

**Huntingdonshire Sustainable
Community Strategy
2008- 2028**

draft

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1. Introduction

Introduction by Councillor I C Bates to be inserted.

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What is the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership?

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership is one of five Local strategic Partnerships across Cambridgeshire. The Partnership involves representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Police, Town and Parish Councils, the Environment Agency, Huntingdonshire Regional College, local businesses and the voluntary sector.

All of these organisations have teamed up to work together more effectively to improve the quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. They do this by combining their activities to make the best use of resources and share knowledge and expertise. Their vision will be delivered through the Sustainable Community Strategy.

What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

Huntingdonshire's Sustainable Community Strategy shows how we will build a better future for Huntingdonshire. It reflects key district, regional and sub-regional strategies, specifically the Local Development Framework which will be the delivery mechanism for the spatial elements of the Strategy.

It is based on a collective understanding of the current and future needs of Huntingdonshire, public consultation and the aspirations and priorities of those who live and work in the district.

The Strategy is organised under six strategic themes:

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

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

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

What does Huntingdonshire look like today?

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

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

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

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

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

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2. Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

What is a Sustainable Community?

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

Eight key components of a sustainable community are:

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

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

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Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

Active, inclusive and safe

Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities

Huntingdonshire

Perceptions of community identity and belonging in Huntingdonshire are generally high. However, perceptions of strong community identity and belonging tend to be higher in communities where there is good access to facilities and services. Rural areas and the more deprived communities are more likely to feel a lower sense of identity and belonging.

Huntingdonshire is generally a safe place with a low level of crime. However, there are some communities where crime and anti-social behaviour is relatively high.

Well run

With effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

There are some well established consultation and participation activities across Huntingdonshire, both general perception views and service specific. However, there is not always a consistent approach and there is a need to establish effective feedback mechanisms. Working closely with the three tiers of local government, and engaging communities and neighbourhoods and listening and communicating with local residents will involve them in decision making and ensure that their views are used to improve services and inform the development of policies.

Environmentally sensitive

Providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment

Huntingdonshire is at the heart of the East of England Growth Agenda and as a result, we need to ensure that the development of places for people to live, work and visit enhances, rather than degrades our environment.

On a global scale there has been a growing realisation that the way we currently live our lives is unsustainable. In other words we are living beyond our means. Perhaps the greatest threat to our environment is that of climate change.

In order to address this global issue, we must act locally. Work is underway in Huntingdonshire to reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases and develop a long-term strategy to adapt to the climate change already taking place. As one of the lowest lying and driest parts of the country, the local consequences are likely to include increased risk of flooding and further stress to water resources.

Addressing the imbalance between our use of natural resources in building the new homes and services we require and the resulting waste produced, is a key challenge where progress is already being made. The protection and enhancement of Huntingdonshire's valuable natural environment and the maintenance of local distinctiveness are also vital to the development of a truly sustainable Huntingdonshire.

Well designed and built

Featuring quality built and natural environment

Huntingdonshire has a good built environment with a mix of quality historic and modern buildings. However a proportion of the housing stock does not meet modern standards for energy efficiency. Job growth has not matched housing and population growth and in addition there is a lack of affordable housing. The natural environment is varied and valued by local residents.

Well connected

With good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

Access to Market towns and other service centres has relied on a high dependency on cars throughout Huntingdonshire's communities which in turn has contributed to congested main roads at peak times. The need for improvements in transport services, communication links, and access to services has been accepted.

Thriving

With a flourishing diverse local economy

Huntingdonshire has a strong and diverse local economy. To maintain this, jobs need to match the level of growth and skills for the future particularly in key sectors, need to be achieved. The vibrancy of our town centres needs to match the demand of growth.

Well served

With public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all

Huntingdonshire has an extensive range of public, private, community and voluntary organisations providing valued and essential services in many communities. Local residents have high perceptions of local services - 84% of residents stated that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (*residents survey 2008*)

Fair for Everyone

now and in the future

Not everyone in Huntingdonshire has equal access to services or information. Huntingdonshire is made up of many different groups of people who have different needs and aspirations. It comprises many different communities; some of these communities represent a geographical location others a shared interest of need. To make progress, resources must be targeted to meet the greatest need.

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3. A Vision for Huntingdonshire

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

- make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;
- enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;
- access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, 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.

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4. Strategic Themes Outcomes and Objectives

Growth & Infrastructure

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

Outcomes:

- Sustainable patterns of growth and development
- Sufficient housing to meet future needs
- Appropriate business infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy and reduce out commuting
- An upgraded and managed transport network, including public transport to service existing and growing communities effectively and safely.
- Enhanced market town centres that serve their surrounding area
- Appropriate flood risk management, sustainable water supply and sufficient provision of utilities including the development of local renewable sources of energy
- Improve health, education/learning, training, community, leisure and local and strategic open space through the appropriate provision of facilities to meet current and future needs
- New and upgraded homes and other buildings which are well designed, well maintained and contribute to lowering carbon emissions

Sustainable patterns of growth and development

- Ensure appropriate policies and plans are in place to meet the infrastructure needs
- Ensure effective and realistic delivery plans are in place

Sufficient housing to meet future needs

- Ensure an appropriate supply of new housing to at least meet RSS targets
- Increase supply of affordable housing (including key worker)
- To reduce the occurrence of homelessness
- Provide accommodation for gypsies and Travellers as required by the emerging policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy

Appropriate business infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy and reduce out commuting

- Ensure land, premises and infrastructure are available for the development of key sectors to support economic growth, including:
 - advanced manufacturing
 - environmental technologies
 - high tech industries such as telecommunications; and
 - creative industries

An upgraded and managed transport network, including public transport to service existing and growing communities effectively and safely.

