Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 Examination

Hearing Statement Matter 7:

Proposed site allocations – St Neots Spatial Planning Area

Huntingdonshire District Council

July 2018

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

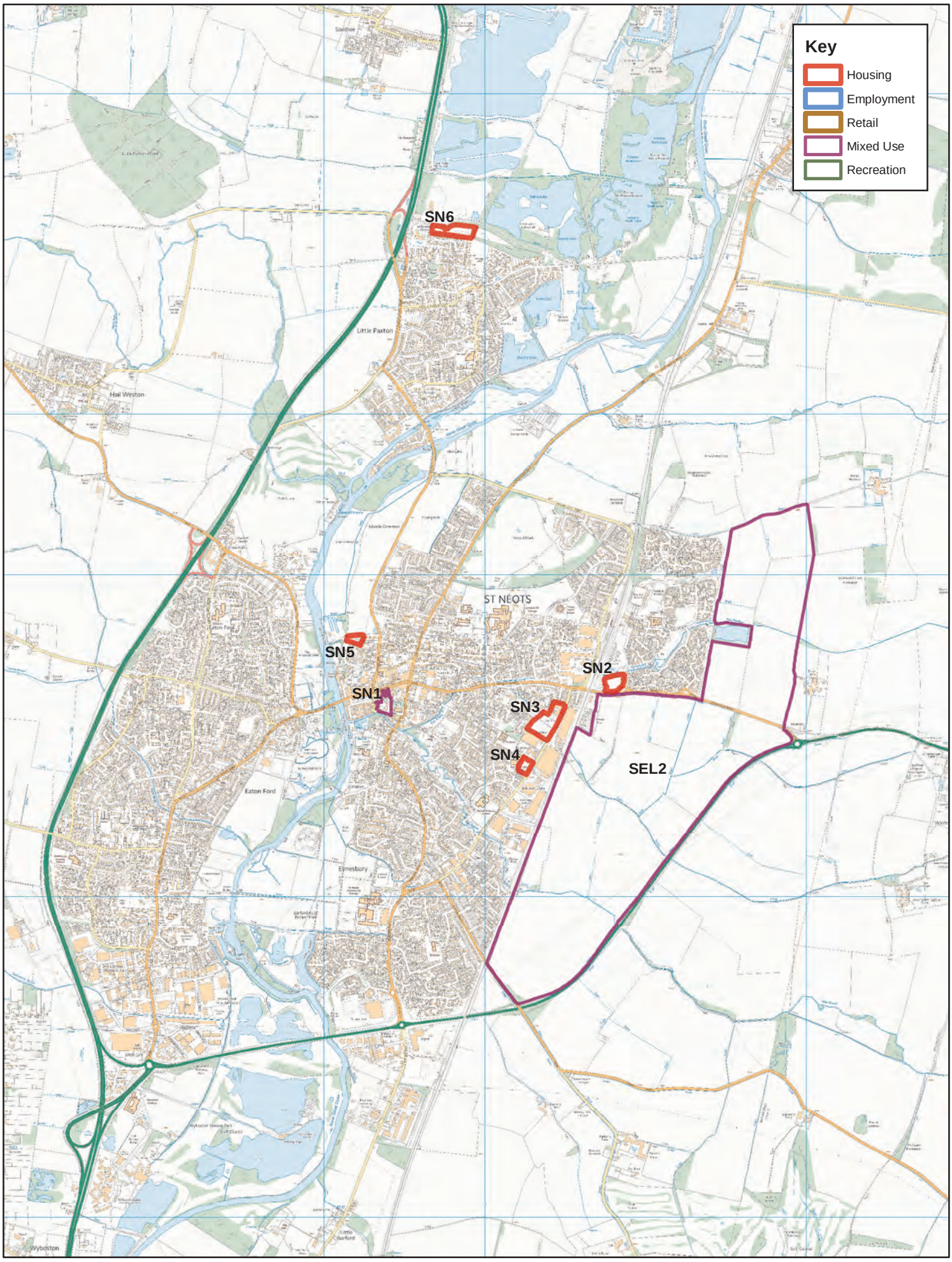
Contents

Appendices

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Policies Map:St Neots Spatial Planning Area Allocated Sites

Scale 1:30,000 Date: 02/07/2018



Issue

Whether the proposed site allocations for the St Neots Spatial Planning Area are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

1. Strategic Expansion Location: St Neots East

SEL.2 – St Neots East

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

1.1. The site is an extensive area of greenfield, agricultural land.

1.2. It was put forward during the production of the Core Strategy 2009 and originally assessed in the Environmental Capacity Study: St Neots Spatial Planning Area document consulted upon between August 2012 and November 2012 (HOUS/02: Availability, page286). The site is also assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 283-286 for full assessment).

1.3. This site has the opportunity to provide a new neighbourhood with its own local services complementing those which are easily accessible elsewhere in St Neots. The following breakdown illustrates how the capacity for the site has been set out: the total site area is 226ha from which 25ha is deducted for employment use and a further 10ha is deducted for community, educational and retail uses. This gives a balance of 191ha for potential residential development at 50% net developable area and an estimated capacity of 3820 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 286).

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

1.4. The site is allocated for a mixed use sustainable development comprising of approximately 3,820 homes, 22ha of employment land (class 'B'), a local centre containing offices (class 'B1a' uses), 4,000m² of gross retail floorspace (class 'A1') including a supermarket (class 'A1') with a maximum floorspace of 3,000m² and other food and drink uses (classes 'A2' to 'A5', a neighbourhood centre containing 800m² of floorspace for retail, service, food and drink and community uses (class 'A1' to 'A5' and 'D1' and 'D2'), specialist accommodation for older people to at least a 120 space care home, educational and community facilities, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, transport infrastructure improvements and strategic green space.

1.5. As agreed under 1300388OUT in March 2018, 28% of homes will be allocated to affordable housing.

1.6. Under 17/02308/OUT, it is proposed that affordable housing will be delivered at a rate of 25% of the first 500 dwellings (a total of 125 affordable units), the application proposes that with a

review mechanism to determine the percentage in subsequent phases. The details of the review mechanism are yet to the determined.

1.7. Mr. Martin Page of Brown & Co (ID: 1118735) queries the quantum of employment development, whether it is 22ha or 25ha. SEL points 1 and 2 cumulatively will deliver 25ha of employment land.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

1.8. The St. Neots eastern Expansion Urban Design Framework (Appendix 1) along with the HELAA 2017 (page 283) identify a series of opportunities to create a new sustainable urban extension to the town that will deliver new homes, community infrastructure, formal and informal open space , employment and health infrastructure. The scale of the site allows for a wide mix of housing to be delivered on site ensuring all groups in society have access to decent, appropriate and affordable accommodation, as well as access to jobs. The UDF was developed in partnership with the main landowning and developer interests and was formally adopted in the winter of 2010. Page 79 of that document also sets out the level of community engagement in the preparation of the UDF, which was carried out with the assistance of the St. Neots Town Centre Initiative (SNTCI) and included discussions with the Town Council, a SNTCI transportation group, a SNTCI manufacturing group, a SNTCI retail group and the Eynesbury Residents Association.

1.9. Planning applications 17/02308/OUT and 1300388OUT were submitted with planning, design and access statement as well as detailed environmental statements.

1.10. Planning application 17/02308/OUT is describe as outline planning permission for development of a mixed use urban extension to include; residential development of up to 2,800 dwellings (C3), up to 63,500 sqm of employment development (B1-B8), district centre including shops, services, community and health uses (A1-A5, D1 & D2), local centre (A1-A5), temporary primary school, two permanent primary schools, open space, play areas, recreation facilities and landscaping, strategic access improvements including new access points from Cambridge road & a428, associated ground works and infrastructure. All matters reserved with the exception of means of access; and application for full planning permission for the construction of new roads, hard & soft landscaping, creation of suds and all associated infrastructure and engineering works including creation of haul routes.

1.11. Planning application 1300388out is described as outline application for the development of up to 1020 dwellings, up to 7.6has of mixed uses including a nursery/crèche (use class D1), public house (use class A4), hotel (class C1), care accommodation (use class C2) and employment uses (use class B1), connections with loves farm, on-site roads and pedestrian/cycle routes, open space and other related infrastructure.

1.12. Both applications clearly set out the quantum of development proposed and were carefully considered by the Development Management Committee. It is therefore considered that the scale and mix of uses proposed have been justified.

1.13. Through careful urban design the scheme will also deliver sustainable urban drainage systems, new employment opportunities and ensure the educational needs of the growing population are served through the delivery of 2 new primary schools while also improving pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the town centre and the existing development known as Loves Farm 1. The scheme also incorporates formal open space and green corridors allowing access to the wider countryside ensuring the health and well-being of future residents.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

1.14. The site has had a number of Outline applications submitted.

1.15. Planning reference 1300178OUT for a mixed use development with 2,800 dwellings was refused in April 2016 as it did not provide the maximum reasonable number of affordable housing. An Appeal against this decision was withdrawn in May 2017.

1.16. Planning reference 1300388OUT for 1,020 dwellings is currently under consideration. This application was considered by the Development Committee on the 16th April 2018 and was supported in principle subject to completion of a S106 agreement and a final list of planning conditions to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

1.17. Planning reference 17/02308/OUT for up to 2,800 dwellings is currently under consideration pending a decision. This is a hybrid application including application for full planning permission for the construction of new roads, landscaping, SUDs, haul road and associated infrastructure. This application went to Development management Committee on the 19th March 2018 and was recommended for approval subject to completion of a S106 and a final list of planning conditions to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

1.18. Redevelopment of the site will bring many benefits to the surrounding area. Taking the Framework policies into account, and in accordance with its Section 1, the development would use have important economic benefits through the provision of employment land, employment opportunities within schools and health and employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents in accordance with Section 6 of the Framework, along with the provision of new schools, a health facility, community infrastructure and formal and informal open space. In accordance with Section 4 of the Framework the site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities by means other than the car including cycling facilities and new bus routes.

