

**THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 –
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - THE INSPECTORS BINDING
REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council that, following his examination of the submitted Core Strategy, the Inspector has now issued his binding report which outlines his considerations and sets out his conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will be aware the Council, acting in respect of its role as the Local Planning Authority, needed to fundamentally update its local development plan documents and accordingly, following a protracted preparation process, the Core Strategy was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in July 2008.

2.2 The appointed Planning Inspector, Eric Searle, conducted the examination by way of written exchanges and via public hearing sessions held earlier this year. The Inspector has considered all of the representations received in respect of the Core Strategy and he has now issued his formal report outlining his findings and conclusions regarding the soundness of the document.

3. THE INSPECTORS REPORT

3.1 The Inspector has issued his binding report and;

- In Section 1 he outlines the basis of the applicable procedures and the relevant tests that he applied to his examination.
- In Section 2 he outlines and comments upon the Council's compliance with all of the applicable legal requirements.
- In Section 3 he considers whether the proposed strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. In doing that he has;
 - endorsed the Council's vision and objectives for the future development of the district, and accepted the suggested criteria that will be applied in order to deliver sustainable development;
 - supported the proposed general distribution of future growth across the district, endorsing the proposed settlement hierarchy, the strategic directions of growth and the related proposals to appropriately restrict dispersed growth;

- supported the Council's aspirations to seek to deliver 40% affordable housing on all eligible sites;
 - amended the proposed wording of the proposed Gypsy and Traveller policy in order to clarify that developments should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape;
 - endorsed the proposed quantum of housing development and employment land provision for the plan period and the proposed distribution and locations of the strategic directions of growth; which are primarily focussed on the Huntingdon, St Neots and to a lesser extent St Ives SPA's;
 - positively supported the Council's strategy for employment led, rather than residential led, regeneration in the Ramsey SPA;
 - endorsed the proposed distribution of retail development; specifically acknowledging the importance of regenerating Chequers Court in Huntingdon in conjunction with the complementary retail element in Huntingdon West;
 - recognised the applicable infrastructure needs, and related nature of the developer and other contributions, that will be required to support the delivery of the strategy.
- In Section 4 he outlines his approach to dealing with the agreed and proposed changes to the submitted document.

3.2 In Section 5 of his report the Inspector reaches his overall conclusions and determines that, with the incorporation of the amendments he recommends, the Core Strategy satisfies all of the relevant legal requirements and is therefore sound.

4. ADOPTION OF THE CORE STRATEGY

4.1 The approved Core Strategy is a vitally important piece of the planning jigsaw for Huntingdonshire as it sets out the Council's strategic planning framework for the further growth, development and conservation of the district for the period up to 2026.

4.2 The approved Core Strategy now supersedes the strategic policies contained within the adopted Local Plan and Local Plan Alteration and therefore it now needs to be formally adopted by Council as an essential component of the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Therefore it is recommended that Council:

- a. Formally adopts the Core Strategy as part of the Development Plan for the district.

Background Papers:

The Submitted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2008

The Inspectors Report on the Examination into the Submitted Core Strategy –
July 2009

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