developed around the bridge over the River Great Ouse, and along the northern bank of the river. St Ives has developed a base of small specialist shops which have enabled it to successfully compete with the other market towns. St Ives is a picturesque town and is a popular destination for tourists and visitors.

## Ramsey and Bury

**5.7** Ramsey is located on the edge of the fenland landscape. The original settlement has effectively merged with the village of Bury and for planning purposes is referred to as the Market Town of Ramsey and Bury. Ramsey has a wide variety of urban character. The 'historic core' is centred on High Street and Great Whyte and the 'abbey greens' associated with the former Abbey to the east of the town. Ramsey is relatively remote as it lies off the main road network and this restricts the opportunities for future development. Ramsey continues to be the focus of a number of regeneration initiatives and is developing its heritage assets.

## Population

**5.8** The population of Huntingdonshire is generally healthier and life expectancy higher than the national average, and incomes are above the national average. There are, however, pockets of deprivation such as the Eynesbury Ward in St Neots, and the Huntingdon North Ward which has the lowest levels of both household income and educational attainment in the District, and is within the 10% most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire.

**5.9** Of the District's population 21.7% are aged between 0 -15, 15.5% are within the 16 to 29 age group, 24.4% are within the 30 to 44 age group, 25.5% are within the 45 to 64 age group, 11.45% are within the 65 to 84 age group and 1.49% are 85 or over. The population of the District is expected to rise to over 166,000 by 2026 with over 23% aged 65 and over. There is some evidence that immigration from other countries in the European Union may be an increasingly important factor.

## Landscape, Biodiversity and Ecology

**5.10** The countryside is fertile farmland, much of which is arable with large fields and few hedgerows. The gentle low relief is mainly a clay plateau dissected by the valley of the River Great Ouse and its associated brooks. To the north and east of the District the land levels fall to fen, most of which is below sea-level.

**5.11** Huntingdonshire contains a number of sites of particular importance for biodiversity, such as the Ouse Washes, Woodwalton Fen and Portholme Meadow. There are over 25 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four Woodland Trust sites, and over 125 County Wildlife Sites. Particular opportunities have been identified by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership in a 50 year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire, which suggests a number of priority areas for habitat creation and enhancement. A Strategic Open Space Study was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2004 which looks at the provision of open space across the county. Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (2006), produced by Cambridgeshire Horizons has been developed to provide a strategy for Green Infrastructure. The Great Fen Project is a major habitat restoration project which will create a 3700 hectare wetland between Huntingdon and Peterborough by connecting Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen, which will also provide new opportunities for recreation and education. There are also significant initiatives to extend Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and to create a new wildlife reserve at Needingworth Quarry.

**5.12** Tourism and leisure are important contributors to the local economy. Visitors are attracted to the District by its strong local historical connections, such as to Oliver Cromwell and Samuel Pepys, as well as opportunities for sport and informal recreation in the countryside. There are opportunities for water-related activities on the River Great Ouse and at Grafham Water.

## Infrastructure

**5.13** Growth will generate additional demands on the District's physical and social infrastructure. A key challenge will be the timely provision of adequate and appropriate new infrastructure to meet these demands as this is essential to the creation of balanced, sustainable communities and will make a significant contribution to the successful integration of new development into existing communities and the environment. Infrastructure requirements reflect more than physical provision of utility services and the highway network; education, health services, recreation, cultural facilities and green infrastructure are all vital to help communities thrive.

**5.14** Cambridgeshire Horizons was established to co-ordinate development and infrastructure implementation and overcome barriers to the development of strategic sites. The District Council will continue to work jointly with Cambridgeshire Horizons to facilitate growth and infrastructure for the benefit of Huntingdonshire.

## Education and Health Care

**5.15** In terms of education infrastructure, Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for ensuring an appropriate match between pupil numbers and school places. It manages the planning and delivery of school buildings and children's centres and contributes to the extended schools programme and early years provision. The County Council identifies potential sources of capital funding for education infrastructure, including contributions from new housing developments.

**5.16** Confirmation was obtained in June 2007 of the continuing provision of health care services at Hinchinbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon which serves most of the District's population. Additional community based intermediate care services will be expanded over the next few years to provide a greater range of services in accessible locations and reduce patients' need to travel.

## Transport

**5.17** A number of main communication routes pass through the District including the main north –south routes of the East Coast Main Line Railway from London to Edinburgh and the A1 and A1(M) and the primary east-west routes of the A14 and A428.

**5.18** The Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan proposes significant enhancement of the transport links between Cambridge and the market towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots. There are to be major road improvements, including a new route for the A14 between Ellington and Fen Drayton, although as the construction work is expected to start in 2010, it is unlikely to be finished before 2014. The route will pass to the south of Brampton and Godmanchester. It will involve the removal of the existing A14 viaduct over the railway at Huntingdon. Studies have shown that this should also enable improved local road access to Huntingdon town centre. Delivery of these improvements will influence the distribution and phasing of residential and employment development in and around Huntingdon.

**5.19** High quality public transport services will be developed to increase alternatives to the car. Between Cambridge and St Ives these will include a Guided Busway, with related on-street bus priority measures to continue the services on to Huntingdon. The Council and County Council are also working towards promoting a High Quality Public Transport Corridor along the A428 between St Neots and Cambridge. The District Council and the County Council are also seeking improvements to the A428 between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet, which is currently nearing capacity.

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**5.20** Market town transport strategies exist, or are being prepared to promote integrated highway, public transport, cycling and walking improvements in Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. A park & ride site will be developed at St Ives as part of the proposed Guided Busway. Consideration will be given to a second park and ride site serving Huntingdon and Godmanchester. There are plans to relieve traffic on the A15 at Yaxley through the development of the township of Hampton and its possible extension.

**5.21** Improved access is planned from villages in the north and west of the District to the market towns and Peterborough, with better public and community transport services and further development of local and long-distance cycle routes. At the same time, significant improvements in the accessibility of services are expected through the increased availability and use of information technology, such as broadband internet access.

## The Planning Context

**5.22** The new development plans system consists of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The East of England Plan is currently at the stage of Proposed Changes with adoption expected early 2008. It will guide development through to 2021. To reflect new national guidance a single issue review has commenced to address the needs for gypsy and traveller accommodation which is expected to be complete in 2009. The emerging East of England Plan is also expected to be subject to an early review which will cover the period to 2031 and it is anticipated that it may seek to increase growth rates.

### Housing requirements

**5.23** The emerging East of England Plan requires a minimum of 11,200 new homes to be built in Huntingdonshire over the period 2001 to 2021. Taking into account housing completions from 2001 to 2006, this is the equivalent of 550 per year up to 2021. As the plan period is already part way through, about 8,500 homes have already been built or are accounted for in existing planning permissions. This leaves 2,700 homes to be built before 2021. Government guidance in PPS3: Housing requires the Council to ensure that there is at least a 15 year supply of land for housing from when the Core Strategy is adopted. As the Core Strategy is due to be adopted in 2009 the remaining plan period to 2021 would not achieve this. The emerging East of England Plan advises that the annual housing requirement should continue to be used for planning purposes during the years after 2021. Therefore an additional 2750 homes will be needed between 2021 and 2026 (five years at the annual rate of 550). As the figures in the emerging East of England Plan are to be treated as the minimum, a number of growth options beyond this were considered as part of the issues and options process.

**5.24** Affordable housing is a key issue in Huntingdonshire due to the relatively high level of house prices compared with local incomes. The emerging East of England Plan seeks 35% of all housing across the region to be affordable. Huntingdonshire's Housing Needs Survey Update (2006) demonstrates a high level of need, particularly for social rented housing.

