



Local Development Framework  
**Submission Core Strategy 2008**

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## Foreword

The District Council knows that Huntingdonshire is an attractive place where people and communities can thrive and develop in a safe and healthy environment. The numbers of people and jobs in the area are growing and we need to plan for their integration into our communities.

House prices are relatively high compared to local wages and many people are in housing need. This has been identified as a critical issue for the Core Strategy to address. Much of the economy has historically been based around agriculture and associated food production. The rural economy faces a challenging future with the need for protection and diversification. A strong specialist manufacturing industry has also grown up in the last 50 years with increasing jobs in retail, leisure and offices more recently. The Core Strategy aims to help Huntingdonshire's economy move forward, to remain competitive and to be attractive to investors.

There are many development pressures, so it will be essential to safeguard the unique character of Huntingdonshire, the built environment of our market towns and villages, its landscape and wildlife.

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

The Core Strategy, as the primary element in the Local Development Framework (LDF), sets the spatial framework for Huntingdonshire's future to 2026. It will help shape the provision of housing development, services, economic growth and environmental improvements. It is a technical document, with formal policies to guide development, and needs to be read in conjunction with national and regional planning guidance to get comprehensive advice.

Many people and organisations have been involved in the production of the Core Strategy so far. This submission to the Secretary of State involves the final stage of consultation, with comments being considered by an independent Planning Inspector. Please get involved and have your say about this important strategy.



Councillor Peter Bucknell  
Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy  
and Transport

# Foreword

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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** The Core Strategy sets the strategic spatial planning framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2026. It contains strategic policies to manage growth and guide new development in Huntingdonshire. The Core Strategy provides the local context for considering the long-term social, economic, environmental and resource impacts of development.

**1.2** 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.

**1.3** The Core Strategy includes:

- a vision of how Huntingdonshire will develop as a place in order to meet the needs of our residents and business communities, both now and in the future
- strategic objectives for the area to achieve the vision - to help guide and manage development and mitigate any adverse effects
- a spatial strategy which will help direct growth to locations where it can be sustainably accommodated and identifies areas of significant change
- core policies to establish overall spatial principles and to provide a framework for more detailed policies for the Development Control DPD, Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan
- recognition of the need to work in partnership to achieve the necessary infrastructure for successful delivery of growth
- details of how the Local Development Framework will be monitored and how the implementation of the Core Strategy will be assessed

**1.4** It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites. These will be dealt with separately by the Development Control DPD, the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan.

**1.5** The District Council will be preparing a series of companion planning documents, collectively known as the Local Development Framework, to guide and manage 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
- Huntingdon West Area Action Plan
- Planning Proposals Development Plan Document
- Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document
- Proposals Map (accompanies this document)

**1.6** 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.

**1.7** The Core Strategy is accompanied by the Statement of Consultation which includes in Annex 1 details about how each component of the strategy was selected and drawn up. Annex 1 forms the audit trail for the development of the policies, setting out a précis of the alternatives that were considered.

# Introduction

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## Evolution of the Core Strategy

**1.8** The first stage of preparation was the Issues and Options Stage (Regulation 25). Consultation was undertaken throughout May and June 2007 with identified stakeholders. Limited publicity was also made at this time to give those interested the opportunity to be involved at this preparatory stage. The representations received were considered and used to inform a further round of consultation with selected key stakeholders through the publication of the consultation document *Towards a Spatial Strategy for Huntingdonshire* to aid further the preparation of the Preferred Options.

**1.9** The Preferred Options Report (Regulation 26) was published for consultation in November 2007. It was presented in two volumes. Volume 1 identified the Preferred Options for policies and their reasoned justification, while Volume 2, provided the evidence base for the development of the Preferred Options. Representations received during this period were considered in detail and have influenced the content of this Submission Core Strategy.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment

**1.10** *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.

**1.11** At the same time, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of all local development documents <sup>(1)</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.

**1.12** 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.

**1.13** Alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Issues and Options paper, an *Initial Sustainability Appraisal* was undertaken by the Council, the outcomes of which informed the development of the Preferred Options. The Preferred Options were then subject to SA, the results of which were published for consultation in the *draft Final Sustainability Appraisal Report* which accompanied the Preferred Options. A *Final Sustainability Appraisal Report* has been completed to accompany this submission version of the Core Strategy to demonstrate the sustainability implications of this plan.

**1.14** Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is complementary to SA/SEA and is designed to protect sites of European importance (European sites). HRA 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. HRA 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 2007*. As the Core Strategy will have a significant impact upon the potential scale, location and type of development taking place 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. If the screening assessment shows that adverse impacts on European sites cannot be ruled out, a full assessment of the likely impacts is required. The full assessment identifies ways in which the plan needs to be changed to ensure no adverse impact and proposes mitigation measures. The HRA process has been carried out by specialist external consultants

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1 section 19 para (5)(a)

Scott Wilson Ltd and is published alongside this Submission Core Strategy. A summary of the main findings of the assessment is presented in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation with additional information where relevant in the sections of the Core Strategy.

## The Development Plan

**1.15** The LDF is part of the statutory Development Plan, which also includes the Regional Spatial Strategy, which for this area is the *East of England Plan (2008)*. This was prepared by East of England Regional Assembly with more recent stages handled by the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East). The *Minerals and Waste Framework* prepared for the county by Cambridgeshire County Council is also part of the Development Plan which was under preparation as at June 2008. The Development Plan is the primary source of policy for the determination of planning applications in line with section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*.



# Links with Other Documents

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## 2 Links with Other Documents

**2.1** The Core Strategy is informed by the regional and local context set in other policy documents. The other key document is the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire*.

**2.2** The *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.

**2.3** 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 so that a minimum of 35% of all housing across the Region will come forward as affordable.

**2.4** As the *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. The two annexes of the Statement of Consultation consider this and the other tests of soundness.

**2.5** 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 *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* was adopted by the Council in 2004. The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* has been reviewed and updated during the preparation of the Core Strategy leading to the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire* (SCS).

**2.6** The SCS sets out the long-term vision for the development of communities in Huntingdonshire. The main underlying principle is that it will deal with the issues that the local community feels are important to its economic, social and environmental well-being. The vision will be delivered by public, private and voluntary organisations. 6 strategic themes are also identified in the SCS which have a series of desired outcomes and objectives which will be achieved through implementation of 5 year delivery plans.

**2.7** The Core Strategy has to have regard to the SCS. The *Huntingdonshire Community Strategy* (2004) informed the Issues and Options stage of preparation of the Core Strategy while the SCS has been used to inform the Core Strategy during Preferred Options and this Submission stage. The dynamic relationship between the Core Strategy and the *Sustainable Community Strategy*, enabled by the simultaneous production, has meant that as each has developed this has affected the other. Strong links between the LDF and the SCS have helped 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.

**2.8** The SCS identifies 8 key components of a sustainable community as:

- active, inclusive and safe
- well-run
- environmentally sensitive
- well-designed and built
- well-connected
- thriving
- well-served
- fair for everyone

# Links with Other Documents

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**2.9** The Local Development Framework is the means of achieving the spatial elements of the SCS. Therefore, they have been developed together. 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.

**2.10** 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

**2.11** 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 has recently been revised, the *Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy* and the *Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy*.

**2.12** 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). At the most local level Parish Plans can provide a wide variety of information and are representative of how local people see their area and how they would like to see it develop. Wherever possible Parish Plans will be used to inform the District's planning policy.

## Supporting Documents

**2.13** The Core Strategy has been informed by a range of studies produced or commissioned by the Council showing it is backed by a strong evidence base. The documents of most relevance to the Core Strategy are listed below, with a full list set out in the Appendix 2 'Evidence Base':

- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2008)*
- *Employment Land Review (2007)*
- *Housing Needs Survey (2003) and Update (2006)*
- *Landscape & Townscape Assessment (2007)*
- *Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)*
- *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2004)*
- *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (2005) and Update (2007)*
- *Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2006)*
- *Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008)*
- *Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper Update (2007)*
- *Annual Monitoring Report*
- *Final Sustainability Appraisal (July 2008)*
- *Habitats Regulation Assessment (July 2008)*
- *Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy (June 2008)*
- *Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)*
- *Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework (2008)*
- *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment (prepared by Atkins for the Council) (2008)*

# The Spatial Vision

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## 3 The Spatial Vision

### A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire

**3.1** Huntingdonshire is still predominantly rural in character with an area of approximately 350 square miles. The population is currently around 160,000 people (2006)<sup>(2)</sup>, 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.

**3.2** The District lies within the designated London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/ Peterborough Growth Area and in the East of England Region. The southern part of the District, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives, falls within the Cambridge Sub-Region and look to Cambridge for many of the higher order services, while the northern part of the District is influenced by the relationship with 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.

**3.3** 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. Opportunities are arising to regenerate the Town Development Scheme estates and the town centres of Huntingdon and St Neots. The District has a high net out-commuting pattern to London, Cambridge and Peterborough 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

**3.4** 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 eastern edge of the town has a strong historic 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 high jobs to employment ratio. It is well connected with the strategic road network and the east coast mainline railway. It has a relatively strong retail sector and functions as the primary shopping centre for the District. Brampton and Godmanchester to the south west and south east respectively have a close relationship with the services in Huntingdon. The town benefits from a larger supporting population than just the town itself and the residents of Brampton and Godmanchester benefit from the wide range of services and facilities available in Huntingdon.

#### St Neots

**3.5** St Neots is, in population terms, the largest settlement in the District. It is a market town established on the eastern 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. Significant housing development is now taking place to the east of the railway and north of Cambridge Road. St Neots has its own railway station, on the east coast mainline, located in the north eastern quarter of the town, and has direct access onto 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.

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2 Source: Research Group, Cambridgeshire County Council mid-2006 population estimates

## St Ives

**3.6** 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 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 an extensive base of small specialist shops which have enabled it to successfully compete with other market towns in the area. St Ives is a picturesque town and is a popular destination for tourists and visitors.

## Ramsey and Bury

**3.7** Ramsey is located on the edge of the fenland landscape. The original settlement focused around Ramsey Abbey has extended south now forming a continuous built-up area with much of the village of Bury, although part of Bury around Holy Cross church remains separate. The buildings of former RAF Upwood also form part of the continuous built-up area. For planning purposes the whole area 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.

## Villages and the Rural Area

**3.8** Huntingdonshire remains a predominantly rural District with just 6% of its total land in urban use. The agricultural heritage of the District has had a large impact on its landscape appearance. The underlying Oolitic Limestone and stone buildings of the Nene Valley and the dark peat soils and flat landscapes of the Fens ensure that these landscapes are particularly distinctive.

**3.9** Despite the growth that has taken place across the District, many of Huntingdonshire's smaller villages retain their historic form. Buildings clustered around a church or village green and linear patterns are both common. The range of services available in the villages varies significantly as does the population. Development pressures can easily undermine the sensitive character of these settlements if it is not sympathetic to the context of the surrounding area, the size of the settlement and the services available.

## Population

**3.10** 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<sup>(3)</sup>.

**3.11** 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<sup>(4)</sup>. There is some evidence that immigration from other countries in the European Union may be an increasingly important factor.

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3 Cambridgeshire County Council

4 Cambridgeshire County Council

# The Spatial Vision

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## Landscape, Biodiversity and Ecology

**3.12** 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.

**3.13** 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 recommends 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.

## Economy

**3.14** Much of the economy has historically been based around agriculture and associated food production. Whilst agriculture remains important to the local economy in more recent times a strong specialist manufacturing industry has grown up alongside changes that have seen more jobs in retail, leisure and office based sectors. There has also been significant growth in the high-technology sector in recent years in Huntingdonshire.

**3.15** Tourism and leisure are important contributors to the local economy. Visitors are attracted to the District by its strong local historical connections, such as Oliver Cromwell and Samuel Pepys. Opportunities for sport and informal recreation in the countryside attract many others, with large numbers attending horse races at Huntingdon Racecourse. There are opportunities for varied water-related activities on the network of waterways in the District, the River Great Ouse and at Grafham Water.

## Infrastructure

**3.16** 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. 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.

**3.17** 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 the delivery of new infrastructure for the benefit of Huntingdonshire.

## Education

**3.18** Huntingdonshire Regional College provides full and part-time education for young people and adults. Based in Huntingdon and St Neots the college also provides learning opportunities in many other locations across the district. State education for those aged 11-18 is provided in 7 establishments, focused in the larger centres of population with Huntingdon and St Neots each having two secondary schools and St Ives, Ramsey and Sawtry each having one with all secondary schools serving quite extensive rural catchments too. Many students in the north of the district fall within the Stanground College catchment located in Peterborough.