- Enhanced strategic highway capacity and safety
- Improved public transport
- Enhance the physical integration of bus/train/taxi/cycle/pedestrian services (including provision for people with mobility issues)
- Increase cycle and footway networks (particularly to key services in towns and villages)
- Develop improved access to services and facilities by community-based transport

Enhanced market town centres that serve their surrounding area

- Appropriate re-developed and new floor space to enable an improved mix of retail, leisure, commercial, cultural and public facilities
- Enhanced public realm
- Appropriate level of managed car parking

Appropriate flood risk management, sustainable water supply and sufficient provision of utilities including the development of local renewable sources of energy

- Appropriate flood risk management measures in place
- Develop capacity for renewable energy
- Sustainable water supply
- Develop utility provision including ICT (Broadband capacity)

Improve health, education/learning, training, community, leisure and local and strategic open space through the appropriate provision of facilities to meet current and future needs

- Provide appropriate cultural, leisure and community infrastructure
- Provide appropriate local green, recreational and open space
- Provide appropriate networked strategic green open space
- Provide appropriate health and social care infrastructure
- Provide appropriate life-long education/ learning and training facilities

New and upgraded homes and other buildings which are well designed, well maintained and contribute to lowering carbon emissions

- Ensure the building of new homes and commercial/public premises comply to zero carbon standards by 2016 and Lifetime Home Standards
- Improve energy and water efficiency of existing homes, commercial and public buildings
- Ensure design and location of public services as far as possible reduce carbon emissions
- Ensure design and location of community services as far as possible reduce carbon emissions
- Well maintained/decent homes
- Conserved heritage assets

******Publication note**** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

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Health & Wellbeing

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

Outcomes:

- **Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities**
- **Reduced health inequalities**
- **Individuals choose healthy lifestyles**
- **Reduced accidents**
- **Increased opportunities for vulnerable people to live independently**

Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities

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

Reduced health inequalities

- Narrow the gap of inequalities between areas in the district

Individuals choose healthy lifestyles

- Reduce the number of people who smoke
- Tackle obesity – improve nutrition and physical exercise in children and adults
- Promote active and healthy lifestyles
- Reduce alcohol and drug misuse
- Improve sexual health
- Promote mental health well being
- Reduce teenage conceptions

Reduced accidents

- Reduce workplace accidents
- Prevent falls by older people
- Prompt and efficient disabled facilities grants/adaptations

Increased opportunities for vulnerable people to live independently

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

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

Environment

To reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases we must focus on a more balanced transport system with an emphasis on reducing travel demand and increasing sustainable modes of travel, and also look to influence the way energy is used and produced in the District. By focusing our efforts on vulnerable groups we help protect them from the impacts of fuel poverty.

It is important to safe guard both the urban and rural heritage of the District, to protect the quality of green space and ensure adequate provision for present and future generations. We must make this environmental capital accessible to all, while realising its economic potential for the benefit of visitors and residents alike.

We all have concern for our local environment – the places in which we live, work and play. Our streets, local park, village or town, as well as the organisations and businesses that we work within, all impact on the environment. We must maintain our local environment to a high standard, while at the same time reducing our impacts on the broader global environment

Outcomes:

- **Mitigate and adapt to climate change**
- **Efficient use of resources**
- **An environment that is protected and improved**

Mitigate and adapt to climate change

- Increase energy efficiency
- Encourage renewable energy
- Reduce travel and emissions to air
- Adaptation to climate change

Efficient use of resources

- Encourage sustainable purchasing
- Efficient water use
- Make the best use of land
- Reduce waste

An environment that is protected and improved

- Reduce contaminated and polluted land
- Protect & enhance biodiversity & open space
- Protect and enhance urban & rural character
- Maintain a clean & safe Huntingdonshire

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

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Children and Young People

Children and young people have played an integral part in identifying outcomes for this section of the strategy. A key challenge for Huntingdonshire is to ensure we continue to develop services that take into account children and young people's needs and preferences.

This strategy will provide the framework to ensure that there is sustained support for families and carers and tangible improvements for children and young people across Huntingdonshire.