### Employment

**5.25** The emerging East of England Plan requires jobs in Cambridgeshire to increase by 75,000, of which it is predicted that at least 13,000 should be created in Huntingdonshire. To support continued economic growth, sufficient land of a suitable quality in the right locations to meet expected needs for industrial and commercial development needs to be identified. As there is no direct link between jobs growth and land availability, the scale of employment land needed will be the product of a complex series of factors shaping the demand for new accommodation and supply of new and existing employment land and property. The main factors are: overall national economic growth, local labour supply and demand, changing conditions for business competitiveness, and most notably the need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and unsustainable modes of transport for employees and the distribution of goods. Most importantly, the growth of jobs and in choice in the range of jobs in the in Huntingdonshire will help to redress the current imbalance of out-commuting.

**5.26** The Employment Land Review looked at the existing supply of employment land and considered the requirements for the LDF. It recommends retaining a number of existing allocations and two scenarios for future requirements. The future requirements are based on two alternative models. The first is a business as usual approach, which is, and will continue to be, affected by existing trends and other forces, which is referred to as the 'New Usual for Business' model. The second model predicts trend breaking policies that will reshape demand for the type, location and scale of employment building, referred to as the 'Low Carbon Future' model. Under the New Usual for Business model about 96ha of additional employment land is considered necessary up to 2026, whereas under the Low Carbon Future model only about 66ha would be required. For both models the required development would be mostly concentrated in the central employment market area around Huntingdon, although housing growth at St Neots will give rise to the need for significant additional new employment opportunities to create a sustainable community.

## Retail requirements

**5.27** The Core Strategy needs to identify the centres for additional retailing together with an indication of the quantity needed in each centre to ensure their continuing viability and vitality. At present a high proportion of money spent by residents on comparison goods goes to Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford rather than being spent in shops in Huntingdonshire's towns. The Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005, updated 2007) suggests 20,000m<sup>2</sup> net additional comparison floorspace and 3,900m<sup>2</sup> net additional convenience floorspace is needed up to 2021. This figure allows for a slight increase in the proportion of expenditure retained locally as a result of more attractive retail opportunities being offered. Opportunities for regenerating and strengthening the role of town centres exist and can be achieved by policies to promote further retail development.

**5.28** The proposed quantity of convenience floorspace is not sufficient to require strategic consideration. To promote sustainable communities convenience shopping floorspace will need to follow broadly the distribution of additional housing growth. Therefore, the Preferred Option focuses solely on the distribution of comparison floorspace.

## A Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire

**5.29** The Vision for the Local Development Framework has been developed from the key characteristics in the Spatial Portrait, the challenges posed by the Planning Context and the vision from the East of England Plan:

### Preferred Approach

#### The Spatial Vision

In 2026, Huntingdonshire will have retained its distinct identity as a predominantly rural area of villages and market towns whilst accommodating the development for the homes and jobs required as part of a major growth area. It will have taken advantage of the economic vitality of the Cambridge Sub-Region, in a sustainable manner while respecting, maintaining and enhancing the special characters of its towns, villages and countryside. Its residents will have an improved quality of life with improved access to a wider range of local jobs, housing and high quality services, facilities and green infrastructure.

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## Reasoned Justification

**5.30** The spatial vision for Huntingdonshire should flow from the visions set out in the key documents of the East of England Plan and Huntingdonshire's Sustainable Community Strategy, while incorporating the key characteristics that define Huntingdonshire as a unique place and the ways in which the LDF can address their protection and enhancement. The Core Spatial Strategy will provide the spatial expression of these for the District and will direct future development to help achieve their visions and objectives.

**5.31** The Spatial Vision identifies the need to protect the key characteristics of Huntingdonshire and seeks to meet the challenges and pressures arising from the issues highlighted in the planning context.

### The Vision of the emerging East of England Plan:

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

**5.32** The Huntingdonshire Community Strategy was produced by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and adopted by the Council in 2004. The Community Strategy is under review and will be published as the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Huntingdonshire. It will reflect key national, regional and local plans and will be closely linked to the LDF which is the delivery mechanism for the spatial elements of the Strategy.

Although there is, as yet, no adopted vision in the SCS, a draft vision is emerging from the Partnership which is:

### The emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy Vision, 2007

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;
- maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- live in an environment that is protected from the effects of climate change

## Spatial Principles

**5.33** The Spatial Principles indicate the general direction for the policies of the Core Strategy. They build on and support the Spatial Vision and set out how the Council intends to address the key planning challenges that the District faces.

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

## Preferred Approach

### Spatial Principles

Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating future growth in the Cambridge-sub region. The majority of growth will be concentrated in the most sustainable locations of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives where there is access to existing and improving public transport, new road infrastructure and where the use of amenities and facilities can be maximised.

RAF Brampton and the industrial area west of Huntingdon town centre will provide significant opportunities for development on previously developed land within the District. Further opportunities to maximise the use of previously developed land on a smaller scale will be encouraged within the market towns of the Cambridge-Sub region.

The visual quality, viability and vitality of the four market town centres in Huntingdonshire will be enhanced by identifying and implementing appropriate development opportunities and opportunities to improve the public realm. Improvements to the public realm, improving the quality of both place and culture, will encourage local people to use local facilities and will attract visitors.

The regeneration of run down areas will be encouraged with particular attention paid to areas of deprivation within St Neots, Huntingdon and Ramsey through neighbourhood management and regeneration projects.

Opportunities for retail growth will be encouraged within all market towns and in larger villages which are identified as key service centres in order to respond to competitive pressure from other centres and further strengthen the District's economy. A large proportion of future retail growth will be accommodated within the town centre of Huntingdon, with additional, complementary development to the west of the town centre facilitated through an Area Action Plan. Further growth will be accommodated in St Neots where a large scale urban extension to the east of the town will require a district centre which will complement the town centre. There will be a lesser scale of growth in St Ives and Ramsey.

Future employment development will mostly be located in the most sustainable locations of the market towns and will be commensurate with housing growth to ensure the creation of balanced communities. The provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities will help limit levels of out commuting to London, Peterborough and Cambridge and ensure the continued success of the District's economy.

Development in most of the key service centres outside the Spatial Planning Areas will be restricted to a level that will help sustain the existing facilities and amenities, without encouraging growth in these less sustainable locations. In smaller settlements future housing will be restricted to small scale development and that necessary to meet local housing needs.

The further expansion of Peterborough will respect the separate identities of Yaxley, Facet, Folksworth, Stilton and Alwalton by maintaining green separation. However, it is important to ensure those settlements enjoy the benefits of future of development within Peterborough through improved access to a greater range of amenities and facilities. The areas of greenspace around those settlements close to the boundary with Peterborough will also be important areas of open space resource for the expanded population of Peterborough.

The landscape and countryside of Huntingdonshire will be protected and enhanced. Areas identified for enhancement include the Ouse Valley from St Neots to Earith, the woodlands around Grafham Water and Brampton and the wetland and woodlands of the Great Fen Project. These areas will also have improved

## 5 The Spatial Vision

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access for informal recreation. Further opportunities for improved recreation and biodiversity/green infrastructure will be identified. The growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots areas will reinforce the need to protect and enhance areas of greenspace around them.

The A14 improvements will create significant opportunities for new development in the Huntingdon area. The changes will improve access problems to the town centre and facilitate the extension of the town centre in a westerly direction. Other improvements to the transport network will also influence the delivery of housing and employment growth in more sustainable locations. Projects with particular importance include the Cambridge to St Ives Guided Bus, the A428 road improvements and High Quality Public Transport Corridor and the A15 improvements at Hampton near Peterborough. Improvements in public transport will enable the promotion of sustainable travel options.