**3.19** Huntingdonshire currently has 61 state primary schools catering for children aged 4-11. Of these 26 are located within the Market Towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey with 35 others spread around the district, mostly in the larger villages.

**3.20** Samuel Pepys and Spring Common schools provide education services to students aged 2-19 with special educational needs and are based in St Neots and Huntingdon respectively.

**3.21** There is a small private education sector, including Kimbolton School which offers boarding facilities, but most students choosing this travel outside the district for education, mainly to Cambridge and Peterborough. Pre-school education is supplied by a range of state, private and voluntary providers.

## Health Care

**3.22** Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust is responsible for the overall commissioning of health care services in Cambridgeshire. 22 General Practices operate within the District with some having satellite surgeries in villages to provide more local facilities to patients. Opened in 1983 Hinchbrooke Hospital provides medical services for residents of Huntingdonshire and some surrounding areas but was threatened with closure in 2006/7. Confirmation was obtained in June 2007 of the hospital's retention with some restructuring of services taking place. A major new treatment centre opened in 2005 has allowed a significant increase in day case patients and a replacement children's ward opened in 2007.

## Transport

**3.23** Huntingdonshire benefits from excellent strategic communication links. The East Coast mainline rail services are accessible at Huntingdon and St Neots. The A1 offers access north – south on the trunk road network. The A14 provides strategic east – west links and facilitates access to Europe via the East Coast ports. East – west linkages are also facilitated by the A428 crossing the southern part of the District. Access to airports is more remote with Stansted, Luton and Birmingham being the nearest major passenger airports to the District.

**3.24** Private car ownership in Huntingdonshire is higher than the national average reflecting the relatively rural nature of most of the District and consequent dependence on private cars for personal transport. The most frequent bus services operate within and between the Market Towns where there are greater concentrations of potential passengers. Only 17 other villages have a bus service timetabled to be hourly or better between 7am and 7 pm Monday to Saturday operating to at least one Market Town, Cambridge, Peterborough or Bedford. Services are due to start on a Guided Busway between Cambridge and St Ives in 2009, with on-road services continuing to Huntingdon.

## The Planning Context

**3.25** The development plans system consists of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The *East of England Plan* has recently been published and guides 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 *East of England Plan* is expected to be subject to review very soon, which is likely to cover the period up to 2031 and it is anticipated that it may seek to increase development rates.

## Housing requirements

**3.26** The *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, as at 2006, about 2,890 homes have already been built. Approximately a further 4,265 are accounted for in existing allocated sites, many of which are

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either under construction or have planning permission. A further 1,345 are accounted for from non-allocated sites that have planning permission or are identified as urban capacity. Together these sources mean that about 8,500 homes are accounted for, which leaves land to be identified for 2,700 homes to be built before 2021. Government guidance in *PPS3: Housing* requires the Council to ensure that there are locations identified for at least a 15 year supply of land for housing 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 *East of England Plan* advises that the highest average annual housing requirement from 2001 to 2021 or from 2006 to 2021 should be used after 2021. Therefore an additional 2800 homes will be needed between 2021 and 2026 (five years at the 2001 to 2021 average annual rate of 560). As the figures in the *East of England Plan* are to be treated as the minimum, a number of options that went beyond this were considered as part of the issues and options process.

**3.27** Affordable housing is a key issue in Huntingdonshire due to the relatively high level of house prices compared with local incomes. The *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. The recently published *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)* for the Cambridge Housing Sub Region also identifies a high level of need. It shows that average house prices have risen from 2001 to 2006 by about 70% with average lower quartile prices rising by about 95%. At the same time average earnings have increased by about 28% and lower quartile earnings have increased by just 22%. The effect of these changes is that lower quartile market housing is now only affordable to 46% of the population. The *SHMA* supports seeking affordable housing to help address this problem. Meeting the existing and newly arising housing need in the district would require more houses than the annual requirement from the *East of England Plan*. The Peterborough City Council has also produced a *SHMA* for the Peterborough area. The *Peterborough SHMA* covers a small part of Huntingdonshire, to the north of the District. The findings of the *Peterborough SHMA* have been taken into account for the areas it covers.

## Employment

**3.28** The *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. Some of the key factors are: overall national economic growth, local labour supply and demand, changing conditions for business competitiveness, and increasingly 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 choice in the range of jobs in Huntingdonshire will help to redress the current imbalance of out-commuting.

**3.29** 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 'New Usual for Business' approach leads to a requirement for 96ha of land up to 2026. This approach assumes light industrial, warehousing and office developments will be built so that higher job densities will be achieved than previously. The 'Low Carbon Future' approach is more aspirational and requires different attitudes towards employment densities, seeking highly accessible locations and changing ways of working. This could reduce the land requirement to 66ha. For both approaches 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 Development

**3.30** The *East of England Plan* identifies Cambridge and Peterborough as regional centres for retail and other town centre purposes with Bedford being classified at the next level as a major town centre. Their close proximity draws significant levels of expenditure away from retail outlets in Huntingdonshire as shoppers seek greater choice of goods. This has the greatest impact on purchase of comparison goods such as furniture, clothing and electrical items. The four Market Town Centres form the core of Huntingdonshire's retail offer and their continued vitality and viability are critical to the success of the local economy.

**3.31** The *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* (2005, updated 2007) suggests 20,000m<sup>2</sup> net additional comparison floorspace is needed up to 2021 complemented with 3,900m<sup>2</sup> net additional convenience floorspace for food shopping. PPS6 emphasises the need for a proactive approach to planning for town centres within a strategic hierarchy and identification of opportunities for regeneration and investment.

**3.32** The figures suggested in the *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* allow for a modest increase in the proportion of expenditure retained locally as a result of more attractive retail opportunities being offered. It is considered that this will be a challenging level of development to achieve but provision of local shopping facilities is an integral element of promoting sustainable communities by reducing the need to travel. Distribution of new retail development will need to be balanced between the desire to reflect the distribution of additional housing growth, the wish to achieve successful regeneration and investment attractiveness. This may involve extensions of primary shopping areas and extensions of town centres as a whole to accommodate other main town centre uses.

## A Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire

**3.33** 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*:

### The Spatial Vision

In 2026 Huntingdonshire will have retained its distinct identity as a predominantly rural area with vibrant villages and market towns. Residents will be happier, healthier and more active and will enjoy an improved quality of life with improved access to a wider range of local jobs, housing, high quality services and facilities and green infrastructure.

### Protection of Character

The traditional hierarchy of Market Towns and larger villages serving the smaller settlements within their rural hinterland will be maintained with increasing emphasis on the promotion of sustainable communities.

The character of our towns, villages and their historic cores will be protected and enhanced with care taken to ensure new development is well integrated with its surroundings.

The integrity of our towns and villages will be maintained by ensuring that there is separation between settlements, and in particular between Peterborough and nearby villages in Huntingdonshire. Villages near Peterborough will benefit from development within the city through access to an improved range of amenities and facilities while the areas of countryside and green space around those villages will act as an important resource for the expanded population of Peterborough.



# The Spatial Vision

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The landscape of Huntingdonshire will be protected and enhanced. Housing growth, particularly in the Huntingdon and St Neots areas, will be supported by the protection and enhancement of areas of green space around them including the Ouse Valley, the woodlands around Grafham Water and Brampton and the wetland and woodlands of the Great Fen Project. Further opportunities for improved recreation of these areas and to enhance their biodiversity will be identified together with access to the areas of population.

## **Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs**

During this time Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating housing growth, including much needed affordable housing, required as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor while respecting, maintaining and enhancing the special character of its natural, historic and built environments. The majority of growth will be concentrated in the most sustainable locations namely the market towns. More limited development will be supported in larger villages to help sustain their existing facilities and amenities, without damaging their character. In our rural areas schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities will be supported. With the housing growth the appropriate provision of health, education, training, and community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured.

## **Employment that Suits the Needs of the Population and Reduces Out-commuting**

Future employment development will be located in the most sustainable locations of the market towns. This is primarily in order to ensure delivery of the most marketable sites but it also follows housing growth to ensure the creation of balanced communities. The provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities, particularly in advanced manufacturing, environmental technologies, ICT and creative industries. This will help limit levels of out-commuting to London, Peterborough and Cambridge and ensure the continuing success of the District's economy.

## **Enhanced Market Towns**

Market towns will be encouraged to respond to pressure from competing centres outside the district in order to further strengthen the District's economy, provide more choice and reduce the need to travel. Appropriate development opportunities will be identified within and close to the town centres to accommodate further investment. Further improvements to the public realm to make the town centres more attractive will be encouraged.

## **Maximise Use of Previously Developed Land**

Proactive measures will be taken to maximise the use of previously developed land. However a significant proportion of sites will come forward on Greenfield land given the limited availability of brownfield land in sustainable locations. 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.

## **Increased Capacity of the Transport Network**

The proposed A14 improvements will enable much of the development in the Huntingdon area to take place and will improve access to and around the town centre, while the dualling of the A428 in the St Neots area will be promoted to facilitate development there. Improvements in public transport will enable the promotion of sustainable travel options, particularly through the Cambridge to St Ives Guided Bus with associated bus priority measures between St Ives and Huntingdon, and the provision of high quality public transport along the A428 corridor.

## Reasoned Justification

**3.34** 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*. The Core Strategy provides the spatial expression of these for the District and will direct future development to help achieve their visions and objectives. It incorporates the key characteristics that define Huntingdonshire and the ways in which the LDF can address their protection and enhancement. It also seeks to meet the challenges and pressures arising from the issues highlighted in the planning context. The Visions from these two documents are set out below to demonstrate the context in which the Spatial Vision for Huntingdonshire has been developed.

### The Vision of the 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 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.'

### The Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy Vision, 2008:

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, culture and leisure opportunities;
- realise their full potential;
- maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- live in an environment that is safe and protected from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely.

**3.35** The first is a very broad, high level Vision. The second sets high level aspirations for Huntingdonshire and the people who live and work within the District. The Spatial Vision for the Core Strategy is intended to anchor them into the local context and direct ways in which they might be focused.

## Objectives of the Core Strategy

**3.36** 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 have been devised within the context established by the *East of England Plan*.

### Objectives

1. To enable required growth to be accommodated in locations which minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport modes, while catering for local needs

# The Spatial Vision

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2. To ensure that the types of dwellings built are suited to the requirements of local people, are resilient to projected impacts of climate change 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, leisure and tourism
6. To enable business development in rural areas, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and minimises or mitigates against 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 and historic built environment
9. To identify opportunities to increase and enhance major strategic green space
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 is of high quality and that it 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 make best use of existing infrastructure and provide a framework for securing adequate land and infrastructure to support business and community needs
16. To reduce climate change and its effects by minimising greenhouse gas emissions through the use of low carbon and renewable energy sources, reducing the amount of energy used, incorporating adaptation measures in development and facilitating adaptation of biodiversity
17. To enable and prioritise the efficient reuse of sustainably located previously developed land and buildings and minimising the use of Greenfield land.

## Reasoned Justification

**3.37** 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 *Sustainable Community Strategy*.

## 4 The Cornerstone of Sustainable Development

**4.1** Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning policy. The aim of sustainable development is to ensure a strong, healthy and just society living within environmental limits both now and in the future. The most commonly used definition of sustainable is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”<sup>(5)</sup>. It forms an overarching objective that influences all aspects of the Core Strategy. The government’s *Sustainable Development Strategy*<sup>(6)</sup> forms the basis of the UK agenda to achieve sustainable development and sets out a strategic framework to achieve sustainable development. *PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development* sets out how sustainable development can be delivered through planning policies and *PPS Planning Climate Change (supplement to PPS1)* provides expanded policy on planning’s contribution to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**4.2** The Council is committed to playing its part in tackling climate change and has signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change. Climate change is also at the heart of the Council’s *Sustainable Community Strategy* and the *Environment Strategy*. The Core Strategy implements the spatial elements of the *Sustainable Community Strategy* and provides a framework to provide policies which promote the adaptability of Huntingdonshire’s built and natural environment to meet the challenge of climate change. The LDF will put the principles of sustainable development at the heart of decisions about spatial planning at a local level in Huntingdonshire.

**4.3** The Core Strategy will provide the local context for considering the long-term social, economic and environmental and resource impacts of development up to 2026. The following policy sets out the importance of sustainable development in spatial planning and the key criteria for assessing proposals.