1.19. The scheme will provide opportunities for ecological enhancements and provision of sustainable urban drainage systems.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

1.20. The HELAA (P289) identified the adverse impacts of developing this site including the loss of agricultural land, part of the site is in an area at risk of flooding due to climate change, will have significant impact on the surrounding landscape. The allocation has the benefit of having been subject of detailed planning applications, accompanied by detailed planning and design and access statements and environmental impact assessments, including mitigation packages.

1.21. Historic England (ID: 56252) advise development of this site would affect the setting of a number of Grade II listed structures which surround the site. There is also a scheduled monument (the deserted village at Wintringham) located to the east of the site. Historic England consider that these should be referenced in both the policy and the supporting text of the Plan. However, these have been considered as part of the detailed planning applications and furthermore it is considered that the concerns raised are addressed when the plan is considered in the whole, including policy LP36- Heritage Assets and their settings.

1.22. It is considered that the adverse impacts identified are outweighed by the benefits and the development can be made acceptable through use of S106 agreements and planning conditions

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

1.23. Areas around the three brooks which flow east to west are within various flood zones. 88% of the site is in Flood zone 1, 4% lies in Flood zone 2, 7% in Flood zone 3a and 1% in Flood zone 3b.

1.24. North of Cambridge Road a flood attenuation pond has been created to serve that area and Loves Farm.

1.25. The site was assessed in the Sequential Test for Flood Risk (FLO/01), the use of the Sequential Approach means, given the size of the site, development can be placed away from Flood Zones 2 and 3, with the area affected by flooding left undeveloped, this leaves approximately 198 hectares of land is available outside of the Flood zones to be developed (FLO/01: page 12).

1.26. No sites are classified as highly vulnerable in FLO/01, so, following the PPG sequential test flow chart, the exception test is not required for any site that can be allocated in flood zone 2 (FLO/01: Page 3).

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

1.27. Site constraints are set out in detail in HOUS/02 at P283. In summary, this is a large scale edge of settlement development requiring a wide range of infrastructure to support significant growth of St Neots. This will include transport (upgrades to the A428 including new junctions), education, health, sports, retail, open space and community provision. Some of the required provision and associated costs have been estimated and are set out in detail in INF/02. However, further work has now been carried out by the applicants for relevant infrastructure to be provided as part of the developer contributions (1.22 refers).

1.28. The scale of development and its impact on the adjacent open countryside will have to be mitigated through the landscaping scheme.

1.29. Negotiations have taken place with two developers for two adjacent land parcels that will comprise the development. With the exception of review mechanisms relating to the final percentage provision of affordable housing, S106 terms have been agreed with both parties. The developers are collaborating to co-ordinate infrastructure delivery.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

1.30. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

1.31. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11

p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

1.32. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

1.33. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

1.34. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will "manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery". This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

1.35. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

1.36. For this site, constraints and the level of infrastructure will impact on the level of viability. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40% on sites of 11 homes or 1,001sqm or more but where it can be demonstrated in a viability appraisal that due to specific site conditions e.g. other high cost infrastructure elements, subject to validation of the appraisal, consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable.

1.37. The two S106 agreements currently under negotiation for each land parcel will deliver between 25%-28% affordable units for early phases. A review mechanism will be used within later phases of the Wintringham Park scheme where the starting position in any negotiations will be the policy position.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

1.38. The agents for both parts of the site responded to the Annual Monitoring survey in autumn 2017 and stated the site could commence within the next five years.

1.39. For 1300388OUT, (the northern part of the site known as Loves Farm 2) the first 30 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2019/2020, the timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in years 1-5	17/18 Yr. 1	18/19 Yr. 2	19/20 Yr. 3	20/21 Yr. 4	21/22 Yr. 5	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total 17/36
330	0	0	30	115	185	185	185	115	115	65	25	**1020**

1.40. For 17/02308/OUT, (the southern part of the site known as Wintringham Park) the first 25 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2018/2019, the timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in y	17/18 Yr. 1	18/19 Yr. 2	19/20 Yr. 3	20/21 Yr. 4	21/22 Yr. 5	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	Total 17/36
675	0	25	150	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	125	**2800**

1.41. The first three years see a steady increase in the numbers of dwellings completed as infrastructure is put in and the two elements of the site opened up. After this an annual rates escalate until 2021/22 which is the first of three years when peak delivery rates are anticipated of 435 dwellings per year. Completion rates are then expected to reduce as Loves

Farm 2 reaches completion in 2028 with building at Wintringham Park scheduled to complete in 2031.

1.42. The anticipated delivery rates for St Neots East SEL are not unprecedented and other equally ambitious councils are now seeking to boost housing delivery. The evidence for this is set out in full in the response to Matter 6, Question 11 but much applies to this site too.

1.43. This is a large greenfield site first identified as a direction of growth in the Core Strategy 2009. Negotiations to bring it forward are well advanced. Development of the site is expected to coincide with Highways England's proposals for upgrading the A428 relieving traffic congestion in the vicinity.

1.44. Although ambitious, the timescale and rate of development at St Neots East SEL is realistic and is not unprecedented both within the Cambridge and adjoining Peterborough housing market areas as well as further afield. Concerns have been expressed by Gladman Developments (ID: 1118265) in respect of deliverability of this scheme. Gladman raise concerns whether this scale of delivery within the five year period is realistic given that the application is not yet determined, the scheme will then need to be granted reserved matters approval and there is likely to be significant upfront infrastructure works prior to the delivery of any housing. In response planning application 17/02308/OUT for Wintringham Park was submitted on the 3/11/17 and was supported by DMC in March 2018, within 16 weeks from the date of submission, with a resolution to approve subject to completion of a satisfactory S106 agreement to mitigate the impact of the development. At the time of drafting this statement that S106 agreement is still under discussion. Planning application 1300388OUT (Loves Farm) paused discussions in light of the appeal lodged under 1300178OUT but resumed again upon withdrawal of the appeal. In May 2018 members resolved to support that application subject to completion of a satisfactory S106 to mitigate the impact of the development.

1.45. The master developers for Wintringham Park have engaged in a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to provide a dedicated officer to ensure timely determination of planning applications, and applications for condition discharge. This in turn will ensure timely delivery of housing. The developers committed to a 2 year PPA ensuring that there is a dedicated officer for at least 1 year post-decision.

1.46. Regard is also had to the proximity of this allocation to the A1 providing access to London and to the North as well as the A428 linking Bedford to Cambridge. It is also noted that the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge arc, as discussed in the National Infrastructure Commission interim report of November 2017, will be in close proximity and will include the expressway and east-west rail. While it could be said that there is an argument to move the AMR trajectory for this allocation back 1 year to commence in 18/19 given the timescale of the applications it could also be contended that the delivery of such infrastructure on a national scale could provide opportunities to accelerate delivery on these schemes. The scale of St. Neots East, and recognising that there are 2 master developers bringing forward this allocation allows for variety in the size, design and context in house types and character areas which can be addressed through the use of design codes in setting the vision for the area.

1.47. It is considered that based on the partnership approach being followed the overall quantum of development proposed in the first 5 years can be achieved, and the trajectory thereafter is also realistic.

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

1.48. The boundary of the site is considered to be appropriate. Options were considered for alternative boundaries including potential incorporation of two additional parcels of land put forward. Land to the east of the site immediately north of Cambridge Road at Tithe Farm was put forward in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2017 seeking allocation for employment use (CORE/05, pages 31, 55, 79, 207, 321, 395, and 480). It was discounted as it was not considered that such a further large extension to St Neots would be deliverable within the plan period. Land south of the site between Potton Road, the A428 and the railway line was put forward in 2012 and 2013 CORE/05, pages 31, 55, 207, 321). Given the substantial constraints arising from adjoining uses and the presence of high voltage electricity transmission lines running across the site it was discounted due to the poor quality environment for the residential use sought by the landowner. However, it is noted that the Banks Trustees (771587) consider in their comments that the adjoining site is capable of development and that there is a detailed planning application now under consideration. This Hearing Statement does not seek to pre-empt the due consideration of that planning application, which will be dealt with as a development management matter, but the Council does not consider that, as matters stand, there is any justification for amending the boundary of SEL.2 to include the adjoining site.

1.49. Given the alternative considerations above there is not considered to be any justification for amending the boundary.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

1.50. The allocation is supported by a number of respondents. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study , Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and St. Neots UDF. As highlighted in response to Question 3 the UDF was developed prior to the submission of any planning application and carefully considered the constraints and opportunities within the site and ensuring that the site can meet the needs of future residents by way of infrastructure, housing and employment opportunities. The UDF carefully considered uses including (but not limited to) the site's setting, movement, green corridors, SuDs, Cambridge Road, mixing uses, proposed employment areas and connectivity.

1.51. Urban and Civic (ID: 992844) feel the allocation is not sound on the basis that the terminology used for the local and district centre is at variance with the adopted Urban Design Framework for the Eastern Expansion Area and the Wintringham hybrid planning application. In response it is acknowledged that the allocation, as currently worded is based on the descriptions of planning applications 1300178OUT and 1300388OUT, where the land uses ,as described, were

and are supported in principle. It is considered that the allocation needs to continue to set out guiding principles to ensure that the scheme is delivered in a sustainable manner, ensuring the range of facilities and infrastructure proposed is delivered on site. Furthermore, careful management of the delivery of the scheme is required to ensure that employment, retail and commercial uses do not undermine the town centre of St. Neots.

1.52. Urban and Civic also highlight that difference in terminology for the local and neighbourhood centres between the allocation and the UDF (Appendix 1). The proposal is to have a local centre providing a broader range of services to meet the needs of future residents, and the neighbourhood centre is a smaller, more localised provision of retail and community uses. The difference in terminology is acknowledged and could be modified to provide clarity and consistency with the UDF.

1.53. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 108, 201,202, 458) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Page21, 32).

1.54. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG. The site is developable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identify that development is available now can be completed within the plan period.

2. St Neots

SN1- St Mary's Urban Village

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.1. The site currently comprises a mix of residential and employment development and a proportion of the site is used for formal and informal parking.

2.2. This piece of land was put forward during the production of the Core Strategy 2009 and originally assessed for the Local Plan to 2036 in the Environmental Capacity Study: St Neots Spatial Planning Area document consulted upon between August 2012 and November 2012 (HOUS/02: Availability, page 257). The site is also assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 254-257 for full assessment).