Any redundant military bases in Huntingdonshire will need careful consideration to ensure that any potential re-use or redevelopment maximises the economic benefit to the District. RAF Brampton, subject to its release by the MoD, offers the opportunity for mixed use development on an appropriate scale in a sustainable location within the plan period. The future potential of Alconbury Airfield and Wyton Airfield will need to be considered in the longer term as part of the next review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. That review will need to take into account wider strategic issues for the region and the range of sustainable options available.

### Objectives of the Core Strategy

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

#### Preferred Approach

##### Objectives

1. To enable required growth to be accommodated in locations which limit the need to travel, while catering for local needs
2. To ensure that the types of dwellings built are suited to the requirements of the local population, and that an appropriate proportion is 'affordable' to those in need
3. To enable specialist housing needs of particular groups to be met in appropriate locations
4. To facilitate business development in sectors that have potential to meet local employment needs and limit out commuting
5. To strengthen the vitality and viability of Huntingdonshire's town centres as places for shopping and leisure
6. To enable business development in rural areas, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and avoids adverse environmental impacts
7. To maintain and enhance the availability of key services and facilities including communications services
8. To maintain, enhance and conserve Huntingdonshire's characteristic landscapes, habitats and species
9. To identify opportunities to increase and enhance major strategic greenspace
10. To conserve and enhance the special character and separate identities of Huntingdonshire's villages and market towns
11. To ensure that design of new development integrates effectively with its setting and promotes local distinctiveness



12. To promote developments that conserve natural resources, minimise greenhouse gas emissions and help to reduce waste
13. To secure developments which are accessible to all potential users, and which minimise risks to health as a result of crime (or fear of crime), flooding or pollution and climate change
14. To increase opportunities for pursuing a healthy lifestyle, by maintaining and enhancing recreation opportunities and encouraging walking and cycling
15. To provide a framework for securing adequate land and infrastructure to support business and community needs

### Reasoned Justification

**5.35** These objectives summarise the key policy directions. They provide a suitable framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes. There may be tension between objectives but the spatial strategy seeks to achieve the best possible overall balance between the objectives. They are also influenced by the many other strategies and plans which have been taken in to account in the preparation of this document, including the East of England Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

# 6 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

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## 6 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

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

**6.2** The Core Strategy will provide the local context for considering the long term social, economic, environmental and resource impacts of development through to 2026. It will contribute to the promotion of sustainable communities and provision of opportunities for local residents and businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

### The Preferred Approach

#### Policy Wording 1

All plans, policies and programmes of the Council and its partners, with a spatial element, along with all development proposals in Huntingdonshire will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Reflecting environmental social and economic issues the following criteria will be used to assess how a development proposal will be expected to achieve the pursuit of sustainable development including how the proposal would contribute to minimising the impact on and of climate change. All aspects of proposals will be considered including the design, implementation and function of development. The criteria are:

making best use of land and existing infrastructure;

minimising the use of non-renewable energy sources and construction materials and maximising opportunities for renewable energy;

minimising water consumption, and the impact on water resources and flood risk;

curtailing greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution;

encouraging waste reduction and recycling;

preserving the diversity and distinctiveness of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and landscapes including the conservation of buildings, sites and areas of architectural or historic importance;

maintaining and enhancing the range and vitality of characteristic habitats and species;

creating places that are attractive, respond well to their surroundings, adaptable, and which are accessible and safe to use for all sections of the community and encouraging regeneration;

contributing to social cohesion;

supporting the local economy and businesses;

and

limiting the need to travel, and increase opportunities to make necessary journeys by foot, cycle or public transport.

# The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development 6

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An assessment will be required to accompany any proposal for major development to demonstrate how the criteria have been met.

## **Reasoned Justification**

**6.3** Sustainable Development is at the heart of planning and is essential to address the issue of climate change. The assessment criteria will be important in achieving more sustainable outcomes through the planning process.

# 7 The Spatial Strategy

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## 7 The Spatial Strategy

**7.1** The Spatial Strategy sets out how the Council sees the different parts of the District developing. It identifies the different types of settlement within the District and how they will develop. It shows how and where the growth in housing, employment and retailing will be accommodated, and sets out priorities for areas that will be protected from development pressures.

### Strategic Housing Growth - Spatial Planning Areas

**7.2** In spatial planning terms the relationship between the District's four market towns and their nearby settlements is an important consideration. Whilst each settlement possesses its own distinctive character and identity there are strong functional, economic and social links so that these nearby settlements benefit from greater sustainability than they would otherwise have. Within these Spatial Planning Areas existing and future residents enjoy greater opportunities to achieve a sustainable lifestyle.

**7.3** The Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area includes Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester which have a clear physical and functional relationship. Together these settlements have around 31,000 residents (2005). The majority of services and facilities are concentrated in Huntingdon but are accessible to Godmanchester and Brampton by public transport, cycling and walking. The area is a key driver of the local economy, particularly in the retail, leisure and office based sectors. The Housing Land Availability Study (HLAS) identified significant opportunities for development, including previously developed land west of the town centre and at RAF Brampton. The realignment of the A14 and proposed removal of the viaduct over the railway will help facilitate development opportunities after 2015.

**7.4** The St Neots Spatial Planning Area includes St Neots and Little Paxton and had a combined population of around 31,200 in 2005. Little Paxton has its own distinctive identity and is physically separated from St Neots by the River Great Ouse. However, the key concentration of services and facilities of St Neots town centre are as close to Little Paxton as to many parts of the town itself. Along with land in Bedfordshire around Wyboston, the area is also a key driver of the local economy particularly for the manufacturing and warehousing and distribution sectors. The HLAS identified that this area offers significant opportunities for development especially through the creation of a large sustainable urban extension to the east of the town. The capacity of the A428 is an issue until the section between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet is upgraded to a dual-carriageway.

**7.5** The St Ives Spatial Planning Area includes the town of St Ives and development at London Road just south of the town in the parishes of Hemingford Grey and Fenstanton. This area is smaller in scale than Huntingdon and St Neots with a population of just under 16,000 in 2005. The area has enjoyed recent employment growth, particularly to the east of St Ives and has a relatively small but thriving retail sector. It offers fewer opportunities for sustainable development options. Flooding is a major constraint to the south of the town. St Ives will see significant improvement in accessibility with the completion of the guided bus route.

**7.6** The Ramsey Spatial Planning Area includes Ramsey, Bury and part of RAF Upwood, but excludes the small villages of Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Ramsey St Marys. The population was around 8,000 in 2005. The town serves as a focal point for a significant rural community. Ramsey has relatively

poor transport infrastructure as it is well off the main road network and is relatively remote and has more limited services and facilities than the other three areas. These factors combine to make this a significantly less sustainable location than the other three spatial planning areas.

## The Preferred Approach

### Policy Wording 2

At least 5450 homes will be provided before 2026 at a rate of at least 550 per year. Of these at least 1575 homes will be on previously developed land and 3875 homes on greenfield land. About 2150 will be provided as affordable housing. Provision will be monitored regularly and the release of locations will be managed and phased during the plan period with the aims of meeting identified needs and demand and maintaining sufficient supply of deliverable sites.

