



**EXAMINATION IN TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL
PLAN to 2036**

**EXAMINATION HEARING STATEMENT – MATTER 3:
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**Prepared by Strutt & Parker (ID 951540) on behalf of Abbotsley
Farms Ltd (ID 771586) and PW & JW Baker (ID 1141601)**

June 2018

Huntingdonshire Local Plan

Matter 3: Development Strategy

Introduction

1. Strutt & Parker is submitting this Hearing Statement to the Examination into the Huntingdonshire Local Plan on behalf of Abbotsley Farms Ltd and PW & JW Baker. Previous submissions have been made on behalf of our clients have been made to Huntingdonshire District Council at the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages of the Local Plan process.
2. This Hearing Statement addresses issues raised by the Inspector in Matter 3 and specifically relates to the section and questions relating to the St Neots Spatial Planning Area. A further and more comprehensive matter statement will be submitted in relation to Matter 7: St Neots Spatial Planning Area.
3. The Council's approach is supported on the basis that it allows for an appropriate level of development and commits to an early review of the Local Plan, which will provide for future housing growth that will enable proposed infrastructure improvements to roads and railways to be taken into account, such as the proposed upgrade of the A428 between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet.

Q1: What is the basis for the overall strategy for development and the broad distribution of growth set out in Policy LP2? What options were considered and why was this chosen? Is this justified?

3. The overall strategy for development focuses development in a series of key spatial areas. This approach is supported on the basis that these are the most sustainable locations for growth. Indeed, it focuses 75% of the total housing growth and the majority of employment and retail growth in four spatial planning area, around Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey reflecting their status as the District's traditional market towns. These also include two strategic expansion locations at Alconbury Weald and St Neots.
4. Other options included a more dispersed level of growth and this approach was chosen on the basis that it was the more sustainable approach, which provides a particular focus on St Neots and other spatial areas. The focus of development at St

Neots is supported on the basis that it is the largest town on the District, and seeks to concentrate development in locations which provide or have the potential to provide the most comprehensive range of services and facilities.

5. Policy LP2 sets out the strategy for development and distribution of growth over the plan period up to 2036. It seeks to 'concentrate development in the locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the greatest access to services and facilities'. St Neots is a highly sustainable location for additional growth given its proximity to a large number of jobs, services, and facilities, and the proposed significant infrastructure improvements that are proposed.
6. St Neots' position on the Cambridge to Oxford Expressway corridor should be recognized. The Local Plan acknowledges that 'A project to upgrade the section of the A428 trunk road between Black Cat and Caxton gibbet junctions is currently being developed. If funded and approved, the scheme would commence in 2020. In addition, a number of other strategic transport schemes are currently in the early stages of consideration, including: an Oxford to Cambridge Expressway [of which the A428 is part, improvements to the A1 between the M25 and Peterborough, and an East West Rail project'.
7. It is clear that these key strategic transport schemes will consolidate and enhance St Neots' position as a n appropriate location for significant growth and development in this plan period, and beyond. Additionally land could be safeguarded in an early review to enable St Neots to grow further, facilitated by the upgraded A428.

Q2: Are the Spatial Planning Areas appropriately defined, what is the basis for them?

8. The Spatial Planning Areas are broadly appropriately defined albeit the St Neots Spatial Area should be extended to include the triangle of land surrounded by the A428, the East Coast Main Line Railway and Potton Road. The basis for them appears to be using logically defined highway boundaries, but this should be extended as described above, particularly as there is a live planning application affecting this parcel of land.

Q3: Is the approach to the scale and development set out in Policies LP2 and LP7 justified?

9. The approach to scale and development as set out in Policies LP2 and LP7 is justified on the basis that it represents the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.