2.3. The site is situated in St Neots town centre with a mix of surrounding land uses; therefore, it has excellent access to services and facilities enabling it for a mixed use development. Taking the flooding constraints into account, a high density residential development at 60% net developable area is deemed suitable; this gives an estimated capacity of 38 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 256).

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.4. The site is allocated for a mixed use development comprising of approximately 40 dwellings, the retention of Brook House as offices and 60m² of retail floorspace (class 'A1' or 'A2').

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.5. The Council's assessment of the site determined that a capacity for approximately 38 residential units is more suitable recognising the variety of constraints impacting on its capacity including flood risk potential on the southern edge and heritage assets with listed buildings (in particular the grade 2* listed Brook House) within and adjoining the site which wholly lies within the conservation. This approach was derived from the findings in the HELAA 2017 (HOUS/02 page 256). This meets the requirements of paragraph 94 and 99 of the NPPF by adopting a proactive strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change by taking into account flood risk and considering the longer term implications of climate change.

2.6. Initial assessment through the HELAA (HOUS/02 – page 256) identifies this underdeveloped site within St Neots town centre as suitable for a mixed use development owing to the excellent access to services, facilities and employment opportunities as well as outdoor sports facilities. This makes to the site a sustainable choice for mixed use development.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

2.7. A Full planning application (planning reference 0900411FUL) for 24 dwellings (21 houses and 3 flats) was approved in December 2014. The development commenced on the 25th December 2017.

2.8. 3 dwellings were approved in May 2014 on part of site (planning reference 1301969FUL) and commencement in August 2016.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

2.9. Taking the Framework policies into account, and in accordance with its Section 1, the development would use previously developed land in a highly sustainable Town Centre location and have important economic benefits through employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents in accordance with Section 6 of the Framework. In accordance with Section 4 of the Framework the site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities by means other than the car including cycling facilities.

2.10. Redevelopment of the site will bring many benefits to the surrounding area. The allocation is made up of land in multiple ownership and comprising multiple curtilages. A large proportion of the site is derelict land and overgrown. Some buildings are in poor condition. The existing visual appearance of the vacant derelict buildings is causing harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in which it sits. The redevelopment of this site presents the opportunity for positive enhancement to the setting of heritage assets and improvement of the conservation area as identified in Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 18a-004-20140306 of the NPPG through criterions 'b' and 'c', which asks for the development to take appropriate account of the site's location within the conservation area and the high grade listed buildings on and surrounding the site (para 10.20 of the Local Plan – CORE/01).

2.11. The site was assessed as a highly sustainable location suitable for residential development, it is easily accessible to the town centre on foot and is close to accessible natural green space, open space, sports, social facilities and a doctors' surgery.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

2.12. The HELAA (HOUS/02 pages 256-257) identifies potential adverse impacts with regards to the site being mostly in Flood Zone 2, its positioning within the conservation area, the presence of listed buildings on and around the site, impact on townscape owing to the visibility of the site, issues with transport access and off-site impacts, noise impacts, light pollution and air quality.

The site was assessed in detail in Appendix A of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FLO/03 - pages 145-149) of the PDF).

2.13. Mitigation measures are identified in the HELAA and within SN1 in the Local Plan (CORE/01) and include the requirement for a detailed flood risk assessment, provision of vehicular access points from Brook Street and pedestrian access points from High Street and Church Walk, provision of high quality development that enhances the character of the conservation area and safeguards and enhances the character and setting of Brook House, a grade II* listed building, 7-11 Brook Street which is a grade II listed building and the nearby St Mary's Church, a grade I listed building and a layout which maximises the opportunities to create a sense of place afforded by views to surrounding listed buildings (CORE/01, criteria a, b and c).

2.14. The planning and listed building consents granted on the land (as listed in paragraph 10.21 of the Local Plan CORE/01) demonstrate that potential adverse impacts can be mitigated, to the satisfaction of statutory and non-statutory consultees.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

2.15. The site is mostly in Flood zone 2. >1% of the site is in Flood zone 1, 88% of the site in Flood zone 2, 6% in Flood zone 3a and 7% in Flood zone 3b.

2.16. The site was assessed in the Sequential Test for Flood Risk (FLO/01) where it was identified that as the majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 2, it is not feasible to place development outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3.

2.17. The main access and egress routes are affected by flooding, therefore safe access and egress will be required by development, or safe refuge provided if evacuation is not possible during a flood. (FLO/01: page 15).

2.18. No sites are classified as highly vulnerable in FLO/01, so, following the PPG sequential test flow chart, the exception test is not required for any site that can be allocated in flood zone 2 (FLO/01: page 3).

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

2.19. The infrastructure needs and constraints are set out in HOUS/02. In summary these are flood risk and impact on heritage assets and the conservation area. Several listed buildings are within the site. These constraints and infrastructure provision have been addressed by planning applicants through provision of relevant planning consents for part of the site (Q4 refers).

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

2.20. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

2.21. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11 p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

2.22. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

2.23. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

2.24. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will "manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery". This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

2.25. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

2.26. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types and sizes to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF/04, para 3.6).

2.27. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

2.28. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the Local Plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

2.29. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of

40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

2.30. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal.

2.31. The level of constraints on the site detailed in Q8 and the relatively high density will affect the level of viability. The existing consent was subject to a viability appraisal and testing that demonstrated that there was insufficient surplus to support affordable housing. For the remaining land, it is likely that viability appraisals will again be required and the level of affordable provision is likely to be at a low level.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.32. The site is known to be available for development, although it is in multiple ownership and may be delivered through more than one scheme. Despite this, the site can be delivered within 5 years.

2.33. For 0900411FUL (MON/01, page 62), the first 12 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2020/2021 with all homes expected to be completed within years 1-5, the timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in years 1-5	20/21 Yr. 4	21/22 Yr. 5	Total 17/36
24	12	12	**24**

2.34. The remaining allocation expects the first 3 homes to be completed in the year 2017/2018, with all homes expected to be completed within years 1-5 (MON/01, page 84). The timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in years 1-5	17/18 Yr. 1	18/19 Yr. 2	19/20 Yr. 3	20/21 Yr. 4	21/22 Yr. 5	Total 17/36
16	3	0	0	3	10	**16**

2.35. This is deemed to be a realistic timescale as Full planning permission has been granted and development has commenced on the site for 27 dwellings.

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

2.36. The defined boundary allows for comprehensive re-development of previously development land and brings benefits such as the reintegration of the land with the rest of the town centre and reinforcing the existing network of routes that provide physical and visual links to the High Street and Brook Street. It is therefore justified.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

2.37. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

2.38. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 31, 55, 78, 108, 204, 319, 393, 454) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Pages 95-96).

2.39. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG[1]. The site is deliverable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identify that development is available now can be completed within a five year time period.

SN2- Loves Farm Reserved Site

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.40. The site is currently rough grassland, located at the south west corner of the Loves Farm development.

2.41. It was allocated for development in the Local Plan Alteration 2002 and assessed in the 2010 SHLAA. It was then assessed in the Local Plan to 2036 in the Environmental Capacity Study: St Neots Spatial Planning Area document consulted upon between August 2012 and November 2012 (HOUS/02: Availability, page 263). The site is also assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 261-264 for full assessment).

[1] Housing and economic land availability assessment

2.42. This site is situated in a primarily residential area with reasonable access to services and facilities and has few constraints apart from the risk of flooding. Despite of this, the site is considered suitable for medium density residential development across a net developable area of 80% of the site resulting in an estimated capacity of 40 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 263).

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.43. The proposed use is for 40 dwellings. Outline planning permission (planning reference 1300389OUT) for 41 dwellings was approved in January 2017 with all matters reserved.

2.44. Under 1300389OUT (approved in January 2017), 40% of houses will be allocated to affordable housing.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.45. The site comprises circa 1ha of land east of the East Coast Main Line at the southwest corner of the Loves Farm development off Cambridge Road, St Neots. Given the proximity of the town centre and the public transport links (including the train station), the site is considered suitable for medium density development, however the prominence of the site must be taken into account – townscape impact is a development constraint. Due to the site being located in flood zones 2, 3a and 3b the net developable area of approximately 80% of the site results in an estimated capacity of 40 dwellings. This approach was derived from the findings in the HELAA 2017 (HOUS/02).

2.46. An application for Outline planning permission was granted in 2013.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

2.47. Outline planning permission (planning reference 1300389OUT) for 41 dwellings was approved in January 2017 with all matters reserved.

2.48. A subsequent Reserved Matters application is yet to be received for the site.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

2.49. Redevelopment of the site will bring many benefits to the surrounding area. The site is in close proximity to a number of amenities including open space, a doctor's surgery, shops and schools and ensures all groups in society have access to decent, appropriate and affordable accommodation. Taking the Framework policies into account, this is previously developed land and the development would have important economic benefits through employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents. The site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities

by means other than the car including cycling facilities and close proximity to the East Coast Main Line (railways).

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

2.50. The HELAA (HOUS/02) identifies that the site raises no significant sustainability issues, with the exception of flood risk as the site lies within flood zone 2, 3a or 3b. The capacity (or lack thereof) of St Neots WWTW was also raised as a potential issue, noting that there is no consented headroom at present. Agreement between the developer, the LPA, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water with regard to waste water flows would be necessary.

2.51. A listed waymarker is located close to the boundary of the site (note representation from Historic England (ID: 56252) [source PREP/02]) and the prominent location requires a considerate design to incorporate this waymarker, reflect the 'gateway' position and note the proximity of high/intermediate pressure gas pipelines.

2.52. The proximity of the East Coast Main Line must be borne in mind with regard to potential amenity impacts with regard to noise, an acoustic assessment would be required to adequately ensure that a development would adequately mitigate these concerns. It is noted that the site was used for storage during the construction phase of the wider Loves Farm development; accordingly a contamination investigation is required.

2.53. Representations from Cambridgeshire County Council (ID: 1150302) [source PREP/01] identified that development on this site should be required to reduce discharge rates into the adjacent Fox Brook.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

2.54. The site is in various Flood zones. 36% of the site lies in Flood zone 2, 37% in Flood zone 3a and 26% in Flood zone 3b.