As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas, it is proposed that strategic housing growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where 1800 homes will be provided. Of these, 1000 homes will be on previously developed land, 800 homes will be on greenfield land and about 700 homes will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In a significant mixed use redevelopment in the area west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan and redevelopment of previously developed land within the built up area of Huntingdon ;

In Brampton on previously developed land ; and

In Godmanchester as part of a significant mixed use development to the south east/east after the A14 road improvements have been implemented and on greenfield land to the south west.

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where at least 2600 homes will be provided. of these 150 homes will be on previously developed land, 2450 homes will be on greenfield land and about 1050 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In the first phase of a significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town and as redevelopment of previously developed land within the built up area of the town.;

In Little Paxton where a small number of homes will be developed.

In the St Ives Spatial Planning Area where 500 homes will be provided. of these, 100 homes will be on previously developed land, 400 homes will be on greenfield land and about 200 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In a significant greenfield development to the west of the town and

In the redevelopment of previously developed land within the built up area of the town.

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where 300 homes will be provided. Of these 250 homes will be on previously developed land, 50 will be on greenfield land and about 100 will be affordable. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

# 7 The Spatial Strategy

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In an employment led mixed use redevelopments to the west of the town and to the north of the town and as development of land within the built up area of the town. .

Outside the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of Fenstanton, Sawtry and Yaxley, 250 homes will be provided. Of these 75 homes will be on previously developed land, 175 will be on greenfield land and around 100 will be affordable. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

On land within the built up area and on land to the east and south of Fenstanton. ;

On land to the west of Sawtry; and

On previously developed land within the built up area of Yaxley.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.7** The emerging East of England Plan sets an allocation of 11,200 new homes to be built in Huntingdonshire for the period 2001 to 2021. Allowing for completions from 2001 to 2006 this is the equivalent of 550 per year up to 2021. As the plan period is already part way through about 8,500 homes have already been built or are accounted for in permissions granted since 2001. This leaves 2,700 homes to be achieved before 2021. PPS3: Housing also requires the Council to ensure that there is at least a 15 year supply of land for housing from when the Core Strategy is adopted. As the Core Strategy is due to be adopted in 2009 the plan period to 2021 would not achieve this PPS3 requirement. Regional policy advises that annual averages for housebuilding to 2021 be extrapolated forward. For Huntingdonshire this means rolling forward the 550 annual average to provide for at least a further 2750 new homes to 2026. The end date of 2026 will allow for a 15 year land supply upon adoption of the Core Strategy and will mean that the overall District housing figure for the period 2001-26 is at least 13,950 new homes with 5450 to be allocated.

**7.8** The strategy is mainly based on a combination of options. The Cambridge Sub-region is identified in the emerging East of England Plan and previously in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003). The strategy recognises the significance of the Sub-region by concentrating housing development in the towns and Key Service Centres which lie within it. St Neots has been identified as an important location where there is the opportunity for significant benefits from a large scale urban extension on land to the east of the town and the East Coast Mainline railway. Land in this location will play a significant role, particularly in later phases of the plan period, in ensuring housing delivery is maintained above the annualised rate of 550 and this location offers a unique opportunity to create a truly sustainable community with a new secondary school. a higher level of employment than envisaged in the ELR and the construction of a viable District Centre which will complement the town centre.

**7.9** The approach to affordable housing has been informed by the Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey (2003), the update of that survey from 2006, the sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment and policy in the emerging East of England Plan.

**7.10** In line with National and Regional policy the approach is to develop sustainable brownfield land first. Due to the predominantly rural character of the District there is not sufficient well located brownfield land to achieve the national target. However, Brampton and the Huntingdon West area are particularly significant areas where brownfield redevelopment can be achieved. Land east of St Neots offers the best opportunity in the District to create sustainable development on greenfield land.

**7.11** Other housing will come forward on sites within the built up areas of the towns and villages in line with the levels of development set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. This will be in excess of the 5450 homes planned for through the strategic development opportunities identified above.

## Settlement Hierarchy

**7.12** The settlement hierarchy provides a framework to manage the scale of housing development appropriate on unallocated sites.

**7.13** The settlement hierarchy continues the strategic aim of concentrating development in the larger sustainable settlements that offer the best levels of services and facilities and protects the character and scale of smaller villages and the countryside. It will help increase the opportunities for sustainable lifestyles, reduce the need to travel and make good use of existing infrastructure.

### Policy Wording 3

The hierarchy identifies:

Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as 'Market Towns' in which development schemes of large, moderate and minor scale will be appropriate;

Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as 'Key Service Centres' in which development schemes of moderate and minor scale will be appropriate

The following villages as 'Smaller Settlements';

Abbotsley, Abbots Ripton, Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Alwalton, Bluntisham, Brington, Broughton, Buckworth, Bythorn, Catworth, Chesterton, Colne, Conington, Covington, Diddington, Earith, Easton, Ellington, Elton, Farcet, Folksworth, Glatton, Grafham, Great Gidding, Great Gransden, Great Paxton, Great Raveley, Great Staughton, Great Stukeley, Hail Weston, Hamerton, Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Hilton, Holme, Holywell, Houghton and Wyton, Keyston, Kings Ripton, Leighton Bromswold, Little Stukeley, London Road (St Ives)<sup>(iv)</sup>, Molesworth, Needingworth, Offord Cluny, Offord D'Arcy, Oldhurst, Old Weston, Perry, Pidley, Pondersbridge (part)<sup>(v)</sup>, Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside, Ramsey St Mary's, Southoe, Spaldwick, Stibbington, Stilton, Stonely, Stow Longa, Tilbrook, Toseland, Upton, Upwood, Wansford (part)<sup>(vi)</sup>, Waresley, Water Newton, Winwick, Wistow, Woodhurst, Woodwalton, Wyton-on-the-Hill, and Yelling; in which residential infilling will be appropriate. In exceptional circumstances, development schemes of minor scale may be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the settlement concerned offers at least a basic range of services and public transport appropriate to the form of the housing to be provided and it secures the most sustainable solution for the site;

All other areas as part of the countryside, including those hamlets and isolated groups of buildings where nearly all services and facilities must be accessed in higher order settlements. In this tier residential development will be limited to that which has an essential need to be in the countryside.

The scale of housing development schemes is defined as:

- iv The built up area adjoining London Road to the south of St Ives, and lying within the parishes of Fenstanton and Hemingford Grey
- v The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Fenland)
- vi The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Peterborough)

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Large scale development: 60 or more dwellings

Moderate scale development: 10-59 dwellings

Minor scale development: up to 9 dwellings

Residential infilling: up to 3 dwellings

## Reasoned Justification

**7.14** In the Cambridge Sub-Region, the emerging East of England Plan (Proposed Changes 2006) includes the three settlements of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives as Market Towns. They have a wider range of facilities and employment opportunities compared to other settlements in the District. Ramsey and Bury lie outside the Cambridge Sub-Region. Ramsey and Bury provide a similar ranges of services and facilities justifying its designation as a Market Town although the scale of provision is below that of the other Market Towns and the availability of employment is comparatively limited. The Market Towns are defined as the first tier in the hierarchy.

**7.15** The emerging East of England Plan identifies the criteria for Key Service Centres as large villages with a good level of services such as a primary school within the village, a secondary school within the village or easily accessible by public transport, primary health care facilities, such as a GP surgery, a range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a reasonable public transport service to higher order settlements. The villages of Brampton, Buckden, Fenstanton, Godmanchester, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley all meet these criteria despite ranging in size and function from sizeable settlements with similar services and facilities to the market towns to large villages with a range of facilities sufficient for most day to day requirements. They are therefore defined as Key Service Centres and form the second tier of the hierarchy.