### Policy CS 1

#### Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

All plans, policies and programmes of the Council and its partners, with a spatial element, and 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 adaptability to climate change. All aspects of the proposal will be considered including the design, implementation and function of development. The criteria are:

Making best use of land (including the remediation of contaminated land), buildings and existing infrastructure;

Minimising the use of non-renewable energy sources and construction materials and resources and maximising opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy sources and on-site renewable energy provision and improving energy efficiency;

Reducing water consumption and wastage, minimising the impact on water resources and water quality and managing flood risk;

5 World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

6 *Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005*

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Minimising and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, oxides of nitrogen, fine particles and other forms of pollution;

Encouraging waste reduction and recycling;

Preserving and enhancing the diversity and distinctiveness of Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and landscapes including the conservation and management of buildings, sites and areas of architectural, historic or archaeological importance and their setting;

Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the range and vitality of characteristic habitats and species to create a viable ecological network;

Promoting sustainable, well designed and accessible places that respect the setting and character of the surrounding area, that are adaptable to meet changing needs and reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime;

Promoting inclusive, cohesive and empowered communities and encouraging community involvement in the design, development and management of places;

Promoting health, well-being and active lifestyles by protecting, maintaining and enhancing green space and sport and recreational facilities;

Supporting the local economy and businesses by providing opportunities for lifelong learning and skills development and by enabling the integration of a mix of uses that provide employment opportunities suitable for local people; and

Minimising the need to travel, promoting and increasing opportunities to make necessary journeys by foot, cycle or public transport.

An assessment will be required to accompany any proposal for major development <sup>(7)</sup> to demonstrate how the criteria have been met.

## Reasoned Justification

**4.4** One of the most significant challenges in achieving sustainable development is climate change. Climate change is caused by greenhouse gases that are primarily produced through the burning of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels provide the basis for much of the energy and power used to heat our homes and work places and how we travel. It has far reaching effects on the planet and problems commonly associated with it include rising sea levels, rising temperatures and extreme weather patterns. Cambridgeshire County Council has produced a *Climate Change Strategy* (2005) which sets out how climate change affects Cambridgeshire and how it can be tackled locally through involving different partners and agencies. Huntingdonshire District Council's *Environment Strategy* (2008) identifies how climate change is likely to impact upon the District and details measures that the Council is undertaking to help tackle it. Therefore, although climate change is a global problem, tackling it at the local level is important. The District Council is committed to this by promoting an integrated system of plans and strategies. Tackling climate change locally can be achieved by minimising the impact of development on the environment through, for example, locating development in places well served by public transport and accessible services so the need to travel is minimised. It also means ensuring that the built and natural environment can adapt, and is

7 The standard definition of 10 or more dwellings or 1000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace is used for major development. For the complete definition please see the *General Development Procedure Order* (2006 as amended)

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more robust to the challenges of climate change. Spatial planning provides a key mechanism for delivering adaptation as it goes beyond traditional land use planning to incorporate different sectors such as health and transport and brings together different partners.

**4.5** Making the best use of land is a key objective of the planning system in achieving sustainable development. The national target of achieving 60% of all development on previously developed (brownfield) land has been set by central government. The *East of England Plan* includes a regional target of 60% although it is recognised that the extent to which this target can be achieved across the region will vary.

**4.6** Due to the largely rural nature of the District there are limited opportunities to develop on brownfield land in sustainable locations. The *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)* has identified the potential land supply across the District and found that brownfield land within the most sustainable locations of the Market Towns is particularly limited, the redevelopment of which will be prioritised in line with government guidance. By making best use of brownfield land in sustainable locations it will also maximise the use of existing infrastructure. However, the limited supply of brownfield land means it will also be necessary to make use of greenfield land in order to accommodate the growth required. In doing so the Council will ensure that only the most sustainable greenfield locations are used and that land is used efficiently by using appropriate densities and design principles.

**4.7** Traditional building materials, such as bricks and concrete are non-renewable, generate a lot of embodied energy when produced and can create a lot of waste. It is essential that the construction of buildings is taken into consideration at the early stages of the planning and design processes to ensure that opportunities for using renewable, recyclable and locally sourced materials are maximised. Construction and demolition waste represents the largest waste stream in the region. Sourcing materials locally and making use of recyclable and reclaimed materials wherever possible cuts down on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub>, one of the biggest contributors to climate change, emitted during their production and transportation. Locally sourced materials also contribute to sustainability by supporting local businesses. Further information on addressing sustainable construction issues has been produced by the Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons <sup>(8)</sup>.

**4.8** The planning system has an important role to play in helping reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, through the design of buildings, influencing where and how they are built and the travel mode used. There are four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Huntingdonshire – Huntingdon, Brampton, St Neots and Fenstanton. These have been identified because of their particularly high levels of nitrogen dioxide; the main source of which is vehicle emissions. Careful monitoring of the nitrogen dioxide levels occurs within these areas and the District Council is developing an *Air Quality Action Plan* which will focus on promoting cycling and walking and reducing the need to travel by car. The District Council has published its own Green Travel Plan to encourage its staff to use sustainable modes of transport to get to work and is committed to promoting sustainable transport. The planning system can promote sustainable travel, for example, by locating development in sustainable and accessible locations. Proposals for renewable energy provision will be encouraged in accordance with the *PPS1 supplement on Climate Change*, and will be considered in the Development Control Policies DPD. Development proposals for renewable energy will need to take into account the Council's *SPD on Wind Power*.

**4.9** The East of England is one of the driest regions in the country. As a result of climate change, weather patterns are likely to get more extreme with significantly drier summers but also increased risks of flooding, particularly in the winter. Reduced levels of rainfall in summer mean that potable water will become a dwindling resource. Significant housing and employment growth will have a large impact on water resources, as the amount of water used per person is increasing. It is important that water resources are used carefully to protect against potential shortages in the future.

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**4.10** Water resources also have significant ecological value providing habitats and food supplies for a variety of species. Huntingdonshire has a very sensitive natural environment and water is a very important feature with the River Great Ouse, Ouse Washes, and fens to the North and East of the District, particularly the Great Fen, providing important wetland habitats. The effects of climate change will mean that we have to manage surface water flood risk and water shortages by maintaining and creating flood water storage and reservoirs for potable water. Huntingdonshire is vulnerable to some of the likely impacts of climate change, particularly those parts close to, or below sea level and thus vulnerable to rising sea levels and tidal storm surges. It is therefore important to provide appropriate mechanisms that effectively minimise and manage flood risk. All development proposals will have to ensure that there is no additional risk of flooding and that water efficiency measures are incorporated.

**4.11** Huntingdonshire District Council is one of the best performing local authorities in the country for recycling. In order to maintain this position, new buildings need to be designed to reduce waste generation and encourage recycling by providing space for storage of recyclables and green waste awaiting collection.

**4.12** Huntingdonshire's towns, villages and countryside have very particular characteristics that reflect the unique geography and history of the District. The Spatial Portrait provides an overview of the landscape of Huntingdonshire. The *Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD* (June 2007) provides more detailed information on the landscape character areas of the District and the unique characters of its settlements.

**4.13** The Council is committed to ensuring a clean, green and attractive place. The *Design Guide SPD* (June 2007) provides information on how to improve the quality of new development. Conservation Area Character Statements aim to protect special character areas of particular settlements across the District. All development proposals will be expected to make a positive contribution to the built environment by employing the design principles in the Development Control Policies DPD when adopted and those in the *Design Guide SPD*.

**4.14** As described in the Spatial Portrait the District has a wide range of sites designated for their sensitive environmental character, flora and fauna and other environmental value. It is critically important that these areas are protected, maintained and where possible enhanced. Development should not adversely affect existing designated environmental areas and, but where this is unavoidable, it will need to provide appropriate mitigation measures. Development can also contribute to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure outside of these designated areas. Areas of Strategic Green Space Enhancement are set out in Policy 9 of the Core Strategy and the accompanying map, and the emerging Development Control Policies DPD contains a detailed policy on protecting and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure.

**4.15** It is important to ensure that our built and natural environment is able to adapt to climate change. Planning policies can ensure that adaptation is a key consideration in the planning and design of development. The Council uses the *Building For Life Standards* to assess the quality of new development and ensure that it meets the needs of local communities. Design and Access Statements are a national requirement for most planning applications and ensure that inclusive access is taken into account within a development proposal. All development proposals will have to demonstrate that they are designed appropriately to be inclusive and accessible.

**4.16** As set out in *Growing Success* the Council is committed to promoting safe, vibrant and inclusive communities. An important element of this is providing opportunities for people to be involved in development proposals. The *Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)* sets out how and when people can participate in the development of planning proposals. Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy the Council has undertaken extensive consultation to ensure that the plan reflects the issues important to local communities and is responsive to them. By encouraging community engagement the Council is also helping to promote community cohesion as people come together to have an input in the decision making process. In many cases development proposals can provide significant community benefits by providing new or improved infrastructure. This can also help promote community cohesion and can provide significant health benefits, for example, providing new or improved sport and recreational facilities or cycle/footpath links to encourage active lifestyles. It will need to be demonstrated that there have been opportunities for local communities to get involvement in the planning and design of development proposals in

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accordance with the *SCI*. The Council is producing an SPD on Planning Contributions and all major development proposals will have to demonstrate that are providing sufficient contributions towards infrastructure in accordance with the Core Strategy policy 10: Infrastructure requirements and the SPD once adopted.

**4.17** The draft *Local Economy Strategy (2008-2015)* identifies a need to maintain a strong local economy in order to promote the vision set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, the spatial elements of which are implemented by the LDF. Planning has a significant role to play in influencing the type of employment provided and the location of employment land. Provision of adequate employment development is a key part of creating sustainable communities. Development proposals for employment will have to demonstrate that they are in a sustainable location, are accessible and are of a high quality design.



## 5 The Spatial Strategy

**5.1** 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.

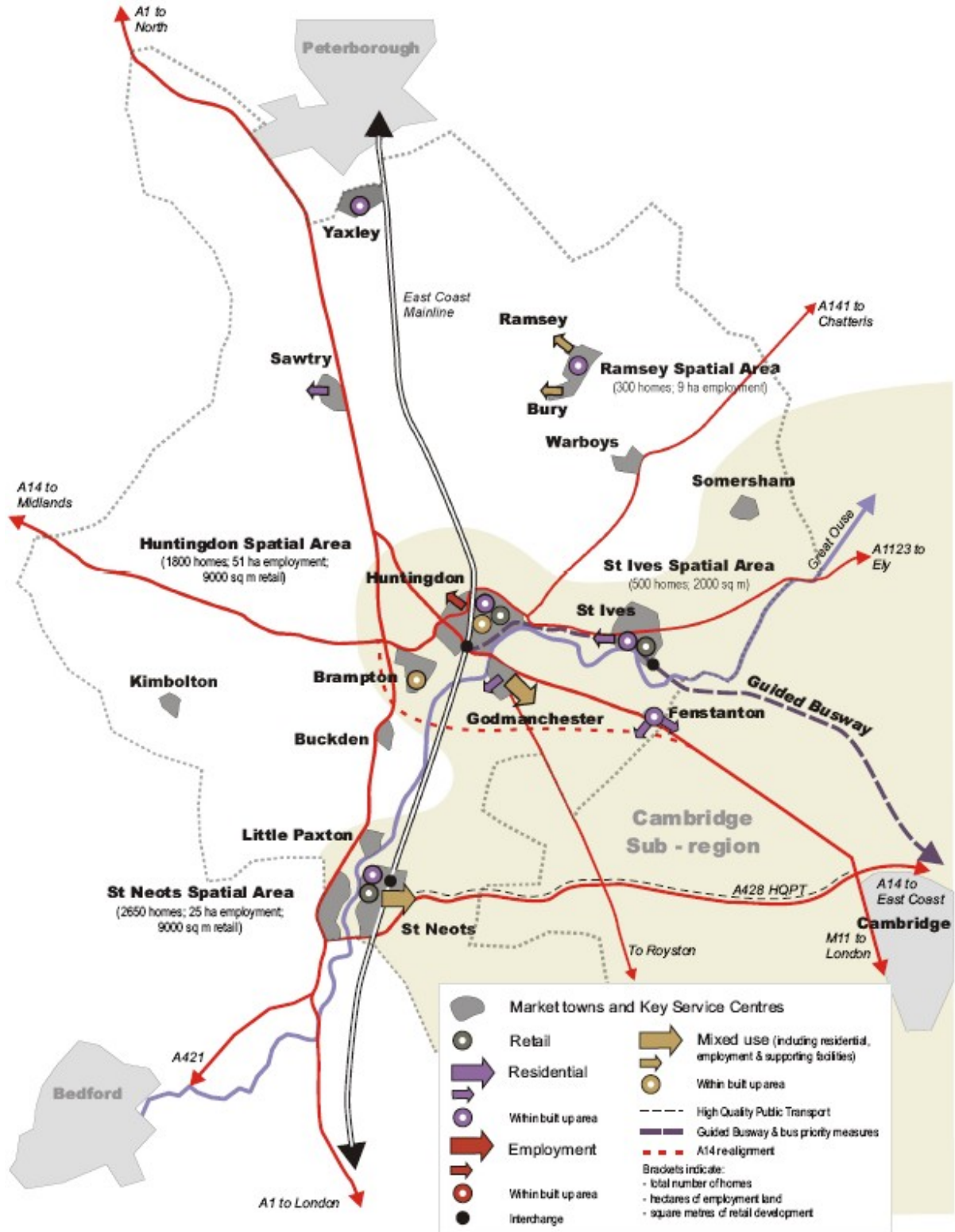
### Key Diagram

**5.2** The Key Diagram illustrates the locations and directions of growth for the new homes, employment land and retail floorspace identified in the Strategic Housing Development, Employment Land and Retail Development policies. It does not show sites allocated through the *Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (2002)*, or with existing planning permission, that have not yet been built. For each of the spatial planning areas the total new homes, employment land and retail floorspace are indicated. Also illustrated are planned and identified improvements to the strategic transport network.