2.55. The exception test was applied to the site. The site specific test shows that the site will be safe for its lifetime and that development can reduce flood risk overall. The site was therefore considered suitable for allocation (FLO/01: page 25) across a net developable area of 80% of the site.

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

2.56. The main constraints and infrastructure required are outlined in detail in HOUS/02. In summary the constraints are noise from the railway, flood risk and a gas pipe easement.

2.57. Infrastructure will involve an access point and open space.

2.58. An outline approval has been granted together with a signed S106 agreement for a 40 unit residential scheme.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

2.59. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

2.60. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11 p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

2.61. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a

requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

2.62. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

2.63. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will "manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery". This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

2.64. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

2.65. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types and sizes to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF/04, para 3.6).

2.66. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

2.67. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the local plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development

size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

2.68. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of 40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

2.69. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal.

2.70. The existing consent includes provision for 40% affordable housing.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.71. The site's agent confirmed it could be delivered within five years and the 41 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2019/2020. However, the agent's projection for completion has been deferred by one year as a Reserved Matters application is yet to be submitted (MON/01, page 70).

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

2.72. The boundaries comprise post and rail fencing (with the highway beyond) to the east and south. To the north lies a pedestrian/cycle route, with a band of established trees providing screening. To the west, the boundary is formed of similar planting and a continuation of the post and rail fencing.

2.73. This arrangement is appropriate as it represents the land submitted as available for development.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

2.74. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA (HOUS/02) and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FLO/02).

2.75. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Cambridgeshire County Council as LLFA and Archaeology, Anglian Water, Highways England, and Historic England. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the

Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, pages 109, 202, 318, 394 and 454) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, page 96).

2.76. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG[2]. The site is deliverable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory from the site's Agent suggest that development could be delivered within a five year time period.

SN3- Cromwell Road North

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.77. The land is currently occupied by a disused industrial building, a car park for Sealed Air Limited and vacant land.

2.78. This piece of land was originally assessed for the Local Plan to 2036 in the Environmental Capacity Study: Additional Site Assessments document consulted upon in November 2013 (HOUS/02: Availability, page 267). The site is also assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 265-267 for full assessment).

2.79. This site is situated in a mixed industrial and residential area with reasonable access to services and facilities, therefore is considered suitable for medium density residential development across a net developable area of up to 60%, this equates to an estimated capacity of 78 dwellings once the flood risk constraint has been taken into account (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 267).

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.80. The proposed use is for 80 dwellings.

2.81. The type and mix of residential units will be determined through the application of policy LP 26- Housing Mix.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.82. A detailed assessment of the site was carried out as part of the HELAA December 2017 (HOUS/02, P265-267). West of Cromwell Road is becoming more residential in character as older employment land is no longer viable to maintain. A residential use would be in keeping with the existing residential land use beyond the site to the north, west and south. The scale

[2] Housing and economic land availability assessment

takes into consideration site constraints including the need for a site specific Flood Risk Assessment, the requirement to deliver onsite sustainable drainage and the protection of the Wintringham Brook culvert which in turn addresses the concerns about Wintringham Brook raised by both the Environment Agency (ID:1146949) and Cambridgeshire County Council (ID:1150302) and the opportunity to open up the culverted watercourse. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FLO/01 – page 75, paragraph 11.3.2) says "De-culverting of a watercourse, to open it up and make it a feature of the site to allow for flood storage and betterment downstream, should be considered for all sites with culverted watercourses within their boundary". A site specific flood risk assessment would assess the impact of development on the culvert and explore the opportunity for de-culverting to respond to the representation of the Environment Agency and County Council.

2.83. Policy LP 26 is justified through the application of Cambridge Sub-Region SHMA (HOUS/07) and Peterborough SHMA (HOUS/08) and local housing need and strategies (including HOUS/06). By referring to up-to-date evidence the policy ensures that the most appropriate strategy is employed in line with local demand and settlement type and location, or proximity to the most appropriate housing market area consistent with paragraph 50 of the NPPF and NPPG Housing and economic development needs assessments.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

2.84. A planning application has not yet been received.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

2.85. The site is in close proximity to a number of amenities including open space, a doctor's surgery, shops and schools and ensures all groups in society have access to decent, appropriate and affordable accommodation. Taking the Framework policies into account, the development is a brownfield site and would have important economic benefits through access to employment, employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents. The site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities (health, formal and informal open space, retail) by means other than the car including cycling facilities and close proximity to the East Coast Main Line (ECML)). Redevelopment of this site would also be an improvement to the visual appearance of this part of Cromwell Road through well designed new homes and opportunities to improve biodiversity.

2.86. The site was assessed as a highly sustainable location suitable for residential development, it is easily accessible to the town centre on foot and is close to accessible natural green space, open space, sports, social facilities and a doctors' surgery.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

2.87. The site is adjacent to the Cromwell Road Established Employment Area and the ECML lies beyond that and therefore there could be adverse noise impacts on future occupiers. Having regard to the former land use the site could be contaminated. Flood matters are addressed as part of Q7 but consideration must be given to the impact on Wintringham Brook. It would also be necessary for any future scheme to demonstrate that meeting the Water Framework Directive would not be compromised.

2.88. The allocation clearly sets out the constraints of the site and can be mitigated through the submission of the necessary assessments to demonstrate the site specific mitigation required. Assessments such a transport assessments, noise assessment, flood risk assessments (addressed under Question 7 below) and contaminations assessments are reasonable for developments of this scale. Furthermore, mitigation can be controlled through the careful use of planning conditions.

2.89. While Historic England (ID 15252) would request the potential to impact upon the setting of the conservation area to be referred to in the supporting text when all policies, including policy LP36 (Heritage Assets and their Settings) are considered in the planning balance the protection sought by HE already exists within the Plan currently being examined.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

2.90. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Appendix A - Level 2 Detailed Site Assessments (FLO/03 - page 25 of the PDF) shows that 64% of the site is in Flood zone 1, 2% in Flood zone 2, 2% in Flood zone 3a and 32% in Flood zone 3b. The detailed guidance in that document (page 29) advises that the risk to development could be reduced through using the Sequential Approach to place development outside of the flood zones (i.e. on the 64% of the site that lies in Flood Zone 1).

2.91. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Sequential Test for Flood Risk (FLO/01 – pages 17 and 18) advises that the allocation passes the sequential test and, consistent with the Level 2 Detailed Assessment of the site (FLO/03 – page 25 of the PDF), development can be placed outside of the flood zones (i.e. in Flood Zone 1).

2.92. The HELAA (HOUS/02 page 267) and site allocation policy SN3 adhere to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment by estimating the site capacity to that which can be accommodated on the proportion of the site area that lies within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. 64%). The HELAA estimated the capacity of the site at 78 dwellings across a developable area of 60% and policy SN3 allocates a similar capacity at 80 dwellings. This should also mean that pressure to build over the existing culverted watercourse is minimised if not eliminated, consistent with the representations of the Environment Agency (ID 1146949) that building over any sections of

watercourse that needed to remain in the culvert be restricted to all but essential infrastructure (i.e. access).

2.93. A site specific flood risk assessment may demonstrate that the site has a greater capacity for development. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Appendix A - Level 2 Detailed Site Assessments (FLO/03 - page 29 of the PDF) says *"The watercourse is culverted under the site; it is possible that the culvert has not been taken into consideration when defining Flood Zones. Detailed modelling as part of a site specific flood risk assessment will confirm whether the culvert has been accounted for and will provide more accurate Flood Zones".* In this regard it is possible that a site specific flood risk assessment will demonstrate a reduction in the flood extent across the site and a corresponding increase in developable area and site capacity. A site specific flood risk assessment would also quantify the effect of the flood attenuation works associated with the St Neots East strategic expansion location on reducing flood risk to the allocation site, as referred to in paragraph 10.35 of the allocation policy SN3.

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

2.94. HOUS/02 sets out the main constraints and infrastructure for the site. In summary the constraints involve flood risk, demolition, contamination and an easement. The flood risk comes from an existing culverted brook. The flood risk assessment will need to consider solutions to mitigate this risk. A large industrial building will require demolition and there may be historic contamination requiring removal or treatment of soil. There is also a gas pipeline within the site.

2.95. Infrastructure required will focus on a suitable access road, open space and landscaping. Noise attenuation due to the nearby railway will need to be addressed.

2.96. The constraints and requirements are expected to be addressed through a planning application.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

2.97. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a

further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

2.98. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11 p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

2.99. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

2.100. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

2.101. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will "manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery". This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

2.102. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

2.103. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types and sizes to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF04, para 3.6).

2.104. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

2.105. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the local plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

2.106. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of 40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

2.107. For this site, constraints and the high density will impact on viability achievable. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal. The viability work within INF/04 indicates that the typology that this site falls into will generally indicate limited viability though other St Neots sites have been able to support policy levels of affordable housing.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.108. In response to the Council's Annual Monitoring Report housing trajectory survey 2017, the site's agent confirmed its availability and has confirmed that completions could realistically commence within 5 years.

2.109. The first 30 homes will be completed in the year 2021/2022, the timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in years 1-5	21/22 Yr. 5	22/23	Total 17/36
30	30	50	**80**

2.110. The agent for the site considers the site could accommodate up to 120 dwellings, however the capacity was kept at 80 to reflect the draft Local Plan allocation that takes account of constraints imposed by the existing culvert and the EA's request to open this up. A higher density could potentially be achieved if the culvert is retained (MON/01, page 84-85).

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

2.111. The defined boundary allows for comprehensive re-development of previously development land and brings benefits to the site such as contamination mitigation and improved flood mitigation. It is therefore considered that there is no justification for amending the boundary.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

2.112. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA (HOUS/02 – page 267) and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FLO/02 and FLO/03), and Sequential Test for Flood Risk (FLO/01).

2.113. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 205, 320, 394, and 454) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Page96).

2.114. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG. The site is developable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identifies that completions could realistically commence within 5 years.

SN4- Cromwell Road Car Park

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.115. The land is currently used as a car park for Sealed Air Corporation and is currently accessed from a non-adopted road.

