

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Position Statement

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Wellbeing)  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**Executive Portfolio:** Planning and Housing Strategy (DD)

**Report by:** Head of Development (AM)

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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**Executive Summary:**

This report updates the Panel on the current position with the preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

**Recommendation:**

That the Panel notes this report.

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## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT / PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 This report updates the Panel on the current position with the preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY / BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The report outlines the key themes that arose from the recent targeted consultation on the draft Local Plan. It also identifies issues that need to be addressed within the next period prior to the Proposed Submission stage of the Local Plan's preparation, and then its formal Submission to the Secretary of State and Planning Inspectorate for its Examination in Public.

## **3. LOCAL PLAN – CURRENT POSITION**

### **Local Plan Targeted Consultation**

- 3.1 A non-statutory 'targeted consultation' on the Stage 4 draft Local Plan was held for an 8 week period between 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015 and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This was an extra stage in the Local Plan preparation process specifically designed to engage town and parish councils, Huntingdonshire district and county councillors, key stakeholders and 'duty to co-operate partners', and the landowners of the range of sites identified as potential allocations in the draft Local Plan.
- 3.2 A series of well attended seminars were held at the start of the process for town and parish councils (26<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015) and key stakeholders (4<sup>th</sup> February 2015), and a report was presented to this Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015. In total, there were 81 respondents who made 831 individual comments. This is considered to be a good response rate. It is notable that the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Local Nature Partnership, and Huntingdon Town Council did not make any representations.

### **Key Themes and Issues**

- 3.3 The key themes that arose from the targeted consultation were consistent with issues that had been raised within previous consultation stages. These included:
1. Infrastructure provision and funding to support development (particularly regarding highways and transport infrastructure around Huntingdon, Wyton and St Ives).
  2. Concern over the proposed Wyton on the Hill Strategic Expansion Location (particularly in relation to highways and transport infrastructure).
  3. The viability of affordable housing delivery and whether it is possible to meet the district's needs.
  4. Flood risks and mitigation (particularly from the Environment Agency).

5. Alternative strategies for delivering potential large scale housing and related mixed use development (including a newly proposed large development area to the east of St Ives known as Giffords Park, the intensification of development at the former RAF Brampton site, suggestions that land at RAF Alconbury and RAF Molesworth should form part of a revised strategy, and an 'exit strategy' by Sainsburys for the Huntingdon West area).
6. Consideration of a wider Functional Economic Area in relation to Huntingdonshire's objectively assessed jobs and homes balance and the amount of land required for employment (from Bedford Borough Council).

#### **4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS**

- 4.1 An ill-prepared Local Plan will be found unsound, but undue delays that result in the Council having less than a five year housing land supply are likely to result in developments that the Planning Inspectorate would not otherwise approve being approved at appeal. The Council currently has a five year housing land supply, and this position will be kept under review. Lessons will continue to be learnt from other authorities' experiences of Local Plan preparation.

#### **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Each of the key themes and issues set out above, along with a range of other more specific and localised related matters, will need to be carefully considered as part of the process of refining the draft Local Plan and its associated evidence base, prior to moving to the next stages of the plan preparation process.
- 5.2 It is currently envisaged that this Panel will be consulted on a Proposed Submission Local Plan at its meeting in the July 2015 Cabinet cycle. However, this date may need to be changed as the next immediate step after the comments received on the targeted consultation have been carefully considered is to identify the scope of any additional work, and then carry out that work, to ensure that the Proposed Submission draft is fit for purpose for this stage, which will be the first formal stage of the statutory plan preparation process.

#### **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 6.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is a corporate priority identified in the Corporate Plan.

#### **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 There will be further consultation on the Local Plan as part of the Proposed Submission stage. This will be a full public consultation where comments can be made on 'soundness' and legal issues.

#### **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 8.1 This report is an update report and no decisions are required at this stage.

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