# The Spatial Strategy

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Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Key Diagram.



# The Spatial Strategy

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## Strategic Housing Development

**5.3** 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 between settlements so that these nearby settlements benefit from greater sustainability than they would otherwise have. The range of services in the market towns is also supported by a larger population than is available in the towns themselves. Within the areas of the market towns and their nearby settlements that have this reciprocal relationship, existing and future residents enjoy greater opportunities to achieve a sustainable lifestyle. For this Strategy these areas have been identified and are referred to as Spatial Planning Areas. Due to the relationship between the settlements in the Spatial Planning Areas the Council has approached each as a whole as it is considered locations within any of the settlements offer similar opportunities for sustainable development. Cambridgeshire County Council has completed an 'Accession' Assessment of the locational and accessibility aspects of the spatial strategy details of which are contained in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

**5.4** The Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area includes Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester which already have a physical and functional relationship whilst maintaining different characters and being separated by green spaces and water courses. Together these settlements have around 31,000 residents<sup>(9)</sup>. 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 *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)* has identified significant opportunities for development, including previously developed land west of Huntingdon town centre and at RAF Brampton. The realignment of the A14 and proposed removal of the viaduct over the railway will help facilitate further development opportunities after 2015.

**5.5** The St Neots Spatial Planning Area includes St Neots and Little Paxton and has a combined population of around 31,200. 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 *SHLAA* has 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 may be an issue until the section between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet can be upgraded to a dual carriageway.

**5.6** 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. It also includes the business development areas immediately to the east of St Ives in Needingworth parish. 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 currently offers fewer opportunities for sustainable development options. Flooding is a major constraint to the south and east of the town. St Ives will see a significant improvement in accessibility with the completion of the guided busway.

**5.7** 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. As a result it 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.

**5.8** Guidance to assist with the identification of Key Service Centres is contained in the *East of England Plan*. The guidance indicates that there will be certain factors that will be common within Key Service Centres such as the existence of a primary school and related good access to secondary education, a doctor's surgery, a good range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a frequent public transport service to higher-order centres. The availability of this range of services and facilities means that these villages have potential for some sustainable development that other villages with less services do not. The Council has completed a Settlement Hierarchy background paper that identifies the villages in the district that have this range of services and can therefore be identified as Key Service Centres.

## Policy CS 2

### Strategic Housing Development

During the period, from 2001 to 2026, a total of at least 14000 homes will be provided in Huntingdonshire. This is to meet the requirement of at least 11200 homes from 2001 to 2021 identified in the East of England Plan plus at least an additional 2800 homes for the period from 2021 to 2026. These equate to a target development rate of at least 560 homes per year.

From 2001 to 2006	2890	That have been completed
From 2006 to 2026	4265	That will come from existing allocations in the Local Plan <sup>(1)</sup>
	1345	That will come from non-allocated sites that have planning permission or from urban capacity
	5500	That will be provided in the locations identified below
Total	14000	

1. For more information please refer to the Housing Trajectory in the Implementation Section

Of the 5500 homes for which locations are identified, at least 1575 homes will be on previously developed land and about 3925 homes on greenfield land. About 2200 of these new homes will be provided as affordable housing. Provision will be monitored 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 whilst observing environmental designations and constraints, it is proposed that strategic housing growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where at least 1800 homes will be provided. Of these, at least 1000 homes will be on previously developed land, about 800 homes will be on greenfield land and about 720 homes will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

In a significant mixed use redevelopment in Huntingdon 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 a mixed use redevelopment in Brampton on previously developed land;

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In Godmanchester as part of a significant mixed use development on greenfield land 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 2650 homes will be provided. Of these at least 150 homes will be on previously developed land, about 2500 homes will be on greenfield land and about 1060 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 the St Ives Spatial Planning Area where at least 500 homes will be provided. Of these, at least 100 homes will be on previously developed land, about 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;

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

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where at least 300 homes will be provided. Of these at least 250 homes will be on previously developed land, about 50 will be on greenfield land and about 120 will be affordable. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

In an employment-led mixed use redevelopments to the west of the town, to the north of the town and redevelopment of previously developed land within the built-up area of the town.

Outside the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of Fenstanton, Sawtry and Yaxley, about 250 homes will be provided. Of these at least 75 homes will be on previously developed land, about 175 will be on greenfield land and about 100 will be affordable. This provision will be made in all the following general locations, with actual levels being set out in the Planning Proposals DPD:

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

**5.9** The *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, as identified in the policy. 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 the highest average annual build rate between 2001 and 2021 or between 2006 and 2021 be used. For Huntingdonshire this means using the 560 annual average to provide for at least a further 2,800 new homes between 2021 and 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 14,000 new homes with 5450 to be allocated.

**5.10** The strategy is based on a combination of options. The Cambridge Sub-region is identified in the *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 annual rate 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 Employment Land Review, and the construction of a viable new District Centre which will complement the town centre. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts. Details of Atkins' *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment* are given in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

**5.11** The approach to affordable housing has been informed by the *Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey (2003)*, the update of that survey from 2006, the recently published *Cambridge Housing Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment* and policy in the *East of England Plan*.

**5.12** 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 of 60%. 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.

**5.13** Other housing will come forward on 'windfall' sites within the built up areas of the towns and villages in line with the scales of development set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. This will be in excess of the 5500 homes planned for through the strategic development opportunities identified above.

**5.14** The SHLAA has considered the potential suitability of sites in market towns and key service centres and while there are sites in and around most settlements capable of being developed for moderate scale development these should accord with the settlement hierarchy. Sites capable of accommodating moderate scale developments will be considered in light of continued monitoring of housing delivery and where appropriate will be allocated in the Planning Proposals DPD along with sites in the locations identified in this policy.

**5.15** The built-up area is considered to be the existing built form excluding buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement, gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, especially where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village.

## Settlement Hierarchy

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

**5.17** 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.

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## Policy CS 3

### The Settlement Hierarchy

The hierarchy identifies;

Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as 'Market Towns' in which development schemes of all scales may be appropriate within the built-up area;

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 and infilling may be appropriate within the built-up area;

Abbotsley, Abbots Ripton, Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Alwalton, Bluntisham, Brington, Broughton, Buckworth, Bury - Holy Cross<sup>(10)</sup>, 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>(11)</sup>, Molesworth, Needingworth, Offord Cluny, Offord D'Arcy, Oldhurst, Old Weston, Perry, Pidley, Pondersbridge (part)<sup>(12)</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>(13)</sup>, Waresley, Water Newton, Winwick, Wistow, Woodhurst, Woodwalton, Wyton-on-the-Hill, and Yelling as Smaller Settlements in which residential infilling will be appropriate within the built-up area; and

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 strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside. Such development will be prescribed in the Development Control Policies DPD.

Development proposals of a larger scale may be allowed where site specific circumstances demonstrate that this secures the most sustainable option for the site. Schemes will be judged on individual merit taking into account the availability of a range of services and public transport appropriate to support the form of the housing to be provided and performance against the criteria set out in Policy CS1. In Smaller Settlements development proposals in excess of minor scale as defined in this policy will require strong justification of how the proposal would make the most efficient use of land and existing infrastructure and how a wide range of services could be accessed by sustainable modes.

As an indication of the scale of development likely to be acceptable the following definitions should be used:

Large scale development: 60 or more dwellings

Moderate scale development: 10-59 dwellings

Minor scale development: up to 9 dwellings

10 The built-up area of Bury village around Holy Cross church east of Bury Bridge

11 The built up area adjoining London Road to the south of St Ives, and lying within the parishes of Fenstanton and Hemingford Grey

12 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Fenland)

13 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring Authority (Peterborough)

Residential infilling: up to 3 dwellings

## Reasoned Justification

**5.18** In the Cambridge Sub-Region, the *East of England Plan* 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.

**5.19** The *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.

**5.20** Huntingdonshire has a great many other villages of varying size and character all offering different levels of services and facilities to their residents. These 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.

**5.21** The countryside contains a number of hamlets, groups of houses and individual properties typical of an historic and 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.

**5.22** The Council has produced a background paper on the *Settlement Hierarchy* and the 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.

**5.23** Policy CS2 focuses on identifying locations for strategic scales of growth. However, non-strategic housing developments are likely to come forward during the plan period. The indicative scales of development set out in the Settlement Hierarchy are intended to guide the volume of growth likely to be acceptable in different types of location and to protect the overall strategy of focusing growth in the Market Towns.

**5.24** Large scale development is defined as being that of 60 dwellings or more or 2 ha or more of land. Within Huntingdonshire this scale of development is sufficient to have a significant impact on the settlement where it is proposed.

**5.25** Moderate scale growth is defined as being that between 10-59 dwellings, or broadly up to 2 ha of land based on PPS3's recommended minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Proposals of this scale can be sensitively developed within Key Service Centres and occasionally can be integrated into some of the larger Smaller Settlements which benefit from a wider range of services.



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**5.26** Minor scale growth accords with the national definition. Residential infilling is defined as the development of a small site within the existing built-up area of a settlement by up to 3 dwellings.

## Addressing Housing Need

**5.27** 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.

**5.28** *PPS3* sets out up-to-date definitions of affordable housing, distinguishing between social rented and intermediate housing tenures which will be used when considering proposals. 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. In order to add to the definition for Huntingdonshire, intermediate housing is housing for people who may not receive sufficient priority to be offered a social rented property but whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to access market priced housing. Rents for intermediate rented housing should not exceed 30% of net median household incomes in Huntingdonshire and housing costs (mortgage and rent) for low cost home ownership (shared equity), should not exceed 30% of gross median household incomes in Huntingdonshire.

**5.29** 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 has recently been completed. Although it is difficult to compare previous surveys and this assessment directly due to differences in the methodologies used, the findings support the previous needs surveys. The affordable housing need identified is well in excess of that which is likely to come forward under existing policies. In such circumstances where need outstrips supply, the use of rural exceptions sites to provide schemes with only affordable housing is justified.

### Policy CS 4

#### Affordable Housing in Development

In order to address the need for affordable housing in the district 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 smaller settlements as defined in the settlement hierarchy.

Provision should be made in the form of free serviced land. The affordable housing provision should comprise at least 70% social rented accommodation with the balance being provided as Intermediate housing. These proportions may be varied where justified and with agreement with the Council.

In determining the amount of affordable housing to be delivered, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account.

Where appropriate for specific sites, criteria setting out variations in the form the contribution should take, including tenure will be provided in the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Additional detail will be provided in the Developer Contributions to Affordable Housing SPD.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.30** The *East of England Plan* includes a target of an average of 35% to be achieved across the region, which 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. Similarly some sites will provide a lower level of affordable housing due to specific site conditions.

**5.31** The *SHMA* identifies need for Huntingdonshire of 1205 affordable homes per year for the first five years, and then once the backlog is cleared, an ongoing need for an additional 534 affordable homes per year. Over the next 15 years this is equivalent to the affordable homes requirement being more than the total proposed housebuilding targets. This level of provision is clearly impossible to achieve. This evidence of overwhelming need further justifies the levels of affordable housing being sought, which are consistent with the target set by the *East of England Plan*.