2.116. The site has been assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 268-270 for full assessment).

2.117. This site is situated in a mixed use area with residential properties to the south with reasonable access to services and facilities and limited constraints and is considered suitable for medium density residential development at 90% of the net developable area giving an estimated capacity of 27 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 270).

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.118. The proposed use is for approximately 20 dwellings.

2.119. Under 0901288OUT, an indicative 40% will be allocated to affordable housing.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.120. A detailed assessment of the site was carried out as part of the HELAA December 2017 (HOUS/02, P270). The west of Cromwell Road is becoming more residential in character as older employment land is no longer viable to maintain. A residential use would be in keeping with the existing residential land use beyond the site to the west and south. The scale takes into consideration site constraints including noise attenuation measures. It is noted that there are no objections to this allocation.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

2.121. An Outline planning application (planning reference 0901288OUT) for up to 21 was recommended for approval subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement at Development Management Committee on the 19th December 2016.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

2.122. Redevelopment of the site will bring many benefits to the surrounding area. The site is in close proximity to a number of amenities including open space, a doctor's surgery, shops and schools and ensures all groups in society have access to decent, appropriate and affordable accommodation. Taking the Framework policies into account, this is previously developed land and the development would have important economic benefits through employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents. The site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities by means other than the car including cycling facilities and close proximity to the East Coast Main Line (railways). Redevelopment of this site would also be a visual improvement to this part of Cromwell Road through well designed new homes and improvements to the existing access opposite the Bargroves education Centre.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

2.123. The HELAA sets out adverse impacts of developing the site. Consideration will need to be given to the relationship with the school immediately west of this site but that can be managed through careful design including appropriate boundary treatment. The site will need to demonstrate compliance with National Grid requirements and compatibility with nearby waste management uses. It is considered that these are site specific matters that can be addressed through site specific assessments and conditioned accordingly.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

2.124. The site is in Flood zone 1 (FLO/01, page 9). It is therefore at the lowest risk of flooding and the most suitable for development in conformity with the sequential test (NPPG, Para: 019 Reference ID: 7-019-20140306) and paragraph 100 and 101 of the NPPF.

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

2.125. HOUS/02 sets out the site constraints. In summary the primary constraint is noise from neighbouring industrial uses and a gas pipe easement. There are no significant infrastructure requirements.

2.126. Infrastructure will be provided through relevant developer contributions. A S106 agreement is in the process of being finalised.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

2.127. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

2.128. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11 p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

2.129. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

2.130. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: “work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council’s emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth”. The response goes on to state that “water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan”. Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water’s zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water’s Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

2.131. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 (‘AMP 7’) for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will “manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery”. This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

2.132. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

2.133. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types and sizes to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF/04, para 3.6).

2.134. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

2.135. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the local plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

2.136. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of

40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

2.137. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal.

2.138. There is currently an application under consideration with a resolution to approve which includes an affordable provision of 40%.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.139. In response to the Council's Annual Monitoring Report housing trajectory survey 2017, the site's agent has confirmed the sites availability and stated the site could be delivered within 5 years. The 21 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2019/2020 (MON/01, page 79).

2.140. This is considered to be realistic as Outline permission is recommended for approval once a signed S106 Agreement is received.

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

2.141. Retaining the boundary as proposed will ensure the retention of a number of mature trees which are expected to be retained along with the provision of additional landscaping to attenuate noise arising from the adjacent primary school. There are no objections to the allocation boundary as proposed and the defined boundary allows for comprehensive re-development of previously development land.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

2.142. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Reasonable alternatives such as the allocation of the site for wholly supported housing were dismissed (see question 1).

2.143. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 205, 394, 454) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Page96).

2.144. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG. The site is deliverable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identify that development is available now can be completed within a five year time period.

SN5- Former Youth Centre, Priory Road

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

2.145. The site is currently vacant and comprises of previously developed land which is mainly hardstanding, thus reducing the impact of redevelopment.

2.146. The site has been assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 252-253 for full assessment).

2.147. The Huntingdonshire Sequential Test for Flood Risk assessed the site (FLO/01, P24) and concluded that the site is previously developed, would provide an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, is located in close proximity to services, employment and public transport and open space and would provide a limited increase in residential accommodation.

2.148. The site is situated on the edge of the built up area amongst a mix of medium density residential and leisure uses in close proximity to the town centre with very good access to services and facilities, however, there is a risk of flooding on the site which has reduced the developable area of the site to 50% resulting in an estimated capacity of 13 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 253).

2.149. Planning application 1100379OUT was determined in April 2012 and remained extant until 27th April 2015. The Environment Agency did not object and the permission was granted subject to a number of planning conditions. Planning application 15/00634/FUL was received on the 23rd April 2015 and is still under consideration.

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

2.150. The proposed use is for an estimated 13 dwellings.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

2.151. The Council's assessment of the site determined that a capacity for approximately 14 residential units is more suitable recognising its situation within the conservation area. This allows for the release of land for improved on-site water permeability and flood risk attenuation. This approach was derived from the findings in the HELAA 2017 (P252). This meets the requirements of paragraph 94 and 99 of the NPPF by adopting a proactive strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change by taking into account flood risk and considering the

longer term implications of climate change. Redevelopment is in a vulnerable area and should therefore be managed through suitable adaptation and mitigation measures, regardless of the site's previous use.

2.152. Initial assessment through the HELAA identifies that the site is suitable for apartments due to its proximity to the town centre and correlation with the more built-up nature of the existing area.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

2.153. An Outline planning application for 14 dwellings (planning reference 1100379OUT) was approved in April 2012.

2.154. A later Full planning application (planning reference 15/00634/FUL) for 14 dwellings is under consideration.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

2.155. Taking the Framework policies into account, and in accordance with its Section 1, the development would use previously developed land in a highly sustainable location and have important economic benefits through employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents in accordance with Section 6 of the Framework. In accordance with Section 4 of the Framework the site would also be sustainably located with access to employment and facilities by means other than the car including cycling facilities.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

2.156. The HELAA identifies that the site is in a designated conservation area, more than half the site is in flood zone 3a, a small part is within the functional floodplain (flood zone3b). While historic England (ID: 56252) would recommend a tightening of policies to address the site's location adjacent to the St. Neots Conservation Area it is considered that when any proposal is considered against the plan as a whole the level of protection required exists through policy LP36.

2.157. In respect of flood matters regard is had to the sites location and that the EA did not object to the 2011 application on the grounds of flood and that the site could be made acceptable through the submission of a detailed flood risk assessment and use of planning conditions. Allocation SN5 continues to set out the requirement of a site specific flood risk assessment.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

2.158. 1% of the site is in within Flood zone 1, 93% in Flood zone 3a and 6% in Flood zone 3b.

2.159. The site has been assessed in the Sequential Test for Flood Risk (FLO/01) where the site was identified as having significant flooding constraints. A Flood Risk Assessment was prepared and assessed for a previous planning application to which the Environment Agency did not object. The site is situated on the edge of the built up area amongst a mix of medium density residential and leisure uses in close proximity to the town centre with very good access to services and facilities, however, the risk of flooding on the site reduced the developable area of the site to 50% resulting in an estimated capacity of 13 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 253).

2.160. Site specific Flood Risk Assessment states that development can be made safe and that compensatory flood plain provision can be provided on-site. It was concluded that the site passes the exception test as it will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. (FLO/01: page 24).

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

2.161. Specific costs have not been calculated for the infrastructure. It is expected that the developer will provide the necessary infrastructure through a S106 agreement.

2.162. HOUS/02 sets out the detailed constraints of the site. In summary, much of the site is affected by flood risk, reducing the developable area and it is a sensitive location with conservation and heritage considerations required.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

2.163. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each

settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

2.164. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11 p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

2.165. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

2.166. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

2.167. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian

Water will “manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery”. This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

2.168. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

2.169. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF04, para 3.6).

2.170. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the local plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

2.171. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

2.172. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of 40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

2.173. For this site, the constraint of the flood risk will impact on viability achievable. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal. The site is expected to demonstrate a relatively limited level of affordable provision. The viability work within INF/04 indicates that the typology that this site falls into will generally indicate limited viability though other St Neots sites have been able to support policy levels of affordable housing.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

2.174. No expected timescale for delivery was reported in the Councils Annual Monitoring Report 2017. Since the publication of the report, outline permission has been approved and a Full planning application is currently under consideration. Due to the small nature of the site it is estimated that the site could be deliverable within 5 years (MON/01).

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

2.175. The boundary is defined by adjacent existing land uses and an access from New Street to the river across the north of the site. It is not considered that the boundary should be amended.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

2.176. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

2.177. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 109, 202, 318, 393) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Page96)

2.178. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG. The site is deliverable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identify that development is available now can be completed within a five year time period.

3. Little Paxton

SN6- North of St James Road

Question 1: What is the background to the site allocation? How was it identified and which options were considered?

3.1. This is a Greenfield site and much of the site falls within a County Wildlife Site, with the site housing a number of mature trees and well screened from the remaining quarry works.

3.2. This site was submitted in response to the Call for Sites in August 2017 (HOUS/02: Availability, page 282) and has also been assessed through the Huntingdonshire Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment 2017 (HELAA) (HOUS/02: Pages 280-282 for full assessment).

3.3. The eastern part of the site forms part of the Paxton Pits county wildlife site and is unsuitable for development. The western part of the site (approximately 1.3ha) is considered suitable for low density development across a net developable area of 75% of the site resulting in an estimated capacity of 34 dwellings (HOUS/02: Suitability, page 282). Allocation SN6 comprises the western part of the site only and does not include any land that falls within a County Wildlife Site.

Question 2: What is the scale and type/mix of uses proposed?

3.4. The proposed use if for 35 dwellings.

3.5. The type and mix of residential units will be determined through the application of policy LP 26 Housing Mix.

Question 3: What is the basis for this and is it justified?

3.6. The HELAA December 2017, P280 carefully considered the broader allocation proposed and carefully considered the site constraints that resulted in a smaller allocation.