**7.16** Huntingdonshire has a great many other villages of varying size and character all offering different levels of services and facilities to their residents. They are classed as Smaller Settlements in the third tier of the hierarchy. The main distinction between these Smaller Settlements and the Key Service Centres is that none offer a sufficient range of services and facilities to sustain daily living without the need to access services and facilities elsewhere.

**7.17** The countryside contains a number of hamlets, groups of houses and individual properties typical of a productive agricultural economy. These offer virtually no services for residents and typically contain less than 30 homes. Government policy clearly indicates that such locations should not be a focus for further development.

**7.18** The Council has produced a background paper on the Settlement Hierarchy and the potential Key Service Centres. Updated in October 2007, this paper provides further information on the criteria used to determine a settlement's position in the hierarchy.

## Affordable Housing in Development

**7.19** It has become increasingly difficult for local people on low to modest incomes to gain access to suitable housing. A growing gap between average earnings and housing costs, a limited supply of new affordable properties and the loss of existing social housing through 'right to buy' / 'right to acquire' provisions have all contributed to this problem. The planning system has a key role to play in making more affordable properties available, through securing contributions from market housing schemes and by enabling rural 'exceptions' sites to come forward. It is necessary to define the scope of what constitutes 'affordable housing' in order to develop policies specifying where and when its provision will be required.



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

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

## Policy Wording 4

The definition of Affordable Housing in PPS3 will be used.

40% of all housing proposed in developments in the following categories should be provided as affordable housing:

on proposals of 15 or more homes or 0.5ha or more in all parts of the District; or

on proposals of 3 or more homes or 0.1ha, in all parishes with less than 3000 population.

In order to prevent avoidance of contributions the requirement will consider the complete developable area rather than the area or number of homes of a proposal where it forms a sub-division of a larger developable site.

In determining the amount of affordable housing site conditions including redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination will be considered. Where evidence shows that site conditions or other material considerations may affect the amount of affordable housing, criteria will set out the priorities for achieving affordable housing. Similarly criteria will be set for the form the contribution should take and the circumstances in which these may be varied.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.22** It is considered that the definition of affordable housing and the threshold of 15 dwellings in PPS3 is appropriate in Huntingdonshire. The average target of 35% included in the emerging East of England Plan is an average for the region and applies to all housing development. In order to achieve the average when a site threshold is used, a higher percentage must be sought on eligible sites, as some sites will not contribute because they are below the threshold. The Council considers it is viable and practical to set requirements for affordable housing from development in rural areas that reflect the need and type of development likely to take place in these areas. With these characteristics in mind the threshold and the percentage sought are lowered. It is considered prudent to include site thresholds expressed in both number of homes and in land area

## Rural Exceptions Affordable Housing

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

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**7.24** In the settlement hierarchy most new housing will be built in the Market Towns and Key Service Centres, but where rural housing need is high, like in Huntingdonshire it is important to have a mechanism for addressing affordable housing needs that arise within the District's rural areas. The exceptions process is well established. It is so called because an exception to the prevailing policy that determines where and what scale of housing development can take place as long as it is for affordable housing to meet the needs of local people. The level of services available locally will be informed by Parish Plans.

### Policy Wording 5

In exceptional circumstances, affordable housing development will be considered acceptable within or adjacent to the built up areas, subject to the following criteria:

The proposal is limited in number and type of housing to that which can be justified by evidence of need for affordable housing arising from people who are either currently resident, have an existing family or employment connection or have some other unambiguous local connection in the parish or individual settlement;

The settlement is a small rural community that is below 3000 population<sup>(vii)</sup> that offers at least a basic range of services appropriate to the form of housing to be provided;

Appropriate safeguards are put in place that ensure that the housing will remain affordable for successive occupiers; and

It can be demonstrated that there is no land in a more suitable location that is available.

### Reasoned Justification

**7.25** It is important that occupiers of the new properties have access to at least a basic level of facilities appropriate to their needs, to help reduce their need to travel. For instance access to a food shop and also a primary school where the houses will be occupied by families would be expected.

### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**7.26** The Government, in Circular 01/2006, requires local authorities to provide for the housing needs of gypsies and travellers through a rural exception sites policy and the allocation of sites in a Development Plan Document. The Circular considers rural sites, where not subject to special planning constraints, to be acceptable in principle; and points to the benefits that sites can bring to previously developed, untidy or derelict land. The Circular defines Gypsies and Travellers, and an additional draft circular has indicated that this will also include Travelling Showpeople.

**7.27** Land in urban areas which is suitable for housing may also be suitable for Gypsy and Traveller sites but may have land prices which are effectively beyond the reach of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

**7.28** The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is preparing a single issue review of the emerging East of England Plan to develop a policy which will address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the region. It will identify the total number of additional pitches requires to 2016 and the number of additional pitches which

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vii as defined in the Housing Act 1996

should be provided in local authority area. EERA has consulted on an Issues and Options document and is currently considering the responses. The document proposed two options for the distribution of pitches, both of which set the number of additional requirement to be provided in Huntingdonshire at 20 pitches.

**7.29** This took account of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the wider Cambridge Sub-Region which was published in May 2006; it identified that the need in Huntingdonshire for the period to 2011 is for an additional 15 to 25 pitches. The GTAA identified that in Huntingdonshire at the time of the survey (2005) there were 20 pitches (with a capacity for 36 caravans) on the County Council owned site at St. Neots, while the average number of unauthorised caravans 2002-2004 was 14 caravans.

**7.30** Huntingdonshire is committed to preparing a Development Plan Document (DPD) for Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and the programme for its preparation is set out in the Local Development Scheme. The programme reflects the need to ensure that the DPD is consistent with the RSS policy and policies in the Core Strategy.

**7.31** Circular 01/2006 requires the Core Strategy to set out the criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites, as the Government sees this as a strategic issue, which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the DPD and to meet demand which may result in planning applications on land as a rural exception site either before the DPD is prepared or in addition to sites allocated.

## Policy Wording 6

Account will be taken of the need to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services such as water and sewerage are provided and with good access by foot, cycle or public transport to services such as education and health. Account will also be taken of the rural nature of Huntingdonshire where the availability of public transport is limited. Providing sites in appropriate locations will help prevent the social exclusion of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and conflict with settled communities. Consideration will be taken of the preference of many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for a rural location with a degree of separation from the settled community.

The following criteria will guide the provision of sites:

adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport;

the site is served (or can be served) by adequate water and sewerage connections;

there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses;

the health and safety of occupants are not put at risk including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality or unacceptable flood risk.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.32** This policy is required to be consistent with Government policy.

# 7 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

## Employment

**7.33** The Employment Land Review (ELR) and the draft Local Economic Strategy both identify the strong economic performance that Huntingdonshire has enjoyed recently with both the number of jobs and the number of businesses being created well above the national and regional averages. The emerging East of England Plan identifies jobs growth for Cambridgeshire of 75,000, but gives only limited guidance as to how this figure might be made up from jobs growth in the local authorities in the County. However forecasts predict that at least 13,000 jobs will be created in Huntingdonshire. The ELR looks in detail at various models that seek to predict the amount of employment growth during the plan period, and compares this with evidence of land take up in recent years. The ELR concludes that planning for a 'low carbon future' is the most appropriate model and that at least 66ha of land for employment uses should be identified.

**7.34** Most of the jobs growth in recent years has been centred in and around Huntingdon and this trend is predicted to continue. However, to support the creation of sustainable communities it is necessary to increase the amount of employment land provided in Godmanchester and St Neots.