**5.32** *PPS3* sets 15 dwellings as a nationally accepted level for the threshold at which a site should have to contribute affordable housing. It is considered that this threshold is appropriate in Market Towns and Key Service Centres in Huntingdonshire. 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 at which affordable housing is sought is lowered to three dwellings. It is also considered appropriate to include site thresholds expressed in both number of homes and in land area in order to promote the most efficient use of land.

## Rural Exceptions Housing

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

**5.34** In the settlement hierarchy most new housing will be built in the Market Towns and to a lesser extent the 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, is made, as long as it is for affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.

## Policy CS 5

### Rural Exceptions Housing

In exceptional circumstances, affordable housing development will be considered acceptable within or adjacent to the built up area of a Key Service Centre or Smaller Settlement subject to the following criteria:

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The proposal is limited in number and type of housing to that which can be justified by evidence of need from a local needs survey for affordable housing arising from people who are either currently or formerly resident, have an existing family or employment connection or some other connection as agreed with the Council, in the individual settlement or adjacent settlements;

There is reasonable access to at least a basic range of services appropriate to the form of housing proposed;

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

## Reasoned Justification

**5.35** In settlements that are unlikely to see significant housing development, housing need may go unmet if left to normal market forces and the proportion of affordable housing sought through policy CS4. In order to try to tackle housing need in these locations exceptions to the normal housing policies are made for development of purely affordable housing. It is considered appropriate to include Key Service Centres in the settlements able to take advantage of this policy because this is an enabling policy and the Council is determined to tackle housing need across the district and as such it would be wrong to artificially exclude settlements that are rural in character and where housing need may need addressing.

**5.36** It is considered important that in order for occupiers of new properties to be able to live as sustainably as possible they should 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. The level of services available locally, along with the form and location of affordable housing, will be informed by Parish Plans where they are available.

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

**5.37** 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. *Circular 01/2006* defines Gypsies and Travellers while *Circular 04/2007* defines Travelling Showpeople.

**5.38** 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.

**5.39** The East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) is preparing a single issue review of the *East of England Plan* which will address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers across the region. EERA published a draft policy which was subject to consultation from February to May 2008. The draft policy sets the number of additional permanent residential pitches to be provided in Huntingdonshire at 20 pitches for the period up to 2011 and thereafter provision to be made for an annual 3% increase, to be calculated from overall planned provision in 2011.

**5.40** This is generally consistent with the *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)* for the wider Cambridge Sub-Region which was published in May 2006; it identified the need in Huntingdonshire for the period to 2011 to be for an additional 15 to 25 pitches. 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.

**5.41** 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.

## Policy CS 6

### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

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 number of pitches should be appropriate to the size of the site and the availability of infrastructure and services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy. The following criteria will guide the provision of sites:

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

the development should not adversely impact on the character of the landscape and appropriate landscaping and boundaries should be provided;

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 an adequate water supply and appropriate means of sewage disposal which meets national standards;

the health and safety of occupants are not put at risk including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality and unacceptable noise (as for example close to trunk roads) or unacceptable flood risk so that the quality of the environment is at the same acceptable standard as for the settled community;

there should be adequate space for operational needs including the parking, turning and servicing of vehicles.

### Reasoned Justification

**5.42** *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.

**5.43** Additionally, "*Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide*" (DCLG May 2008) sets out the features needed to help ensure a site is successful, easy to manage and maintain, including site location, layout, size and the services and facilities needed to make it operate effectively.

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## Economic Development

**5.44** The *Employment Land Review (ELR)* and the draft *Local Economic Strategy* both identify the strong economic performance that Huntingdonshire has enjoyed recently. Both the number of jobs and the number of businesses being created have been well above the national and regional averages. The *East of England Plan* identifies a target for jobs growth in 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.

**5.45** The *ELR* looks 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 of the two approaches considered planning for a 'low carbon future' is the most appropriate model and that at least 66ha of land for employment uses should be identified. The Strategy aspires towards the 'Low Carbon Future' approach, as this is recognised as the most sustainable, making the most efficient use of land and limiting impact of climate change. However the need to retain flexibility and ensure an adequate supply of deliverable land in locations where significant housing growth will be delivered is recognised and so a balance between the two approaches is taken.

**5.46** 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, Brampton and St Neots.

**5.47** Alconbury airfield has been identified as a strategic employment site in the saved structure plan Policy P2/3 in recognition of the warehouse commitment on this site that is still outstanding. As at 2008 it is being used for a variety of manufacturing and storage uses with temporary permission. The existing commitment is not likely to be implemented and the future potential of Alconbury Airfield (together with 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.

### Policy CS 7

#### Employment Land

At least 85ha of new land for employment 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 15ha 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, whilst observing environmental designations and constraints, strategic employment growth will be located:

In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area where 51ha of land will be provided, of which at least 13ha will be on previously developed land and about 38ha will be on greenfield land. Provision will be made in the following general locations:

In a mixed use redevelopment in Huntingdon, for B1 <sup>(14)</sup>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;

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 25ha 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 which might come forward during the plan period.

In the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area where at least 9ha of land, of which at least 2ha will be on previously developed land and about 7ha will be on greenfield land, will be provided in the following general locations:

In an employment led mixed use redevelopment for B1 and B2 uses to the west of Bury;

In a mixed use development in a previously identified location to the north west of Ramsey.

Outside of the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of Little Paxton, Sawtry and Yaxley, on existing commitments which might come forward during the plan period.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.48** This approach is based on the *ELR* which concludes that the most sustainable option is the provision of at least 66ha of additional employment land by 2026. Past development has been at various densities and the move to more efficient use of land and the nature of the locations that will be identified (less warehousing land for instance) indicate that it will be possible to achieve much higher job densities than before and hence the need for less land.

**5.49** The Council's *Economic Strategy* is promoting jobs that will feed off the growth in the high-tech economy centred around the Cambridge area and is seeking higher quality, more sustainable locations to achieve this. These will tend to be closer to the town centres and built at higher densities and often on previously developed industrial sites. Other local jobs will be created in the retail, leisure and tourism sectors as a result of population growth. The area of land identified has, however, been increased to take into account a number of factors. To reflect the main market preference for new employment land, the potential locations available and as Huntingdon has been identified as having the best balance between jobs and homes, it is considered appropriate to identify locations for additional local employment opportunities in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. This would help to ensure an adequate supply of deliverable sites around Huntingdon. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts. Details of the *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment* are given in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail.

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14 For definitions of all use classes refer to the Use Classes Order revised 2006

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**5.50** In St Neots, the target of 25ha of employment land is higher than the requirement identified in the ELR, in order to have a balance in the Spatial Strategy with its emphasis on substantial residential growth in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area. This also reflects the Spatial Strategy Options Assessment which noted that in most of the proposed growth options considered, the housing provision for St Neots was relatively large compared to the employment provision. Given that the proportion of residents working within the town is already high, there were concerns that this could lead to an increase in out-commuting. The higher level will help ensure more balanced communities with less out-commuting as the employment land will be integrated with new housing development and will maximise opportunities for residents to live and work in close proximity.

**5.51** St Ives has outstanding commitments for employment which are considered to be sufficient to match the growth and market pressure for land.

**5.52** There have been significant efforts to bring forward regeneration projects for Ramsey in recent years and to stimulate appropriate employment. To bring the supply of employment land into better balance with prospective demand the *ELR* recommended adjustments to the allocations put forward in the 1995 Local Plan for Ramsey. Therefore new directions of growth and approximate land areas involved are identified in the policy.

**5.53** Little Paxton, Sawtry and Yaxley have significant outstanding commitments which are considered to be sufficient to meet expected growth and market pressures for land.

## Retail

**5.54** Huntingdonshire faces a number of challenges over the plan period in terms of retailing and the District's town centres. These have been identified as the need to retain more of the retail expenditure in the District to the benefit of the town centres and the wider economy of the District, to continue to improve the environment and public realm in town centres and to provide opportunities for residents to access town centre services sustainably.

**5.55** National planning policy for town centres requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused. Huntingdon and St Neots, being the main foci for growth, will take the larger proportion of retail development. Retail development in the other key settlements is important for maintaining services, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining retail expenditure.

### Policy CS 8

#### Land for Retail Development

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:

At least 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace will be located 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;

At least 9,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace will be located 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;

At least 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace will be located in St Ives concentrated in the town centre; and

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

## Reasoned Justification

**5.56** The *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study (HRAS)* was completed in September 2005 and updated in 2007. The Study (2005) included forecasts of floorspace requirements for both the comparison and convenience retail sectors over several different time periods, and contained advice on how best to accommodate identified requirements. The Update (2007) gives a range of comparison retail floorspace requirements for Huntingdonshire ranging between 13,900m<sup>2</sup> and 20,000m<sup>2</sup>. Of these it was recommended that the higher of these two should be the Council's policy target in order to claw back lost retail expenditure to other centres.

**5.57** The scale of convenience retail floorspace requirements identified was modest at around 3,900m<sup>2</sup>, which was to be predominantly generated by expenditure increases after 2011 and so there was no immediate need to identify sites for further major foodstore provision in the short term. Although it was noted that after 2011 it is likely that further development will be required. A discount foodstore in Huntingdon town centre could be supported on grounds of increasing choice and there may be scope for other schemes increasing the diversity of choice in individual centres.

**5.58** In order to recognise the comparatively strong retail and leisure operator demand for locations in Huntingdon, and the relative size and growth potential, retail expenditure available and level of operator interest in St Neots, the amount of floorspace was distributed in equal amounts to these two centres. The residue was directed to St Ives where there is already a relatively strong representation of the comparison goods sector. Further retail growth in Ramsey would be treated in the same way as other key settlements.

**5.59** Huntingdon is the higher order centre within the District and market demand for further retail development is greatest. The implementation of the Chequers Court Phase II scheme in Huntingdon town centre is the Council's top retail priority as this is a previously developed site within the existing town centre. Delivery of this scheme is expected to attract additional comparison goods retailers to Huntingdon offering a greater diversity of shopping opportunities which is critically important for the retention of comparison retail expenditure. Compared to the other Market Towns, Huntingdon has more opportunities for use of previously developed land in and adjacent to the town centre to strengthen the range of retail provision in locations most easily accessed by sustainable modes of transport.

**5.60** St Neots has been identified as the location for the majority of residential growth. Easy access to shops and services by sustainable modes of transport will be vital to promoting this as a sustainable community. The town centre should benefit from increased consumer demand and expenditure and opportunities should be maximised to provide additional retail floorspace within the town centre to reduce residents' need to travel elsewhere to shop. To promote social cohesion the urban extension will include a new district centre incorporating shops and other services that residents will require on a day-to-day basis. This should complement the town centre not compete with it.

**5.61** St Ives has many specialist independent retailers and competes well with other market towns. In order to maintain its competitiveness a modest amount of comparison floorspace is considered appropriate.

**5.62** Ramsey has an outstanding convenience floorspace commitment in the form of a new supermarket at the northern end of the town which was taken into account in the *Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study* before the figure of 3,900m<sup>2</sup> was recommended.

**5.63** The Development Control Policies DPD will provide more detailed guidance on the preferred scale and location of retail development, including the focus on town centre shopping and provision of local shopping facilities.



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**5.64** Future retail demand is particularly difficult to predict beyond about a 10 year horizon as it is such a dynamic part of the economy. Thus, it is very important to monitor development and review provision requirements.

## Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement

**5.65** Huntingdonshire's countryside needs to respond to changing economic and environmental circumstances. Improving the ecological, visual and recreational value of the countryside brings environmental, social and health benefits. It 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 green space is a priority for the Council as set out in *Growing Success*, the Corporate Plan. Green space forms an important part of the District's Green Infrastructure which can come under considerable pressure as a result of new development. Green Infrastructure is essential to enhancing biodiversity by providing important green linkages for species and helping to protect against habitat fragmentation.

**5.66** Green infrastructure and particularly green space has an important role to play in tackling the effects of climate change. Green space provides important cooling, shading and filtering effects that will become even more significant as temperatures rise as predicted. Trees and woodland in particular have a role to play as they store carbon dioxide and intercept rainfall which can help to reduce erosion and prevent flooding.

**5.67** The following areas of 'Strategic Green Space Enhancement' reflect the targets for habitat creation identified in the *Structure Plan* and the Biodiversity Partnership for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's *50 Year Wildlife Vision*. They also reflect the Green Infrastructure Initiatives set out in the Cambridgeshire Horizons Green Infrastructure Strategy. The process of improving and linking these corridors and habitats is known as 'strategic green space enhancement.'