3.7. Initial assessment through the HELAA identifies, having regard to the site constraints and proximity to the County Wildlife Site, that the site is suitable for low density dwellings due to the sites proximity to the built-up area of Little Paxton

3.8. Policy LP 26 is justified through the application of Cambridge Sub-Region SHMA (HOUS/07) and Peterborough SHMA (HOUS/08) and local housing need and strategies (including HOUS/06). By referring to up-to-date evidence the policy ensures that the most appropriate strategy is employed in line with local demand and settlement type and location, or proximity to the most appropriate housing market area consistent with paragraph 50 of the NPPF and NPPG Housing and economic development needs assessments.

Question 4: What is the current planning status of the site in terms of planning applications, planning permissions and completions/construction?

3.9. No planning application has yet been submitted.

Question 5: What are the benefits that the proposed development would bring?

3.10. The site is in a sustainable location in FZ1 and in close proximity to bus stops and a number of amenities in little Paxton including a doctors surgery, shops, school, and open space. The site is also within 2Km of an industrial estate, namely Harley Industrial Estate. Taking the Framework policies into account, the development would have important economic benefits through employment in the construction of the housing (including in the supply chains of materials, fittings and furnishings) and in the local economic contribution from future residents. There would be important social benefits from the provision of market and affordable homes for the residents. In accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF this scheme would bring about opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecology through good design and introduction of sustainable urban drainage.

Question 6: What are the potential adverse impacts of developing the site? How could they be mitigated?

3.11. The HELAA identifies potential adverse impacts (P280 – 282). There will be loss of grade 3 agricultural land and regard is had to the proximity of this site to the County Wildlife Site, Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and SSSI and the open countryside where ecology is a material consideration. Natural England (ID: 34468) advises that bat surveys should be undertaken prior to this site being allocated to ensure that any adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated, to meet your authority's requirements under the Conservation (of Habitats and Species) Regulations 2010 (as amended). Mitigation measures are identified in the HELAA and within SN6 in the Local Plan and include an ecological assessment to be submitted as part of any planning application and include an enhancement scheme to address any potential impacts from the scheme on ecological matters. In accordance with the NPPG paragraph 016 (ID:8-016-20140612) the expectation is that it will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed and likely impact on biodiversity. It is considered that this approach, along with appropriately worded conditions will mitigate the impact of this development and provide enhanced opportunities to encourage biodiversity and ecology while ensuring the ongoing protection of protected species. Other mitigation measures required by SN6 include the provision of safe and suitable access and retention of trees and hedgerows.

3.12. There are three grade II listed buildings and Paxton Hall, a grade II* listed building to the south of the site. Historic England (ID 15252) feel reference should be made to these in the supporting text. It is considered that when all policies, including policy LP36 (Heritage Assets and their Settings) are considered in the planning balance the protection sought by HE already exists within the Plan currently being examined.

Question 7: How is the site affected by flood risk? How has this been taken into account in allocating the site? How have the sequential and, if necessary, exception tests been applied?

3.13. The site is in Flood zone 1 (FLO/01, page 10). It is therefore at the lowest risk of flooding and the most suitable for development in conformity with the sequential test (NPPG, Para: 019 Reference ID: 7-019-20140306) and paragraph 100 and 101 of the NPPF.

Question 8: What are the infrastructure requirements/costs and are there physical or other constraints to development? How would these be addressed?

3.14. The full constraints are set out in HOUS/02. In summary, the main issues are the impact on the surrounding area which will need suitable mitigation measures. There are no apparent constraints that will affect the viability for development.

3.15. It is expected that appropriate infrastructure will be identified when a planning application is made. There has not been any assessment of cost or the requirement but it is not anticipated that any significant high-cost infrastructure will be required.

Question 9: In particular what is the situation with waste water treatment capacity and how would any issues be resolved?

3.16. In 2016 Arup was commissioned by the Council to undertake an Infrastructure Delivery Plan ('IDP') (INF/01) to support the Local Plan. The IDP considered a wide range of infrastructure typologies, including waste water capacity. The IDP was based on both a desk review and consultation exercise with Anglian Water to determine existing infrastructure capacity. Following this a modelling exercise was undertaken by Arup to understand the likely demand that proposed development over the Plan period would generate. This applied typical industry accepted demand assumptions multiplied by the total number of homes proposed within each spatial planning area. Further consultation with Anglian Water matched this demand to the existing waste water infrastructure to establish where the existing network can support this demand, and where reinforcement would be necessary. In November 2017 a further update to the IDP (INF/03) was undertaken based on a marginally different distribution pattern. Arup noted that the overall change in demand arising between each settlement pattern was minimal. As such it was deemed that overall this would unlikely to substantially alter the previous assessment, with the exception of settlements where the quantum of growth had substantially reduced.

3.17. The Council undertook an updated Water Cycle Study (FLO/11) in 2014 to determine how the water cycle constraints relate to all the potential development sites highlighted in the Local Plan to 2036. It provides a detailed approach to the management and use of water to ensure the sustainability of the water environment is not compromised by growth. Proposed sites in St Neots and St Neots East will be served by the St Neots Wastewater Treatment Works (referred to as a Water Recycling Centre-WRC by Anglian water). The Water Cycle Study assessed that the cumulative impact of the planned growth would exceed capacity (FLO/11

p75). Reinforcement work to increase capacity will be required. The assessment undertaken by Anglia Water and Arup in 2017 concluded there is likely to be capacity for five years but reinforcement work will be needed prior to the capacity being breached. The required upgrades are identified as critical schemes in the IDP Schedule (INF/02).

3.18. Anglian water is responsible for building, operating and maintaining their water infrastructure which is required to provide for additional growth, whereas local upgrades and connections to the existing sewer network required to bring forward development are typically funded by developers. This includes a connection charge, paid by the developer to the water company for the physical connection to the sewer, and also an infrastructure charge. This charge is also paid by the developer when the premises are first connected. The charge contributes to the water companies' investment in improvements to the existing sewer networks to meet increased demand for new customers. Water companies can also build the infrastructure required to connect the new development to its network by charging the developer a requisition charge, which the water company will use to provide a new public sewer and associated infrastructure to a new locality. The cost and extent of the required network improvements are determined through pre-development requirements and appraisals once a more detailed design is known. This enables capacities to be confirmed and the timescales for necessary upgrades and local enforcements.

3.19. Regarding future investment and network reinforcement, Anglian Water in their consultation response state that they: "work closely with the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authorities and developers to understand the scale, timing and likelihood of growth in WRC catchments to inform future investment. [Anglian Water is] a statutory consultee on Local Plan preparation and will be taking into account the future growth proposed in the Council's emerging Local Plan to ensure that infrastructure provision aligns with growth". The response goes on to state that "water recycling centre (previously referred to as sewage or wastewater treatment works) upgrades where required to provide for additional growth are wholly funded by Anglian Water through our Asset Management Plan". Site specific and off-site reinforcements will be funded via Anglian Water's zonal charges (as set out in Anglian Water's Developer Services, Summary of Charges 2018/2019).

3.20. In March 2018 Anglian Water released its Outline Business Plan 2020-2025 for the Asset Management Period 7 ('AMP 7') for public consultation. The document suggests that Anglian Water will "manage an adaptive programme of delivery using intelligence from key indicators, live modelling tools and relationships with local authorities and developers, to determine the optimal timing of solution delivery". This provides further evidence that Anglian Water is committed to monitoring ongoing capacity across its assets and is committed to making the required investment to ensure new demand can be accommodated within the network.

3.21. It is noted that representations received by Anglian Water at Regulation 19 stage are supportive of the proposed policy approach outlined in Policy LP6.

Question 10: Is the site realistically viable and deliverable?

3.22. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study (INF/04) assessed the effect of Local Plan policies (INF/04, Section 3.9, page 15), affordable housing, CIL and a range of site types to demonstrate that the Local Plan allocations and policies are viable and deliverable. The Study uses construction cost assumptions based on the BCIS median weighted for Cambridgeshire to reflect current construction costs. Taking a cautious approach, allowances were also made for contingency costs and fees, to plan for changing market circumstances (INF04, para 3.6).

3.23. The Study factors in a sum of £20,000 per dwelling for site infrastructure costs such as primary and secondary access roads, utility connections, infrastructure and open space (INF/04, para 3.8.6).

3.24. The Study is not site specific, as this is not a requirement for the local plan (NPPG Para: 005 Reference ID: 10-005-20140306). Testing has been undertaken for a range of development size typologies, dwelling densities, value areas on greenfield and previously developed land (NPPF Para 174 and PPG Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20140306).

3.25. The report concludes that the modelling of typologies shows that the housing market in Huntingdonshire is strong with confidence of sustained market growth and that the rate of 40% affordable is viable for most typologies, meaning that housing delivery will not be slowed on the grounds of viability.

3.26. Policy LP25 (affordable housing provisions) seeks a target of 40%. Consideration will be given to reducing the requirement to ensure viability is achievable where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions such as high cost infrastructure elements. This will be assessed through the submission and validation of a viability appraisal. The viability work within INF/04 indicates that the typology that this site falls into will generally indicate strong viability.

3.27. The site is expected to demonstrate a relatively high level of affordable provision.

Question 11: What is the expected timescale and rate of development and is this realistic?

3.28. In response to the Council's Annual Monitoring Report housing trajectory survey 2017, the agent for the site has confirmed that the site is available. However, the landowner intends to commence the gathering of baseline evidence in advance of submission of a planning application.

3.29. The first 17 homes are expected to be completed in the year 2025/2026, the timescale for delivery is set out below:

No. units in years 1-5	25/26	26/27	Total 17/36
0	17	18	**35**

3.30. The site has extant consent for mineral extraction until the mid-2020s, so the agent's projections have been deferred in light of this and as a planning application has not yet been received for the site (MON/01, page 85).

Question 12: Is the boundary of the site appropriate? Is there any justification for amending the boundary?

3.31. The defined boundary allows for comprehensive and sensitive development of this site and brings benefits to the site such as ecology and biodiversity enhancements.

Question 13: Are the detailed policy requirements effective, justified and consistent with national policy?

3.32. The detailed policy requirements are justified and based on a proportionate evidence base including the HELAA and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Viability Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Reasonable alternatives such as the allocation of the site for wholly supported housing were dismissed (see question 1).