## The Preferred Approach

### Policy Wording 7

At least 82 ha of employment land will be provided before 2026 in order to support the creation of at least 13,000 jobs and reduce the significant level of out commuting. Of this at least 15 ha will be on previously developed land. Provision will be monitored regularly and the release of locations will be managed and phased during the plan period with the aims of meeting identified needs and demand and maintaining sufficient supply of deliverable sites.

As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas, strategic employment growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where 51 ha of land will be provided of which 13 ha will be on previously developed land. Provision will be made in the following locations:

In a mixed use redevelopment for B1 uses to the west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan, and in greenfield development for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the north west of the town.

In a mixed use redevelopment for B1 uses on land within Brampton;

and

In Godmanchester as part of significant mixed use greenfield development to the south east/east of Godmanchester after the A14 road improvements have been implemented.

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where 25 ha of land, all of which is greenfield land, will be provided in the following general location:

In a significant mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses on greenfield land to the east of St Neots.

In the St Ives Spatial Planning Area;

On existing commitments and other sites within the built up area of St Ives, which might come forward during the plan period.

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where at least 4 ha of land, of which 2 ha will be on previously developed land, will be provided in the following general locations:

In a mixed use redevelopment for B1 and B2 uses to the west and to the north of Ramsey.

Outside of the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key service Centre of Yaxley, 2 ha of land will be provided for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the north east of the village;

## Reasoned Justification

**7.35** This approach is based the Employment Land Review which suggests that as part of a low carbon future recommends the provision at least 66ha of additional employment land by 2026. To support the creation of sustainable communities, it is considered necessary to increase the amount of employment land in Godmanchester and St Neots where it will form an important component of mixed use development.

**7.36** The ELR also recommends retention of existing allocations in Ramsey and Bury and in Yaxley. The main reasons for retaining both of these locations are regeneration and the creation of more sustainable communities. Employment in Ramsey and Bury will be further supported by employment lead mixed use development at RAF Upwood.

**7.37** St Ives has significant constraints including flood risk that mean potential employment locations is limited to existing commitments and sites within the built up area of the town which might come forward during the plan period.

# 7 The Spatial Strategy

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

## Retail

**7.38** The Retail Assessment Study Update (2007) suggested that the Core Strategy should endeavour to increase the proportion of available expenditure which is spent locally as this is currently low. One way of encouraging this is to provide a greater quantity and choice of shops which will reduce the need to travel to other centres outside the District. A target is proposed of 20,000m<sup>2</sup> net of additional comparison retail floorspace and a further 3,900m<sup>2</sup> net of convenience floorspace in the District for the period 2006-2021. This will allow a slow but steady increase in the proportion of expenditure being retained locally.

**7.39** A target of 20,000m<sup>2</sup> net additional comparison floorspace is proposed. The Retail Assessment Study identified comparatively strong demand from retailers wishing to trade in Huntingdon and an encouraging level of interest in St Neots which has traditionally been considered less attractive by investors. The distribution is consistent with the Retail Assessment Study. Government guidance dictates that new retail facilities should be in town centres and edge of centre and out of centre locations only considered where this cannot be reasonably achieved. The Retail Assessment Study suggested that although the level of need for convenience floorspace appears limited there may be further opportunities to increase the range of facilities. In particular it noted the need for a discount foodstore in Huntingdon town centre. Compared with other centres Huntingdon is the higher order centre where pressure for further retail development is greatest. It also has more opportunities to regenerate and thus strengthen the range of uses with retail expansion on sites in and adjacent to the town centre.

## The Preferred Approach

### Policy Wording 8

At least 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace and 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace will be provided before 2026. As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas, retail growth will be located:

In 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace in Huntingdon, concentrated in the town centre and complementary and appropriate development in significant mixed use redevelopment in the area west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan;

In 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace in St Neots, concentrated in the town centre and complementary and appropriate development as part of significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town;

In 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace in St Ives concentrated in the town centre; and

In 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace located to serve population growth in town centres across the District.

## Reasoned Justification

**7.40** This distribution provides the best combination of a high but achievable level of retail growth, market preferences, retaining and encouraging local spending in the local area and taking into account sustainability issues including reducing the need to travel. It recognises the market preference for locating in Huntingdon. Retail growth at St Neots is considered necessary to support the proposed increase in population and to retain more local spending in the town.

**7.41** St Ives is considered to be the most appropriate place for additional comparison retail floorspace outside Huntingdon and St Neots.