### Policy CS 9

#### Strategic Green Space Enhancement

Areas of Strategic Green space Enhancement, along with new and enhanced green corridors connecting them with areas of population growth in order to form a coherent network are identified as follows and depicted in the figure below 'Policy CS9 - Strategic Greenspace Enhancement':

The Great Fen Project area with links to the Peterborough Green Parks, Ramsey and Huntingdon;

The Grafham Water / Brampton Woodlands area with links to Huntingdon and St Neots; and

The Great Ouse Valley area with links between St Neots and Earith.

Within these areas and along the corridors coordinated action will be taken via consultation with statutory and other agencies to:

safeguard existing and potential sites of nature conservation value, including ancient woodlands and historic landscape features;

create new wildlife habitats;

contribute to diversification of the local economy and tourist development through enhancement of existing and provision of new facilities;

create appropriate access for a wide range of users to enjoy the countryside; and  
contribute where possible to enhanced flood protection.

It is particularly important that resources are concentrated in these areas in the early part of the plan period in order to create opportunities for additional outdoor recreation facilities for the growth in population expected and the early creation of new green corridors.

In the longer term the enhancement of the following green corridors will provide additional corridors and connections with key areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and enhancement of a coherent network:

Grafham Water area with the Great Fen Project area;

The Great Fen project area with Needingworth Wet Fen (Fen Edge project) and South Peterborough Green Park;

The Great Ouse and the East of St Neots area with the proposed Forest of South Cambridgeshire.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.68** Huntingdonshire is a predominantly rural area with a variety of green spaces including rivers, gardens, parks, farmland and woods which make up a large proportion of the District. These green spaces support a great variety of plants and animals. Focusing countryside enhancement efforts on the areas identified in Policy 9 will give maximum scope for consolidating and linking important habitats, and enable complementary access improvements to be pursued. Within the defined areas, it will be important to ensure that development proposals do not conflict with this vision and, when development does occur, that the design, landscaping and any community benefits contribute to its realisation.

**5.69** Cambridgeshire Horizons' *Green Infrastructure Strategy* is a valuable source of information that seeks to enhance, reinstate and create 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.

**5.70** Green infrastructure is defined as a network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces (including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens) woodlands (including Ancient Woodlands) and green-way links. It offers opportunities to provide for a number of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement. Policy CS9 aims to promote green corridors and habitat linkages within and between the identified areas to form a network of connected green space.

**5.71** Ensuring a clean, green and attractive environment is a key priority of the Council. One of the aims in the Corporate Plan *Growing Success* is to maintain existing areas of open and green space and provide strategic new areas. This is supported by the *Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)* which aims to promote efficient resource use and an environment that is protected from and adaptable to the effects of climate change. Policy 9 implements these spatial elements of *Growing Success* and the SCS.

**5.72** The Great Fen Project encompasses an area that incorporates Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen. Woodwalton Fen is a RAMSAR site of international significance and both Fens are important National Nature Reserves. The project involves a major initiative of landscape scale restoration in partnership with other agencies to protect and enhance Fenland habitats and to link Woodwalton Fen and Holme Fen National Nature Reserves.

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A masterplan and management plan will be produced to balance the need to enhance biodiversity, provide areas for public access and countryside recreation, provide visitor facilities, undertake hydrological engineering and provide flood storage and further economic activity compatible with the aims of the project.

**5.73** The area of strategic green space created through the Great Fen Project will complement the rapid rise in population in the northern part of the London Stansted Cambridge Peterborough growth area. Additionally it will contribute to the economic regeneration of north east Huntingdonshire in and around the market town of Ramsey where the local economy has been in decline in parallel with the decline in the agricultural workforce as farming becomes more efficient. It will also enable habitats to adapt to the long term effects of climate change. Policies will be included in the Development control DPD to promote and control development within the project area and surrounding area to ensure that the restoration is enabled and not prejudiced.

**5.74** Grafham Water offers opportunities for water and land based recreation together. It also has scope for the creation of wildlife habitats and better links to nearby woodlands such as Brampton Wood as well as other links to green space, such as Hinchingsbrooke Country Park for people and wildlife through green corridors incorporating sustainable access routes where possible. A major focus of initiatives in this area will be the provision of improved linkages for biodiversity corridors and habitats. Improvements to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park will be identified in the emerging Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Existing habitats and species will be protected and the scope for wider enhancement and development considered. The County Biodiversity Action Plan provides guidance on specific species and habitats to target.

**5.75** 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. Major expansion is scheduled at Paxton Pits nature reserve. A focus of initiatives in the Great Ouse Valley will be enhanced access for all and by sustainable means including foot, cycle, horse and boat. Gaps in the network should be addressed including suitable bridging points where feasible. Existing and new routes should act as biodiversity corridors as well as access points. The demands of access will need to be carefully managed to protect sensitive environments and balanced with the need to promote and enhance the local diversity. Again, the County Biodiversity Action Plan provides guidance on specific species and habitats to target.

**5.76** As emphasised in policy CS9 by the inclusion of the green corridor to the Forest of South Cambridgeshire, links with green infrastructure initiatives outside of the District are important. The aim of policy CS9 is to create a well connected network of green corridors which integrates into the wider green corridor network of neighbouring Districts.

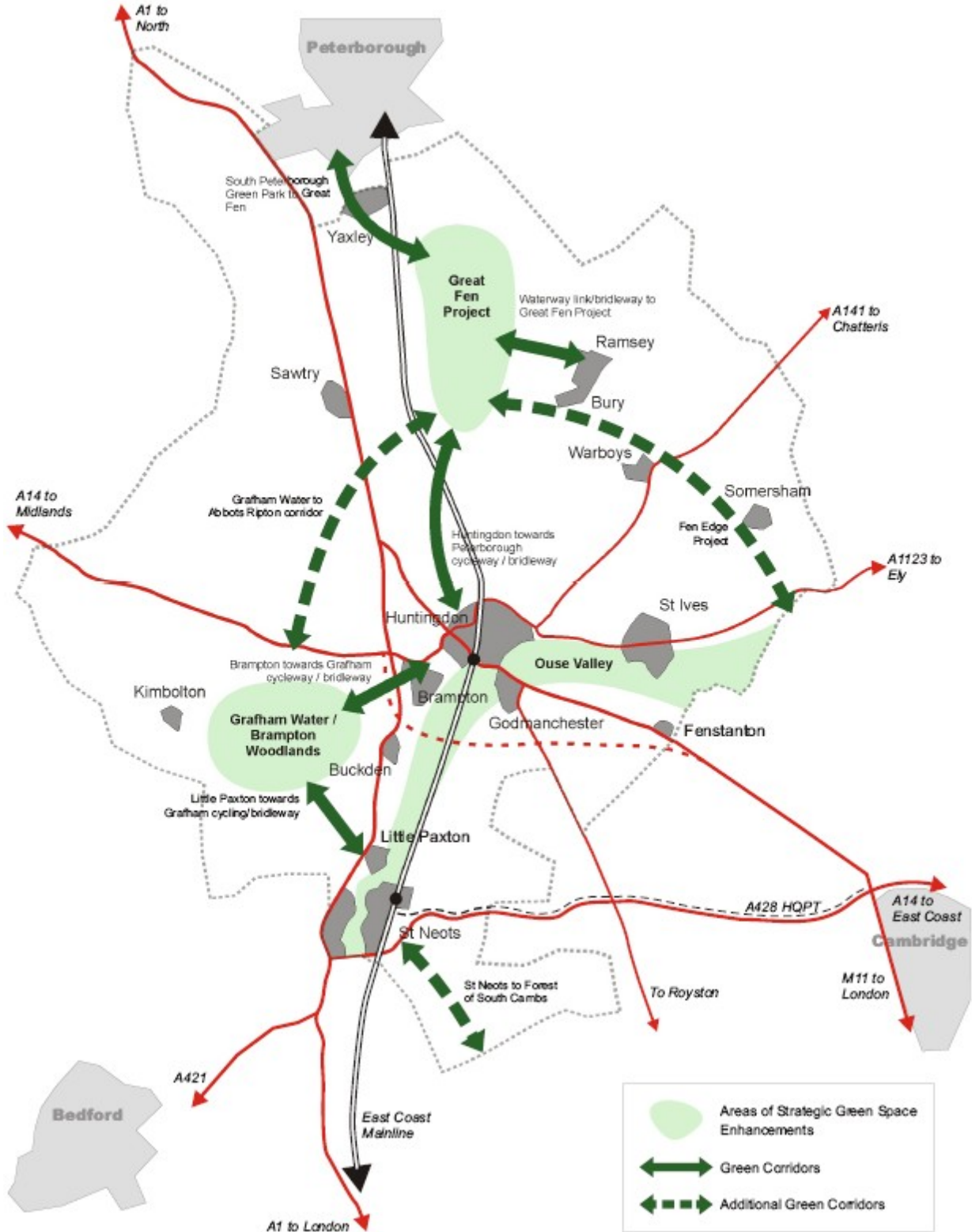
**5.77** Other types of green space outside of the identified strategic areas of green space enhancement also make an important contribution to biodiversity and the character and attractiveness of places. Although not identified in the same way as strategic areas of green space enhancement, these additional areas make up part of the green infrastructure of Huntingdonshire. Such areas may be locally recognised and designated, for example a County Wildlife Site, or they may simply be footpaths or roadside verges. These areas are important to protecting and enriching biodiversity as they provide important green corridors and are home to a variety of species. They also provide opportunities for people to interact with and learn about wildlife on their doorsteps and, in conjunction with open space and recreational facilities, encourage healthy and active lifestyles by giving people opportunities to walk, cycle and play. The Council is committed to ensuring the promotion of quality open space and has carried out an audit and assessment of open space provision in the District. Development proposals will be required to contribute to open space provision and should not entail the loss or partial loss of open space in accordance with the emerging policies on sports and recreational facilities and open space in the Development Control Policies DPD. Standards will be set out in the Development Control Policies DPD regarding the provision of open space required from new development.

**5.78** All policies within the LDF will be carefully assessed as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process which aims to ensure that policies are sustainable. There are a number of sustainability objectives which relate to green space and a summary of the conclusions drawn from the Sustainability Appraisal can be found in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail. An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out to ensure that the Core Strategy will not have significant effects on sites of international importance such as Woodwalton Fen.

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## Policy CS9 - Strategic Greenspace Enhancement



## Infrastructure and Implementation

**5.79** The delivery of growth and development is dependent on the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure. The ability to deliver infrastructure and the timing of its delivery are critical determinants of the scale, location and timing of development. It will be important to ensure that infrastructure is provided ahead of development to safeguard against adverse environmental impact. Transport infrastructure and services play a key role in creating sustainable travel patterns to, from and within development areas. Equally water, energy and green infrastructure are all important requirements in achieving development which is sustainable. Social infrastructure must be provided that can meet the emerging demands from new communities and anticipated changes in the existing population.

### Existing Delivery Mechanisms

**5.80** The District Council's delivery roles and responsibilities sit within a wider partnership structure operating from the local to the regional and even national level. The Cambridgeshire Together Board has jointly established a *Vision for Cambridgeshire* to be a county of strong, growing, prosperous and inclusive communities supported by excellent services where people can fulfil their potential, live longer, have healthier lifestyles and influence decision-making.

**5.81** Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) will be the three year delivery plan for this vision. The LAA, alongside the Action Plans developed by other key partnerships, will focus on delivery of outcomes that will make a difference on the ground. In order to fulfil the requirement of having a LAA framework that builds on the work of district-based LSPs, the main priorities identified in Cambridgeshire's five Community Strategies have been consolidated and integrated into the LAA.

**5.82** Growth in the Cambridge sub-region is coordinated by Cambridgeshire Horizons whose aim is to drive forward the development of new communities and infrastructure in the area. To ensure this is done in an integrated, coherent and consistent manner a Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee has been established to provide a strategic mechanism for each authority and Cambridgeshire Horizons to explore the issues relating to growth. Delivery boards currently exist for Northstowe and (Cambridge) Urban Fringes as these will see significant growth; consideration is being given to the establishment of a Market Towns delivery board too.

**5.83** The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) involves representatives from agencies including Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Constabulary, environmental agencies, local businesses and voluntary sector organisations. These agencies provide important services to the public such as health care, community safety, transport, education, environmental protection, leisure, economic development and planning. These agencies have teamed up to work together more effectively to tackle the 'big issues' in the area and improve quality of life. They do this by 'joining-up' their activities to make the best use of resources and by sharing knowledge and expertise.