3.33. The policy requirements are effective and have been based on consultation with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Anglian Water, Highways England, Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council as the LLFA, Local Highway authority, and Archaeology unit. Their responses and the Council's subsequent amendments to the policy can be found in the Statement of Consultation (CORE/05, Pages 120,471, 500) and Statement of Representations (CORE/04, Page97).

3.34. Responses to the questions above demonstrate that site is suitable, available and achievable as defined in the NPPG. The site is developable as defined through paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Recent responses to the Annual Monitoring Report Housing Trajectory identify that development is available now can be completed within the plan period.

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

St Neots eastern expansion

urban design framework


Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents

List of Illustrations

Figures

Photos

Graphs

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Urban Design Framework

The purpose of the Urban Design Framework is to describe the main planning and design factors and requirements that developers must address in delivering a sustainable urban extension to the east of the market town of St Neots in Cambridgeshire.

1.2 St Neots

St Neots is a market town in Cambridgeshire. It is located at the southern tip of Huntingdonshire District and to the south and west it adjoins Bedfordshire. The current population is some 27,000 which makes it the second largest settlement in the County after Cambridge. The town has ancient historical roots and is centred on the broad River Great Ouse which provides the town with an impressive riverside and floodplain environment. The town has good connections with London, which is 45 minutes away by rail on the East Coast Mainline and takes about an hour by road on the A1 which forms its western boundary. More locally, it is only 27 kilometres to Cambridge City Centre, 22 kilometres to Bedford town centre, and 42 kilometres to Peterborough City Centre.

1.3 Growth

St Neots is a focus for growth within the Cambridge sub-region. This is recognised in the policies of the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy which was adopted in September 2009. It is important that the growth is based on the principles of sustainable development and that it encompasses the development of new communities in the St Neots East area and improvements to the existing town including the ongoing regeneration of the town centre and the town's business areas, and its social infrastructure and environmental and townscape qualities.

1.4 Location of the Sustainable Urban Extension

The sustainable urban extension development area covers some 227 hectares of greenfield land to the east of the existing town of St Neots. It is located to the east of the East Coast Main Line railway track, which currently defines the eastern edge of the town. It is located to the east of the East Coast Main Line railway and bounded to the south and east by Priory Road and the A428 trunk road. It adjoins the existing Love's Farm development and is bounded to the north by Priory Hill. Open countryside lies beyond the development area boundaries.

1.5 What will the Sustainable Urban Extension Provide?

Excluding the existing Love's Farm development, the sustainable urban extension has the capacity to provide land for the development of some 3,500 new dwellings, of which a target of 40% affordable housing will be sought, plus associated community facilities and services such as schools, shops, recreation areas and open space. It will also provide some 25 hectares of new employment land. There is an opportunity to link parts of the development (e.g. employment areas and schools) to a potential heat main that will provide combined

heat and power from excess / wasted capacity at the nearby Little Barford Power Station. It is envisaged that, on completion, the sustainable urban extension will accommodate some 12,000 new residents (if Loves Farm is included), and a range of new employment opportunities both in the identified employment areas, mixed use areas, the district and local centres, the schools and other community activities.

1.6 What are the Development Timescales?

The first phase of development east of the railway, known as Loves Farm, is currently being implemented by Gallagher Estates. The quality of the development is managed through an agreed Design Code. The further phases, which are the main focus of the Urban Design Framework, will be delivered in the period to 2026 and beyond.

1.7 What are the Impacts on St Neots?

One of the key design factors for this project is to provide a framework that ensures that the sustainable urban extension has its own distinctiveness and is also integrally linked to and perceived to be part of St Neots. Connectivity is important in this respect and particular attention is being paid to linkages and improvements to the town centre (which lies 1 kilometre to the west).

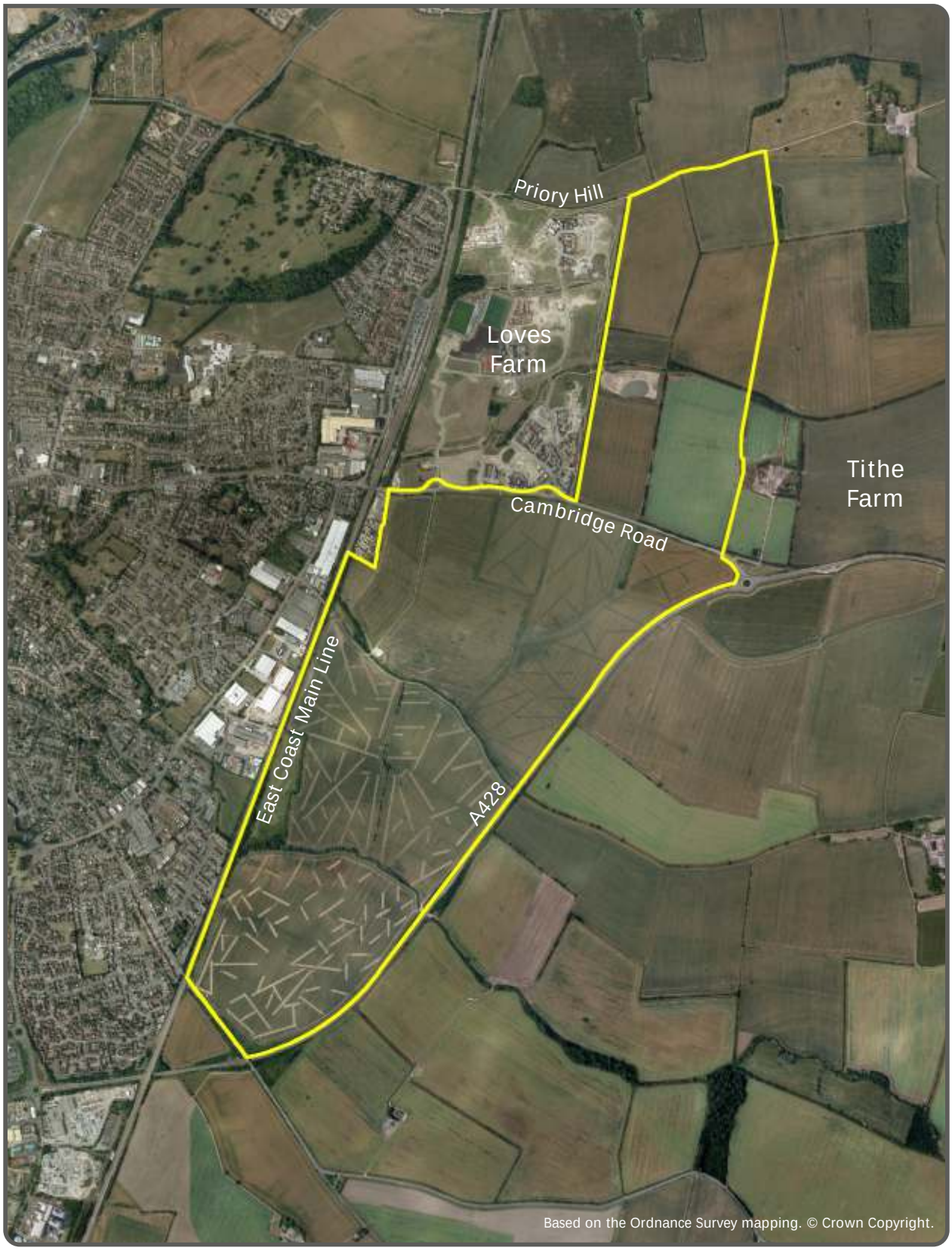
1.8 Process

The Urban Design Framework has been developed in an inclusive way, involving a wide range of local community, business, and other interest groups as well as the main statutory planning, environmental, highways and infrastructure agencies. Urban design advice from the Cambridgeshire Design Quality Panel has helped to shape the finalised framework. The Urban Design Framework has been refined through a significant process of consultation and engagement with a wide range of local groups, communities, and interested organisations and agencies.

1.9 Status

The Urban Design Framework has been developed by the District Council in partnership with the main landowning and developer interests. It was adopted as Council policy in winter 2010. The Council will use the Framework, along with the statutory Development Plan, to continue to work with the developers and landowners in the preparation of master plans, outline and detailed planning applications for the development area.

FIGURE 1. The Site



St Neots Eastern Expansion

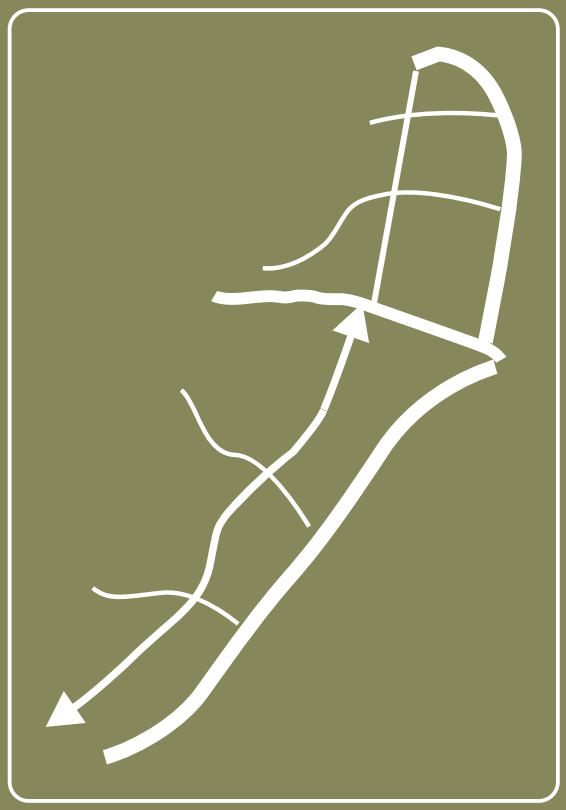
Urban Design Framework 2010

2. Urban Design Objectives

2.1 Urban Design Objectives

The urban design objectives for the development of the St Neots East sustainable urban extension are:

- To create a sustainable, well planned, distinctive and interesting place that has its own identity and becomes a positive and integral part of the town and community of St Neots.
- To help meet the future housing, employment and community needs of St Neots and its surrounding area.
- To use land efficiently and creatively, making the most of existing landscape features, creating new ones, and minimising the impact of site constraints.
- To reduce the need for residents to travel long distances by providing good links from residential areas to local employment areas, community facilities and services, the town centre, and to the public transport network for journeys to employment and other services beyond the town.
- To provide a range of social and community facilities including local shops and primary schools to meet the needs of the new residential community.
- To ensure, through good design, that the residential environment is not dominated by the car.
- To be based on a network of well designed, attractively landscaped and inter-connected streets, paths and walkways through safe open spaces which encourage walking and cycling into and around the area and the existing town.
- To improve managed pedestrian footpath access from St Neots into the open countryside to the east of the A428 and to the north of Priory Hill.
- To enhance native biodiversity (the number and variety of plant and animal species) and range of habitats within the area and address the impact of development on the biodiversity and environmental quality of the surrounding countryside.
- To promote an energy efficient new development that has minimal impact on the causes of climate change, and which takes advantage of appropriate renewable technologies including the potential to use locally generated waste heat and power.