# 7 The Spatial Strategy

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## Key Diagram

7.42 The following diagram illustrates the geographic distribution and levels of growth in the preferred approach.

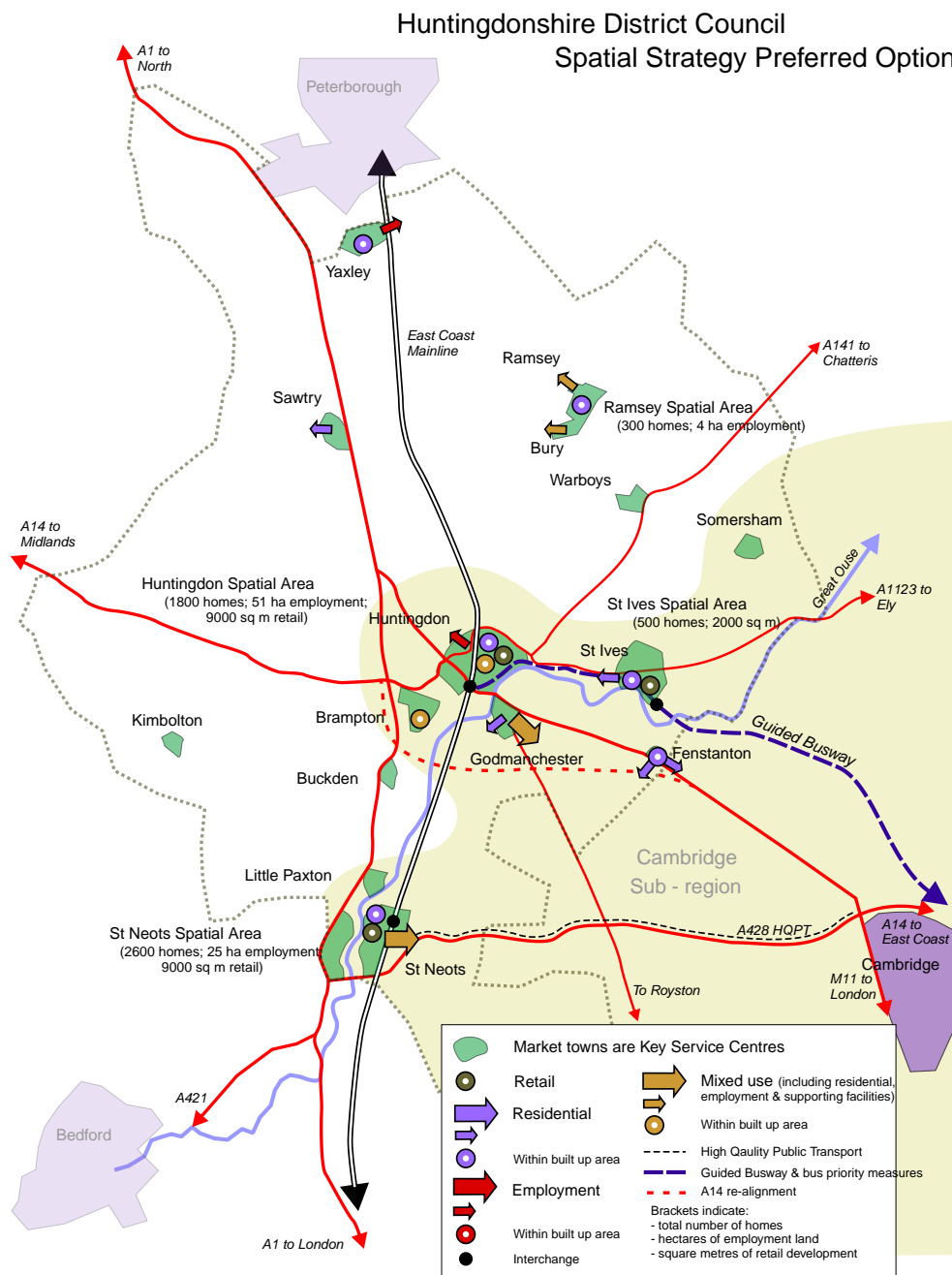


Figure 7.1 Key Diagram



## 8 Core Strategic Issues

### Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

Huntingdonshire's countryside needs to respond to changing economic and environmental circumstances. Improving the biological, visual and recreational value of the countryside brings obvious environmental and social benefits, but can also boost the local economy through increased visitor spending. It is something that should be addressed by all proposals within or adjoining the countryside and some particular opportunities for significant enhancement have been identified. Access to quality greenspace is a priority for the Council. There are however considerable pressures on green infrastructure brought about by development.

**8.1** These possible areas of 'strategic greenspace enhancement' reflect the target areas for habitat creation identified in the Structure Plan and the Biodiversity Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's 50 Year Wildlife Vision.

#### Preferred Approach

##### Policy Wording 9

Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement along with green corridors connecting them are identified in Figure 8.1. Within these areas, coordinated action will be taken via consultation with statutory and other agencies to improve their biodiversity, landscape and recreational value through appropriate forms of habitat creation and landscape management, and projects to promote quiet enjoyment of the countryside. The creation or enhancement of green corridors connecting these areas will be promoted. It is particularly important that resources are concentrated in these areas in the early part of the plan period and to promote the early creation or enhancement of green corridors connecting these areas with areas of population, to form a coherent network:

- The Great Fen Project;
- The Grafham Water / Brampton Woodlands; and
- The Great Ouse Valley (St Neots to Earith)

#### Reasoned Justification

**8.2** Focusing countryside enhancement efforts on these areas will give maximum scope for consolidating and linking important habitats, and enable complementary access improvements to be pursued. Within the defined areas, it will be important to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with this vision and, when development does occur, that the design, landscaping and any community benefits contribute to its realisation.

**8.3** The Cambridge Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy is a valuable source of information that seeks to enhance and reinstate green infrastructure and a network of corridors connecting the key areas across Cambridgeshire. The corridors will allow sites important for biodiversity to be connected thus encouraging the spread of wildlife and will also create opportunities for countryside recreation including walking and cycling.

## 8 Core Strategic Issues

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

**8.4** Green infrastructure is defined as a network of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces and greenway links. It offers opportunities to provide for a number of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement.

**8.5** The Great Fen Project is a major initiative of habitat restoration which is of international significance. It will extend significantly the area of fen by connecting Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen to create a 3700 ha wetland.

**8.6** Grafham Water offers opportunities for water based recreation together with the creation of wildlife habitats and better links to nearby woodlands such as Brampton Wood.

**8.7** The Great Ouse Valley is a distinctive lowland landscape of extensive areas of wetlands, including major areas of water filled sand and gravel pits such as Paxton Pits and Needingworth Quarry, and meadows which require sensitive agricultural management. It is close to centres of population and there needs to be a balance struck between the needs of recreation and biodiversity.

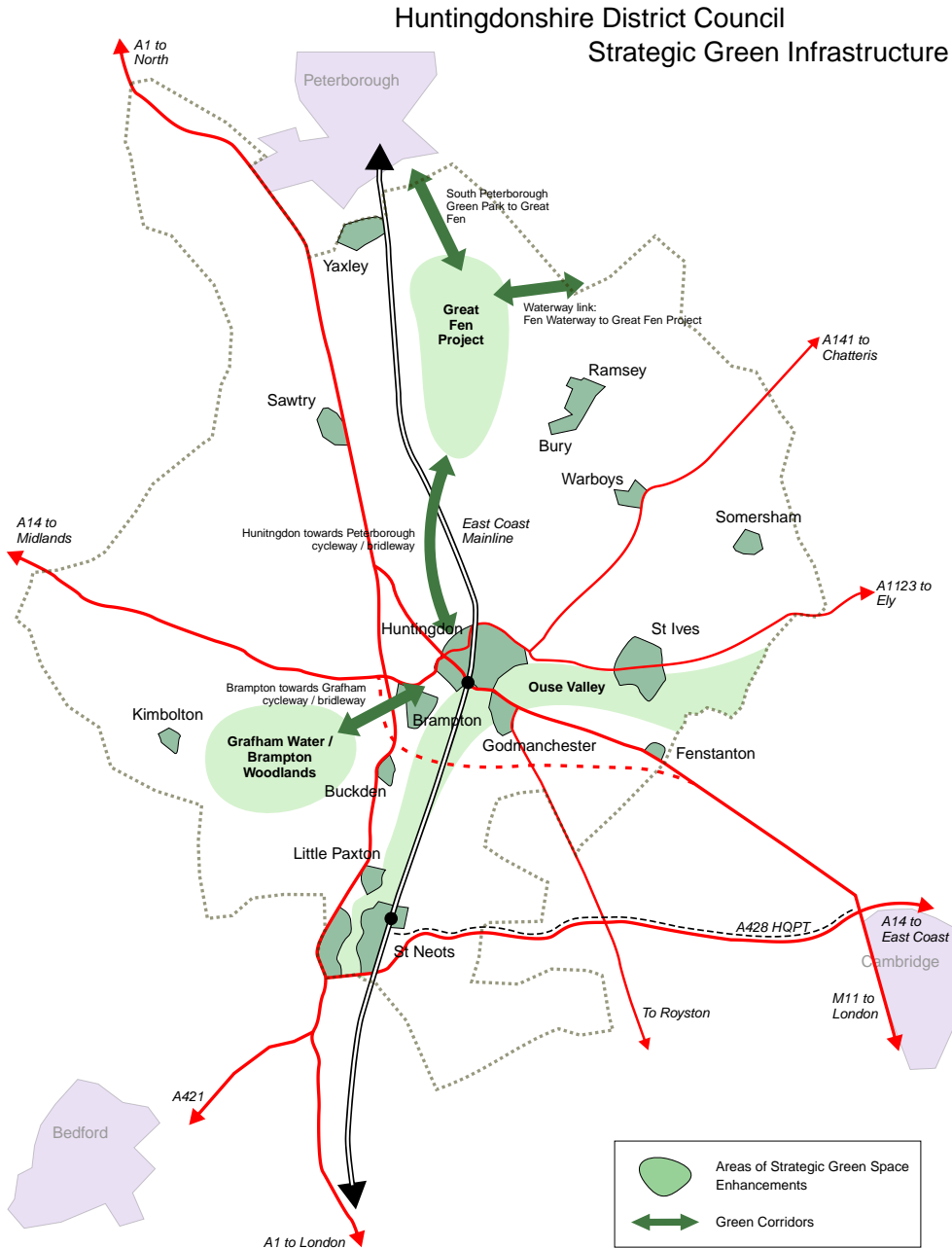


Figure 8.1 Strategic Green Infrastructure

## 8 Core Strategic Issues

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### Access to Services and Facilities

#### Infrastructure Requirements

**8.8** The detailed framework for calculating and negotiating obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents, which will be updated on a regular basis. Huntingdonshire forms part of a wider growth area, and some of the items for which contributions will be required may be strategic in nature (such as strategic open space). Contributions from individual developments may be pooled where appropriate, but in all such cases the nature and scale of contributions sought will be related to the size of scheme and the extent to which it places additional demands upon the area.