Outcomes:

- **Services that are designed and evaluated by children and young people**
- **Effective and sustained support is available for all parents and carers especially those that are vulnerable and/or have vulnerable children and young people**
- **Safe, accessible, positive activities for children and young people**
- **A safe clean environment for children and young people**
- **Positive images of children and young people**
- **Education and training opportunities for all children and young people**

Services that are designed and evaluated by children and young people

- Develop structures to facilitate children and young people's active involvement in delivery of services
- Encourage and support children and young people's active involvement in the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Monitor the impact of children and young people's active involvement; ensure feedback and develop an evidence base

Effective and sustained support is available for all parents and carers especially those that are vulnerable and/or have vulnerable children and young people

- Develop sustainable support for vulnerable parents/carers and families
- Develop frameworks for involving parents and carers in the delivery of services and monitor impact
- Develop a balance of 1:1 and group support

Safe, accessible, positive activities for children and young people

- Increase the range of opportunities for children and young people to meet in informal and safe environments
- Improve access to existing facilities
- provide opportunities for leadership and volunteering and peer mentoring for young people

A safe, clean environment for children and young people.

- Develop local initiatives to improve the environment for children and young people
- Address fear of crime

Positive images of children and young people

- Bridge the generation gap
- Encourage positive images of children and young people

Education and training opportunities for all children and young people

- Raising the aspirations of children and young people
- Develop training and employment opportunities based on the needs of young people

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Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities

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

Outcomes:

- Accessible services for all
- Appropriate community transport
- Vibrant and cohesive communities
- Reduced anti social behaviour
- Reduced crime
- Reduced fear of crime
- Good opportunities for life long learning
- Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities
- Better working with young people
- Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people

Accessible services for all

- Increase access to services for young and older people and in rural areas
- Promote different ways of providing services in communities
- Ensure access to information, advice and guidance

Appropriate community transport

- Affordable transport for job seekers, young people and those on low incomes

Vibrant and cohesive communities

- Promote community based/run activities
- Promote community involvement
- Address the needs of migrant workers and non settled communities including gypsies and travellers
- Address the needs of existing communities where a change in population occurs
- Engage with new and developing communities
- Provide specialist support

Reduced anti social behaviour (inc. criminal damage)

- Reduce alcohol related anti social behaviour
- Address anti-social behaviour
- Reduce vehicle related anti social behaviour

Reduced crime

- Reduce alcohol and drug misuse
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce the incidences of violence against people including domestic abuse

Reduced fear of crime

- Promote safer by design

Good opportunities for life long learning

- Support and increase the capacity of learning communities and facilities for out-reach learning
- Increase access to formal and informal learning opportunities
- Provide opportunities for family learning
- Address the lack of basic skills
- Promote opportunities for local people to improve or gain skills through cultural, leisure and volunteer activities

Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities

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

Better working with young people

- Engage with young people
- Reduce the risk of young people being victims
- Reduce the risk of young people perpetrating crime

Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people

- Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people
- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

Economic Prosperity and Skills

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

Outcomes:

- **A comprehensive level of business support**
- **An appropriate physical infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy**
- **Skills that support economic prosperity**
- **Vibrant town centres**
- **Increased visitor numbers**
- **Well developed key growth sectors**

A comprehensive level of business support

- Co-ordinate the delivery of advice and support for new start ups
- Ensure the availability of general business services and advice across the district
- Ensure specific business advice, for key growth sectors, rural businesses, young people, migrant workers and businesses looking to re-locate here
- Enable the growth of small and medium sized businesses
- Ensure appropriate (de) regulation
- Promote strong business to business networks
- Develop appropriate services and support for businesses already in the district and those looking to locate within Huntingdonshire

An appropriate physical infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy

- Improve public transport
- Improve transport networks for business
- Ensure land and premises for economic growth
- Improve ICT broadband/capacity

Skills that support economic prosperity

- Meet skill shortages
- Address skills for the future, particularly in key growth sectors
- Maximise opportunities for workplace learning and training
- Promote learning and training opportunities for people in deprived communities and those who are long term out of work
- Seek investment opportunities for learning and skills development
- Increase retention of young people in learning and training
- Promote vocational opportunities for young people
- Ensure the readiness and transition of young people to work

Vibrant town centres

- Increase the number of people using town centres
- Encourage residents and businesses to buy local produce and services
- Increase the retail offer and mix
- Improve the evening economy
- Enhance town centre environments

Increased visitor numbers

- Encourage local people to visit local attractions
- Encourage business visitors
- Market Huntingdonshire to prospective businesses
- Improve the mix of attractions, facilities and leisure opportunities
- Develop attractions and services for visitors, specifically overnight stay visitors

Well developed key growth sectors (Creative Industries, Environmental Science, Technologies, High Value Manufacturing and Hi-Tech Enterprise)

- Develop business support and promote training for individuals and businesses
- Improve the development of networks for collaboration and the fostering of supply chains
- Cultivate a dynamic cluster within each key sector
- Harness the world-class expertise of our key sectors and utilise for growth
- Encourage employment creation within the sector both in the market towns and rural areas of our district

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

5. Implementing and Reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy

Underpinning each of the Strategic themes is a delivery plan. Each delivery plan details how the outcomes and objectives will be achieved. The delivery plans will identify measures and targets so that achievement of can be reported and reviewed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.