**5.84** The Cambridgeshire Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Consortium was established in 2004 and, as at June 2008, 22 infrastructure organisations were members including Councils for Voluntary Service, Directions Plus, Care Network, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Cambridgeshire Independent Advice Centre and Cambridgeshire ACRE. The Consortium's main role has been to identify gaps in VCS infrastructure service provision and deliver a funded programme of improvements linked to such prioritised objectives as ICT and governance.

**5.85** The lead agencies in the delivery of transport projects are Cambridgeshire County Council, the Highways Agency, the Department for Transport and Network Rail. Cambridgeshire County Council delivers projects through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Funding for the LTP is obtained from a number of sources the major ones being:

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- Central Government Integrated Transport block
- Developer funding
- Growth Areas Fund (GAF)
- Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)
- Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)
- Kickstart Bus Funding (DfT)

**5.86** The Highways Agency is responsible for directing funds to the strategic road network, which would include the proposed improvements to the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton and the A428 Caxton to St Neots.

## Infrastructure Requirements

**5.87** Infrastructure is provided by a variety of commercial and public bodies through a range of different funding and delivery mechanisms. Decisions about the prioritisation and delivery are taken at different levels varying from the national level, through regional to the local level, or at a combination of these. As a result coordination can be problematic. Decisions relating to development contributions and prioritisation are taken at the local level with regard being had to other funding and delivery mechanisms.

**5.88** Huntingdonshire District Council's approach to funding delivery will be set out in a Local Investment Framework (LIF) for the District commissioned in March 2008. Initial research for this has informed this section. This approach will allow consideration and understanding of potential funding available to underpin delivery of the spatial strategy and establish the relevant bodies and agencies roles and responsibilities who will be instrumental in delivering the strategy and act together as a delivery vehicle. This will determine:

- the specific local and regional infrastructure requirements identified on a phased basis
- a cost plan for this provision
- the likely scale of public sector funding for these works
- the level of contribution from private sector development
- the technical justification for these levels of contribution
- the potential funding gaps between infrastructure requirements and likely available public and private funding sources
- proposals for land value capture mechanisms, delivery mechanisms and accountable body arrangements
- guidance on the inter-agency approach and roles and responsibility of each of the public sector bodies including the local authorities, infrastructure providers and delivery agencies
- the future monitoring and review process

**5.89** The provision of infrastructure will be dependent on significant levels of mainstream public sector funding sources (LTP, LSC) as well as Growth Area Funding (GAF) and Community Infrastructure Funding (CIF). Justifying the level of expenditure will require a comprehensive business plan-led solution that links the infrastructure provision to growth trajectories. A principal concern is the relatively short timescale of public sector funding programmes, for instance three years for GAF funding cycles. To add to the complexity, utilities works and funding are subject to their own five year Asset Management Plans.

**5.90** The Core Strategy has been determined following consultation with the bodies responsible for infrastructure delivery. Whilst the views of those bodies have been used in testing the strategy for robustness of delivery and underpin the strategy, there remain some areas which will require further detailed evidence based assessment in consultation with the responsible bodies and agencies. The principal reason for this is differences in the planning cycles of some organisations and the Core Strategy. This is a particular issue for utility companies because the regulators do not permit them to spend unlimited sums on the provision of infrastructure that may or may not be required. The utility companies must justify their proposals and the impact this will have on their customers. Essentially, the utility companies plan the strategic works that need to be undertaken in five year periods. The

decisions taken are often based on assumptions regarding growth trajectories, either sub-regionally or at specific locations, and whilst the overall provision is intended to meet each utility company's statutory obligations in a cost-effective manner, developers may be faced with large off-site costs if the available supply is remote from their proposed development. Certain works have long lead-in times and developers have to allow for this and the impact that has on their construction programmes and cash flow. Huntingdonshire District Council will work in partnership with service providers and developers to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided in a timely fashion.

**5.91** In Huntingdonshire the critical areas of dependency between development and infrastructure arise in transport and access including public transport provision; the provision of utilities including water supply and sewage treatment, and supporting community infrastructure including health facilities and education. The key dependencies between the delivery of the spatial strategy and infrastructure provision are set out below.

**5.92** Research for the Council's emerging Watercycle Study has identified where current treatment infrastructure has insufficient capacity for development in its catchment. The scale of proposed development at St Neots is such that a new treatment works and increase in discharge consent is likely to be required. The design, construction and commissioning period for a new treatment plant is in the order of 5 years and, if land purchase negotiations are added, the period could be 8 years. This constraint could have a significant impact on the timing of growth at St Neots, particularly if funding is not obtained until the period 2015 – 2020. Any development proposals falling within the Upwood Sewage Treatment Works catchment will need to ensure that no adverse effect would arise impacting on Woodwalton Fen.

**5.93** The transport network across Huntingdonshire is dominated by the north-south corridor of the A1(M) and East Coast mainline and east-west A14(T) route. Existing infrastructure contributes to the dominance of the car both in physical terms as a barrier and in operational terms through congestion. The A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement scheme will alleviate the situation, with the preferred route having been confirmed. The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is programmed to commence operation in spring 2009. Phasing of strategic greenfield sites close to the A14 within the plan period will be required to coincide with the associated works with the A14 improvements. Junction improvements will be required to the A428 to overcome objections to further development in St Neots. Any further works to the road network (such as the A1 at Buckden) that are identified during the plan period may affect the phasing of sites where it is proven that the development is significantly dependent on that infrastructure.

**5.94** The proposed growth in St Neots would require a new primary substation (10-12MW). For Huntingdon and St Ives improvement to the grid is being undertaken along with additional circuits to provide increased capacity and reliability of supply within EDF's control. These are expected to be completed in 2013. Godmanchester is expected to require around £3-4 millions of improvements. For Ramsey the scale of development may trigger the need for a second circuit transformer. For Sawtry existing supplies are expected to be adequate for the limited scale of housing growth envisaged but may not be for any high demand employment use. Significant problems reinforcing the supply to Peterborough previously have resulted in difficulties increasing the supply beyond what is now available.

**5.95** Housing and employment growth within Huntingdonshire needs also to address the District's current deficits in social and community infrastructure. The rural nature of the district creates problems in relation to social infrastructure development due to a lack of critical mass. This is reflected in relatively poor access to education, childcare and health care services in the more rural parts of the District particularly in villages to the north and west.

**5.96** With extensive population growth centred around existing larger settlements the demand for social and community facilities will grow significantly. Furthermore, social and community facilities can often be the anchor that draws different communities together and so will play an increasing role in the District to ensure that new and



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existing communities become integrated. The level of social infrastructure (and housing typology) will need to reflect the future demographics of the District, with an ageing population expected, creating a higher level of dependants in the latter age ranges and a lower proportion of children aged 0-14 years.

**5.97** Although there is spare capacity within the District's existing network of schools, new provision will be required in conjunction with major new housing developments to ensure adequate proximity and promote opportunities for children to reach school by foot or cycle. Adequate community and leisure centres will be required to meet the needs of residents in new residential areas to contribute to achieving the Core Strategy's objectives for healthy, socially cohesive communities. The Market Towns are currently reasonably well served by police stations. There are seven fire stations and three ambulance stations with poorer services generally to the north of the District where there are lower concentrations of residents. Adequate emergency and essential services will be required to accompany new development.

**5.98** Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust is responsible for the overall commissioning of health care services in Cambridgeshire. National and local health policy is seeking to provide a greater range of health care services in accessible locations, closer to patients' homes. Considerable expansion and improvements to the community based health infrastructure in Huntingdonshire will be required during the period covered by the Core Strategy. The PCT identifies potential sources of capital and revenue funding for health infrastructure, including contributions from new housing developments.

## Co-ordinating Delivery and Implementation

**5.99** The District Council will work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, members of the HSP, private sector delivery agencies and service providers as appropriate in preparing the LIF and identifying key roles and responsibilities for delivering the LIF. The District Council has endeavoured to consider the implications of known infrastructure requirements in devising the spatial strategy. However, significant delay or non-delivery of major infrastructure projects, such as the A14 improvements, may trigger a review of the Core Strategy.

### Statement of Intent

The District Council will work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, members of the HSP, private sector delivery agencies and service providers as appropriate in preparing the LIF and identifying key roles and responsibilities for delivering the LIF.

The HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will become the Project Board responsible for coordinating delivery of the LIF projects, priorities and interventions.

The District Council and the HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will be responsible for identifying the infrastructure and project priorities, and therefore investment decisions, which are needed to support the Huntingdonshire housing and employment trajectories. HDC and the HSP Growth and Infrastructure Group will liaise, as appropriate, with the LAA Board and Cambridgeshire Horizons as these priorities and investment decisions are identified to ensure consistency with projects and investment at the sub-regional level.

HDC will investigate the extent to which the Huntingdonshire tariff/ Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arrangement can be coordinated with tariff proposals being developed by Cambridgeshire Horizons.

**5.100** The detailed framework for delivering infrastructure requirements identified in the LIF and for calculating and negotiating necessary obligations will be set out in separate Supplementary Planning Documents which will be updated on a regular basis. Consideration will be given to the possibility of the CIL replacing some obligations in due course. 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.

## Policy CS 10

### Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements

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 where this complies with the requirements set out in Circular 5/2005 or successor documents.

Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided through an obligation where this complies with the requirements set out in Circular 5/2005. 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 or Development Plan Documents. Where appropriate, the particular requirements of specific sites, including any additional or special requirements will be set out in other DPDs.

In order to prevent avoidance of contributions any requirement will be calculated on the complete developable area, rather than the area or number of homes/ floorspace of a proposal, where the proposal forms a sub-division of a larger developable area.

The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought 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 is likely to be sought. In determining the nature and scale of any planning obligation, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account. The timing of provision of infrastructure and facilities will be carefully considered in order to ensure that appropriate provision is in place before development is occupied.

Contributions that may be required include 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, play facilities, library and information services, cultural facilities and places of worship);

- education, health and social care and community safety;

- utilities infrastructure and renewable energy;

- emergency and essential services;

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environmental improvements;  
drainage / flood prevention and protection;  
waste recycling facilities; and  
public art, heritage and archaeology.

## Reasoned Justification

**5.101** Increased investment in infrastructure is required to mitigate the impact of development and enable growing communities to be as sustainable as possible. 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.

**5.102** 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.

**5.103** The District Council will liaise with other stakeholders who provide infrastructure and other facilities to contribute to the achievement of their aspirations and objectives, insofar as their activities may be affected by the changes resulting from delivery of this Core Strategy. This may involve infrastructure and facilities outside the District. For example, liaison with Anglian Water over changes to the management of Rutland Water necessary as a result of increased visitors from Huntingdonshire.

## 6 Monitoring

**6.1** 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.

**6.2** PPS3 requires Local Planning Authorities to set out a housing trajectory to illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery for the plan period. Housing trajectories show past performance and estimate future performance in relation to housing delivery, thus supporting the 'plan, monitor, manage' approach of the planning system. A trajectory illustrates this data in graphical form, enabling local planning authorities to monitor any shortfall or surplus in housing supply, and to manage future provision to ensure the required amount of housing is delivered.

**6.3** When preparing the strategic housing development policy for consultation, completion data was only available up to March 2006. Therefore the total housing target was derived from this data and has not been changed in order to avoid confusion. The trajectory below has been updated to include completions from April 2001 to March 2007. The projected annual completions are based on information included within the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*.

**6.4** PPS3 places significant emphasis on achieving efficient use of land. Local Planning Authorities are required to set out how they will achieve this having regard to the targets set out in National and Regional policy. The National and Regional targets for the reuse of previously developed land (PDL) for housing are both set at 60%. The *East of England Plan*, however identifies that this target will not be achievable in some districts while in others substantially more will be possible due to the character of the authority in question. Huntingdonshire, as set out in 'A Spatial Portrait of Huntingdonshire', does not have the heritage of PDL of more urban or industrialised authorities.

**6.5** The Council is committed to achieving sustainable development and to the reuse of previously developed land where it is well located. To this end the Council has established a sequence of development that promotes the use of well located PDL in advance of greenfield land. The sequence is defined by the planned provision of infrastructure. In the short to medium term, delivery mainly comes from existing commitments, which can mostly be delivered without significant additional infrastructure provision. This is then followed by the development of PDL in locations identified in policy CS2, particularly in Huntingdon. Again these locations are not dependent on significant additional infrastructure provision. The next phase will see the start of strategic greenfield development, particularly near St Neots. This phase will be dependent on provision of a significant amount of local infrastructure, in particular water supply and education infrastructure will be required in St Neots. The last phase will be that greenfield development around Huntingdon that is dependent on the improvements to the A14 and will therefore not be able to go ahead until about 2015 when the improvements are complete and the changes to the local road network in Huntingdon have been made.