#### Preferred Approach

##### Policy Wording 10

Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing appropriate infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided through an obligation. The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate. Standards and formulae for calculating contributions will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents. Where appropriate, the particular requirements of specific sites will be set out in other DPDs.

The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought for this purpose will be related to the form of development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. Where appropriate, any such provision will be required to be provided on site. Where this is not possible, a commuted payment will be sought. The range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges or tariff where appropriate.

Contributions may be required for the following:

- affordable and key worker housing
- open space and recreation (including leisure and sports facilities)
- strategic green infrastructure
- transport (including footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, highways, public transport, car parks and travel planning)
- community facilities (including meeting halls, youth activities, library services, cultural facilities and places of worship)
- education, health and social care
- utilities infrastructure
- emergency services

environmental improvements  
drainage / flood prevention and protection  
waste recycling facilities  
public art

## Reasoned Justification

**8.9** Development can place additional demands upon physical infrastructure and social facilities, as well as having impacts upon the environment. In many cases planning obligations will be required, so that provision is made for the necessary improvements to services and facilities, or to secure compensatory provision for any loss or damage arising, for instance the loss of open space. Obligations may also be necessary for corporate planning objectives to be secured, in particular, the provision of affordable and key worker housing where this is justified.

**8.10** This approach highlights the general principle that obligations will be required where necessary in planning terms, and indicates the broad range of matters that may need to be addressed. The detailed framework for calculating and negotiating obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents which will be updated on a regular basis. Huntingdonshire forms part of a wider regional and sub-regional growth area, and some of the items for which contributions will be required will be strategic in nature.

# 9 Implementation and Monitoring

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## 9 Implementation and Monitoring

**9.1** Monitoring and review are key aspects of the development plan system with its emphasis on delivery of sustainable development and sustainable communities. Local Development Frameworks should be regularly reviewed and revised to ensure that components of the framework are updated to reflect changing circumstances nationally, regionally and locally. In the Core Strategy there should be a focus on implementation, setting out agreed delivery mechanisms to ensure that policies achieve desired results in the required time frame. Monitoring will evaluate progress being made towards delivering the spatial vision and objectives through the implementation of policies. The results of such monitoring should provide the basis for any contingencies to be implemented or the need for a review to be undertaken.

**9.2** In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council will produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) containing an assessment of Local Development Document preparation against milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), and the extent to which policies set out in Local Development Documents are being achieved and targets being met. The AMR will be the main mechanism for assessing the LDF's performance and effect. As well as linking with spatial objectives and policies, indicators in the AMR will also link to sustainability appraisal objectives in order to identify the significant effects of policy implementation. If, as a result of monitoring, areas are identified where a policy is not working, or key policy targets are not being met, this may give rise to a review of the Core Strategy or other parts of the LDF.

**9.3** Information on housing delivery in terms of net additional dwellings, will be set out in the AMR in the form of a housing trajectory, showing past and estimating future performance.

**9.4** The following table sets out performance indicators and targets which will form the basis for identifying where the spatial strategy needs to be strengthened, maintained or revised.

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy Wording	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
<b>Land, Water and Resources</b>							
Number of dwellings completed (net)	Core indicator, Significant effects	1, 2, 3	16	2	550 per annum	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
% housing completions on previously developed land	Core output, Significant effects	8, 12	1	2	29%	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Estimated household water consumption	Local output, Significant effects	12	2	1	Reduce pro capita water consumption rates	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
<b>Biodiversity</b>							
Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance:	Core output, Significant effects	8, 9	1, 3, 12	1, 9	Increase the number of ha of specified target habitats	Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambs Biodiversity Partnership, Natural England, RSPB	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs, Countryside Services Initiatives
1. change in priority habitats and species (by type)							
2. change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub-regional or local significance							

# 9 Implementation and Monitoring

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy Wording	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
<b>Landscape, Townscape and Archaeology</b>							
Large scale housing sites meeting 'Building for Life' equivalent standards	Local output, Significant effects	10, 11, 12, 13	4, 5, 10, 13	1	60% to achieve Silver Standard equivalent	District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs, Conservation initiatives
<b>Climate Change and Pollution</b>							
% household waste which is recycled	Local output, Significant effects	12	8	1	50% by 2011 56% by 2016 60% by 2021	District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council	Provision of recycling facilities, Recycling campaigns, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Waste Strategy
% of housing completions in Market Towns and Key Service Centres	Local output, Significant effects	1, 12, 13	7, 9	2, 3	Maximise the % of housing completions in Market Towns and Key Service Centres	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
<b>Inclusive Communities</b>							
% of housing completions on qualifying sites which are affordable	Core output, Significant effects	2, 3	15, 16	4, 5	40%	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions
Amount of new residential development within 30 mins public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary	Core output, Significant effects	1	14, 15	1	Maximise the amount of new residential development within 30 mins public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school,	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs



# Implementation and Monitoring 9

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy Wording	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
school, areas of employment and a major retail centre					areas of employment and a major retail centre		
Number of permissions granted for new public or private Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople sites, or expansion of existing sites	Core output	3	15, 16	6	Increase provision of pitches available on legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople	County Council, Registered Social Landlords, Private Sector	Through Gypsies and Travellers DPD and development control decisions
<b>Economic Activity</b>							
Amount and % of employment floorspace developed on previously developed land	Core output, Significant effects	6, 8, 12	1	7	Maximise the % of completed employment floorspace on previously developed land	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Amount of land for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses	Local output, Significant effects	4, 6, 15	17, 18	7	Annual average 4.3 ha	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
% of retail completions in Huntingdon and St Neots	Local output, Significant effects	5, 7	14, 17, 18	8	Ensure a balance between the two main market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs

## 10 Glossary

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## 10 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.

### **Comparison Floorspace**

Shops retailing items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

### **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.

**Convenience Floorspace**

Shops retailing everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

**Core Strategy**

The main document in the *Local Development Framework*. It is a *Development Plan Document* containing the overall vision, objectives, strategy and key 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.

**Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**

The Government department responsible for planning and production of planning guidance

**Development Plan**

The documents which together provide the main point of reference when considering planning proposals. 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.

**Eco-town**

Eco-towns will be small new towns of at least 5-20,000 homes. They are intended to exploit the potential to create a complete new settlement to achieve zero carbon development and more sustainable living using the best new design and architecture.

**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.

## 10 Glossary

Huntingdonshire District Council | Core Strategy 2007 - Preferred Options - Volume One

### **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.

### **Large scale development**

The creation of 60 or more dwellings on one site.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Moderate development**

The creation of between 10 and 59 dwellings on one site.

**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.

## 10 Glossary

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### **Stakeholders**

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

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

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

### **Statement of Compliance**

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

### **Statutory Development Plan**

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

### **Statutory Organisations**

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

### **Strategic Greenspace**

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

### **Submission**

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

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

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

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

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

### **Sustainable Development**

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

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

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

### **Tenure**

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

**Tests of Soundness**

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

**Use Class Orders**

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

**Vitality and Viability**

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

**Windfall site**

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

**Zero carbon building**

A building with a net energy consumption of zero over a typical year. This can be measured in different ways relating to cost, energy or carbon emissions.