

Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The District Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the proposed programme for the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The programme includes key milestones to inform people about opportunities to be involved in the plan-making process.
- 1.2 The LDS has been prepared to reflect the amendments to the plan-making process in the Localism Act, the draft National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Regulations consultation. If necessary it will be revised further once national changes have been brought into effect.
- 1.3 The development plan is the primary basis upon which all planning decisions are made. The development plan will comprise the Local Plan to 2036, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plans and any Neighbourhood Plans covering areas within Huntingdonshire.
- 1.4 The Localism Act (2011) set the framework for revoking existing regional strategy and structure plan policies as soon as possible, subject to the outcome of environmental assessments by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Until Orders to revoke these are approved they remain part of the statutory development plan.
- 1.5 The Local Plan to 2036 will be a spatial planning document that will be subject to independent examination. It will include a development strategy, site specific allocations of land, development management policies and a proposals map.
- 1.6 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 proposed in this LDS will, once adopted, supersede the Core Strategy (2009) and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (2011) in their entirety. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) allowed for existing statutory plans to be saved whilst replacement documents were produced. Thus, the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 will also replace all remaining saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) and the Local Plan Alteration (2002). The Secretary of State issued a direction in September 2007 setting out which policies remained saved until appropriately replaced; a list can be found at:

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Planning/Planning%20Policy/Pages/Local%20Plan.aspx>
- 1.7 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan (2011) is jointly prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to guide the development and management of mineral resources and waste materials. Huntingdonshire is not a minerals and waste planning authority so this LDS does not deal with these matters. However, relevant proposals in adopted Minerals and Waste Development Plans produced by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council will be shown on the Proposals Map.

- 1.8 Under the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish and Town Councils to provide detailed guidance on specific issues. These will be subject to independent examination and a local referendum. If approved at the referendum then the Council will bring the neighbourhood plan into force. As it is Parish and Town Councils that will decide to produce Neighbourhood Plans it is not appropriate for the LDS to specify when, or for where, they will be produced.

2 Plan Making Process

- 2.1 The process of preparing and adopting development plans was amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 and is quite complex. Consolidated replacement regulations were published for consultation in July 2011 which do not propose significant changes to the main processes; no date has yet been set for bringing the new regulations in force. A summary of the plan making process is set out below.

Public Participation

- 2.2 The Council will undertake early public participation in the preparation of the Local Plan. Community involvement is a key component of the plan making process. The scale and nature of community involvement will vary according to the stage of document production. Public participation will be guided by the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Publication and Submission

- 2.3 On completion of the public participation stages the Council will prepare the document for publication, also known as the proposed submission stage. Once published there is a period for representations on issues of soundness and legal compliance. The Council can make limited, minor amendments to the published document at this stage before submitting it to the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate along with the representations and a summary of the changes.

Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.4 To assess the potential impact of the Local Plan it must be subjected to thorough sustainability appraisal. In order to fully comply with the European SEA Directive and the UK SEA Regulations and to provide a robust evidence base the Council will adopt an integrated approach towards meeting the requirements for both sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment of the Local Plan. The appraisals are a systematic, iterative process, integrated into each phase of document production. Their purpose is to assess the extent to which emerging policies and proposals will help achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives.
- 2.5 Neighbourhood Plans will also be required to undertake both sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment. Huntingdonshire District

Council will provide guidance to parish and town councils in fulfilling these requirements if required.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 2.6 Amendments were introduced in the UK Conservation (Habitats & etc) Regulations 1994 in September 2006. These result in Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC being required for all plans likely to have a significant effect on a European site. Habitats Regulations Assessments, including Appropriate Assessment as necessary, will be undertaken prior to submission of the Local Plan.

Examination

- 2.7 Once the Local Plan, its sustainability appraisal and all other supporting documentation have been submitted to the Secretary of State it must be examined by an independent Inspector before the Council can adopt it. The Inspector is charged with examining whether the document complies with legislation and is sound.
- 2.8 Development plan documents must be prepared within the context of national policy. They should be in accordance with higher level guidance unless strong local evidence supports deviation from this and would provide better outcomes in the specific local context of Huntingdonshire.
- 2.9 To examine whether the submitted document is legally compliant the Inspector will check that it:
- has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the Regulations;
 - has been subject to sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment;
 - has regard to national policy; and
 - has regard to any sustainable community strategy for the area
- 2.10 The Inspector will also assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the duty to co-operate and whether it is sound. A local planning authority should only submit a plan for examination which it considers to be 'sound' – namely that it is:
- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is practical to do so consistently with the presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence

- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

3 Production Programme

3.1 The Council's priorities for the period 2012-2014 are to produce the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. Its purpose is to set out the strategy for development in the whole of Huntingdonshire, policies for managing development and site-specific proposals for different forms of development. As a precursor to its preparation the Huntingdonshire Statement of Community Involvement will also be updated.