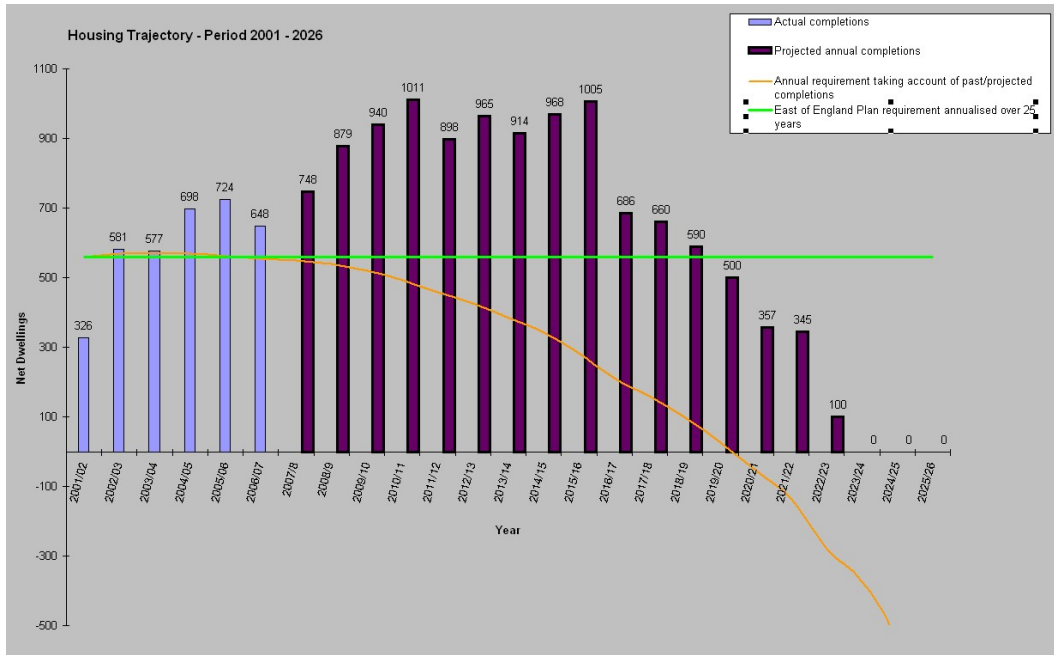
# Monitoring

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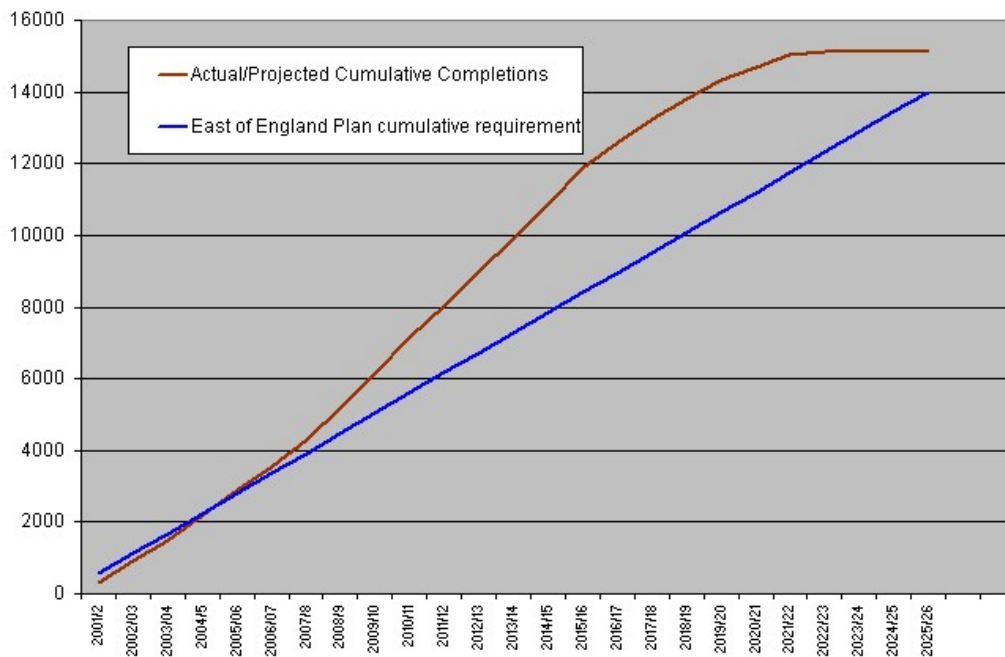
### Annual Completions and Projections Data as at 31 March 2007

Period 2001 - 2026	COMPLETIONS										PROJECTIONS															
	Year	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/8	08/9	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual completions	326	581	577	698	724	648																				
Projected annual completions							748	879	940	1011	898	965	914	968	1005	686	660	590	500	357	345	100	0	0	0	0
Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions	560	570	569	569	563	555	550	539	519	492	458	426	385	341	284	212	159	97	26	-53	-135	-280	-373	-560	-1120	
East of England Plan requirement annualised over 25 years	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560

## Housing Trajectory 2001 to 2026 as at 31 March 2007



## Actual and Projected Cumulative Completions and Projections against the East of England Plan requirements



# Monitoring

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**6.6** 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. Information on housing delivery in terms of net additional dwellings, in the form of the housing trajectory will be set out in the *AMR* .

**6.7** 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.

## Performance indicators and targets

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
<b>Land, Water and Resources</b>							
Number of dwellings completed (net)	Core indicator, Significant effects	1, 2, 3	16	CS2	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	CS2	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	CS1	Reduce per capita water consumption rates	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.	Core output, Significant effects	2, 13	2, 6	CS1	Reduce number of planning permissions granted contrary to EA advice.	Huntingdonshire District Council	Through development control decisions
<b>Biodiversity</b>							
Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance:	Core output, Significant effects	8, 9	1, 3, 12	CS1 & CS9	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							
<b>Landscape, Townscape and Archaeology</b>							



# Monitoring

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Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Large scale housing sites meeting 'Building for Life' equivalent standards	Local output, Significant effects	10, 11, 12, 13	4, 5, 10, 13	CS1	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 or composted	Local output, Significant effects	12	8	CS1	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	CS2 & CS3	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	CS4 & CS5	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 school, areas of employment and a major retail centre	Core output, Significant effects	1	14, 15	CS1	Maximise the amount of new residential development within 30 mins public transport time of GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre	Huntingdonshire District Council, Private Sector, Registered Social Landlords	Through Planning Proposals DPD, Huntingdon West AAP, development control decisions SPDs and UDFs
Number of permissions granted for new public or private Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople sites, or expansion of existing sites	Core output	3	15, 16	CS6	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>							

Indicator	Indicator Type	Related Spatial Objective(s)	Related SA Objective(s)	Related Policy	Target	Responsible Agencies	Implementation
Amount and % of employment floorspace developed on previously developed land	Core output, Significant effects	6, 8, 12	1	CS7	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	CS7	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	CS8	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

# Glossary

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## Appendix 1 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. It is defined in PPS3: 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 area**

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 that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, leisure, recreational and cultural needs of 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 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 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 normally forms the curtilage of the property, but fields and paddocks would be outside the curtilage.

## **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.

## **European Sites**

Consist of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), RAMSAR sites 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.

## **Green Infrastructure**

Network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces (including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens) woodlands (including Ancient Woodlands) and green-way links. It offers opportunities to provide for a number of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement.

## **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.

# Glossary

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## **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 collective term for the group of documents including the Local Development Documents, the Local Development Scheme and the annual Monitoring Reports.

## **Local Development Scheme**

Sets out the Council's programme for preparing and reviewing Local Development Documents.

## **Local Strategic Partnership**

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

## **Major Development**

Development above a particular scale as defined in the General Development Procedure Order (2006) as amended.

## **Market Housing**

Private housing for rent or sale where the price is set in the open market.

## **Material consideration**

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

## **Minor scale development**

The creation of not more than 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 scale 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 definition for *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 area or defined limits of a settlement by up to 3 dwellings.

**Rural Exceptions 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.

# Glossary

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## **Spatial Planning**

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

## **Stakeholders**

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

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

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

## **Statement of Compliance**

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

## **Statutory Development Plan**

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

## **Statutory Organisations**

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

## **Strategic Green Space**

These are areas of green space that serve a wider population than just the District, for example Paxton Pits and The Great Fen.

## **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span.

## **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

A study intended to review the existing housing market in an area, consider the nature of future need for market and affordable housing and to inform policy development.

## **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 for 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 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 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.

## **Sustainable Drainage System**

Previously known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, these cover a range of approaches to surface water drainage management including source control measures such as rainwater recycling and drainage, infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns, filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed and basins and ponds to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding.

## **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.



# Evidence Base

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## Appendix 2 Evidence Base

### National

Securing the Future - UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, (HM Government 2005)

### Regional

A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England, (Sustainable Round Table for the East of England 2001)

Sustainable Communities in the East of England, (ODPM 2003)

Towards Sustainable Construction - A Strategy for the East of England (EP, CE, GO-East, PECT, 2003)

### Sustainable Development

Huntingdonshire Community Strategy, (HDC, 2004)

Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy, (HDC forthcoming 2008)

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD, (HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD, (HDC, 2007)

Environment Strategy, (HDC, 2008)

Statement of Community Involvement, (2006)

Health Impact Assessment (Partial), (HDC, 2007)

Sustainable Construction in Cambridgeshire - A Good Practice Guide, (Cambridgeshire Horizons and Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

Climate Change Strategy, (Cambridgeshire County Council 2005)

### Housing

Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Survey, (HDC 2002)

Huntingdonshire Housing Needs Assessment Update, (HDC 2006)

Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011, (HDC 2006)

Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment, (Cambridgeshire Horizons 2008)

Huntingdonshire Housing Land Availability Study, (HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, (HDC 2008)

Huntingdonshire Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper Update, (HDC 2007)

Homes for the Future - More Sustainable, More Affordable, (DCLG, 2007)

# Evidence Base

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Cambridge Sub Region Traveller Needs Assessment (Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

## **Employment**

Employment Land Review, (Warwick Business Management Ltd on behalf of HDC 2007)

Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy 2008 - 2015, (HDC 2008)

## **Retail**

Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study, (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC 2005)

Huntingdonshire Retail Assessment Study Update, (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC 2007)

## **Strategic Green space**

50 Year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, (Cambridgeshire County Council 2002)

Green Infrastructure Strategy (Cambridgeshire Green Vision), (Cambridgeshire Horizons 2006)

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment, (PNP on behalf of HDC 2006)

Great Fen project brochure, (2006)

Habitats Regulations Assessment, (Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of HDC 2008)

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

## **Infrastructure**

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, (Mott MacDonald on behalf of HDC 2004)

Water Cycle Strategy, (EDAW on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment, (Atkins on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Local Investment Framework, (EDAW on behalf of HDC forthcoming 2008)

Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (Cambridgeshire County Council 2006)

# Saved Policies to be Superseded

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## Appendix 3 Saved Policies to be Superseded

### Saved policies from the Local Plan 1995 that are superseded by Core Strategy Policies

Saved Policies	Subject	Core Strategy Policy
H22	Agricultural Land Protection	CS1 Sustainable Development
H44	Gypsy Sites	CS6 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
E9	Employment in Ramsey	CS7 Employment
E13	Employment Development Causing Environmental Problems	CS1 Sustainable Development
S15	Vacant floorspace over shops in town centres	CS1 Sustainable Development
T21	Public Transport Services	CS10 Infrastructure Provision
R14	Grafham Water	CS9 Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement
R16	After Use of Gravel and Claypits	CS9 Areas of Strategic Greenspace Enhancement
R18	Provision for Art	CS10 Infrastructure Provision

### Saved Policies from the Local Plan Amendment 2002 that are superseded by Core Strategy Policies

Saved Policies	Subject	Core Strategy Policy
STR1	The Huntingdonshire settlement hierarchy	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR2	Housing development definitions	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR3	Settlements designated as market towns	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR4	Yaxley designated as a rural growth village	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR5	Settlements designated as group villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
STR6	Settlements designated as infill villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
HL7	Previously developed land and buildings	CS1 Sustainable Development
HL8	Scale of development appropriate in group villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
HL9	Scale of development appropriate in infill villages	CS3 Settlement Hierarchy
AH4	Site targets for affordable housing	CS4 Affordable housing
AH5	Rural exceptions policy	CS4 Affordable housing and P5 Rural exceptions
OB1	Nature and scale of obligations sought	CS10 Infrastructure requirements