3.2 The Proposals Map will be revised alongside the Local Plan to provide a geographical illustration of the application of the policies of the Local Plan.

Production Programme: Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

	2012												2013												2014			
Document	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036	SA											P				S												A

Key:

	Preparation of document and public participation; SA = Consultation on scope of SA
	Publication and pre-submission public participation; P = publication
	Submission and examination; S = submission; H = anticipated hearings date
	Formal adoption; A = adoption

3.3 The organisational lead will be taken by the Head of Planning Services and the Executive Member for Planning Strategy. There will be opportunities for community engagement at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. The Local Plan will be approved by full Council prior to publication for pre-submission consultation as this is the stage at which the Council must consider the document to be sound and ready for examination. Document production and implementation (once adopted) will be reviewed regularly and reported through ongoing monitoring reports.

Resources, Monitoring and Review

- 3.4 The Council's Development Plans team will take the lead in preparing all development plan documents, monitoring reports, and the statement of community involvement. Specialist skills available elsewhere in the Council will also be involved where relevant, in particular:
- Within Planning Services the Development Management teams, the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape team, the Transportation team and the Heritage and Conservation team
 - Environmental and Community Health Services
 - Environmental Management
 - Housing Services
 - Corporate Office
- 3.5 Advice will also be sought from Cambridgeshire Joint Planning Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to socio-economic research, transportation, countryside, biodiversity and archaeology. Expertise and information is also sought where relevant from other partners such as the Environment Agency or consultants may be employed to conduct specialist research. The budget for Planning Services makes allowance for anticipated costs of development plan production, including examination, but with increasingly limited funding for specialist consultancy work.
- 3.6 The Local Development Scheme will be monitored on an ongoing basis and regular updates provided on the Council's website. Regular monitoring of the effectiveness of development plan policies will also be undertaken and published on the Council's website.

APPENDIX 1: TERMINOLOGY

Within each definition links to other terms are shown in italics.

Adoption	The point at which the final agreed version of a document comes into use.
Monitoring Report (AMR)	Document produced at least annually to report on progress in Local Plan production and implementation of policies.
Development Plan	The documents which together provide the main point of reference when considering planning proposals. These will include the Local Plan to 2036, Minerals and Waste DPDs produced by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council and Neighbourhood Plans covering land within Huntingdonshire.
Development Plan Document (DPD)	A document containing local planning policies or proposals which forms part of the <i>Development Plan</i> , and which has been subject to independent <i>examination</i> . NB: the term will be phased out, largely being replaced by <i>Local Plan</i> .
Examination	Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft <i>Local Plan</i> chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Sets out the Council's programme for preparing and reviewing statutory planning documents.
Local Plan	The document containing local planning policies and proposals for Huntingdonshire.
Proposals Map	A map that shows the spatial extent of <i>adopted</i> planning policies and proposals affecting Huntingdonshire.
Publication	Point at which a draft <i>Local Plan</i> is issued for consultation prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

Saved policies	Adopted policies which remain in force pending their replacement by the Local Plan.
Scoping Report	Report produced as the first stage of <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> . It examines existing environmental, social and economic conditions in the district, and identifies appropriate objectives to appraise policies against.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Document setting out the Council's approach to involving the community in preparing planning documents and making significant development management decisions.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Process undertaken during plan production, to assess the potential environmental effects of emerging policies and proposals. It is incorporated within <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> .
Submission	Following the publication and ensuing consultation the point at which a draft <i>Local Plan</i> is submitted to the Secretary of State along with representations the received for <i>examination</i> .
Supplementary Planning Guidance/ Document	Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of adopted policies and proposals.
Sustainability Appraisal	Process undertaken during plan production, to assess the extent to which emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve environmental, social and economic objectives. It incorporates <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i> .