2.2 The vision is to create a distinctive new urban extension to the town to meet a range of needs for the St Neots area, including additional housing close to the railway station, new employment opportunities, and improved access to the countryside. The extension will incorporate open space to serve the residents of the new development.

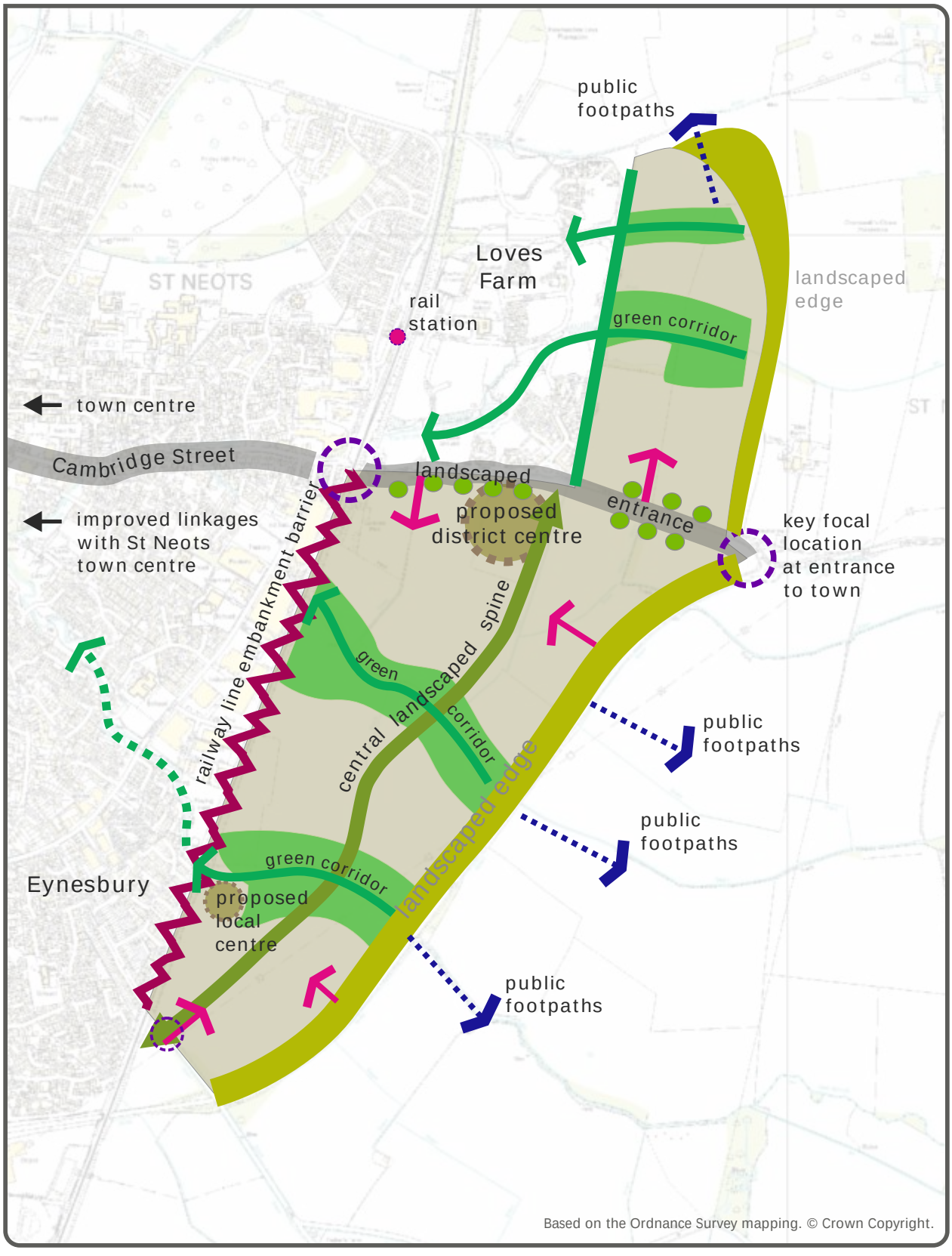
2.3 The eastern expansion will be a sustainable and vibrant new community that is inclusive and diverse with its own distinctive local identity which is founded upon best practice urban design principles, drawing on the traditions of market towns, which encourages the high quality traditions and innovation that are characteristic of the Cambridge Sub-Region.

2.4 Of particular interest and importance are the following points:-

- To effectively integrate the development with the rest of the town through improved connections under and over the railway line and with Loves Farm.
- To ensure that the development has a sufficient range of facilities to serve the new community.
- To create a more attractive landscaped entrance to the town along Cambridge Road / Street.
- To provide a variety of landscaped edge treatments, particularly along the A428 and the north and east of the Loves Farm extension.
- To develop a mix of uses, such as different types of employment use, housing and shops.
- To develop the site with a careful consideration of the landscape, and building it around the shallow vales that generally flow east to west across the site.
- To create a network of open space, a green ladder providing space for activity and leisure.

2.4 The District Council is also exploring how the town centre can expand to provide facilities for the growing population.

FIGURE 2. The Vision



3. Context

3.1 The Origins of the Town

Modern day St Neots was formed as a result of the amalgamation of the medieval town of St Neots with the villages of Eynesbury, Eaton Socon and Eaton Ford. The settlement originated at a convenient crossing of the broad River Great Ouse, close to the Great North Road (now the A1) to the west. The river and its floodplain is a highly attractive environmental and recreational asset which passes through the centre of St Neots, immediately to the west of the town centre. The town grew from Saxon times and became significant from 974AD on the establishment of a priory to house the relics of the Cornish monk "St Neot".

River Great Ouse from Riverside Park

Aerial photo of St Neots and River Great Ouse

St Neots market square

3.2 Recent Growth

St Neots was a location for expansion in the 1960s, when large new housing areas were created as part of the London Overspill Agreement, and new employment areas were built to the west of the East Coast Mainline. The development of the Loves Farm area began in 2008. This area lies to the east of the East Coast Mainline and forms the first phase of the St Neots East sustainable urban extension.

3.3 The Town Centre

St Neots is a market town, with the main market taking place at the town centre's market square each Thursday. A broad range of shops and town centre services are located in a generally attractive town centre environment. However, the physical area of the town centre is constrained by the river to the west and a fine grain of surrounding urban development. There are opportunities to improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre's shops, services and environmental quality through careful

planning, to ensure that it is able to effectively serve the existing and growing town. These opportunities will be explored in a forthcoming St Neots Town Centre Plan that will complement this Urban Design Framework.

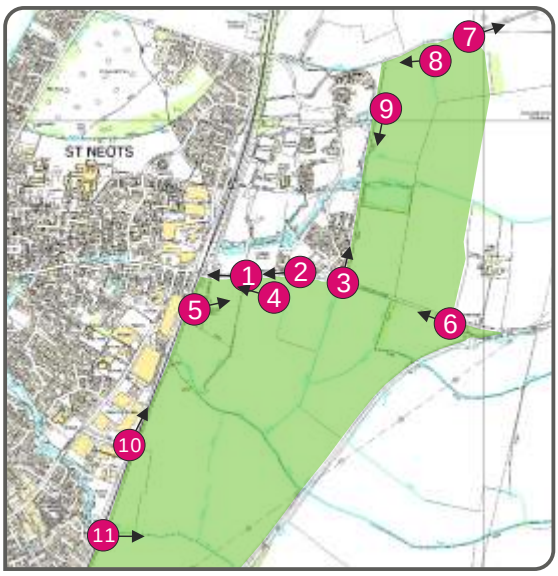
3.4 Integration

The whole town needs to benefit from the growth and development at St Neots East. Although not within the remit of this design framework, new residents will expect good quality town services, especially a vibrant town centre, and many may wish to find work in the local area. The development of the St Neots East area and its integration as part of the existing town offers a great opportunity to underpin the whole town's future viability, physical qualities and its range of retail, employment, and community facilities. Equally, it is recognised that many existing and new residents travel further afield, especially to Cambridge, Bedford and London, for work and services that cannot as yet be found in St Neots, so it is important that the town's levels of connectivity, especially by public transport, are maintained and enhanced. The District Council is assessing the capacity of the town centre to deliver enhanced facilities to serve the future growth of the town.

3.5 Character of the St Neots East Area

The St Neots East area is characterised by a series of existing physical features that form a strong context for developing urban design solutions. These are:

- The railway line: The north / south alignment of the East Coast forms a strong physical boundary to the east of the existing town. The Loves Farm development has crossed the boundary and the rest of the St Neots East development needs to ensure that pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular connectivity through the limited number of access points across this barrier are enhanced.
- The vales: The landscape across the site undulates gently with a series of distinctive tree lined water courses. These run in a general east / west direction and are important landscape features that will continue to help control surface water drainage and act as attractive landscape and ecological elements within the overall Urban Design Framework.
- The wider landscape: The St Neots East area is surrounded by arable agricultural land which forms the broad plain of the River Great Ouse. Hedgerows and ridges form important landscape features.
- Cambridge Road: The existing alignment of Cambridge Road will become one of the main gateways into St Neots from the east. There is an opportunity to create a distinctive and attractive new street characterised by a mix of uses and a very high quality public realm in this area.
- The A428: The A428 trunk road forms a hard eastern edge to a large part of the St Neots East area. The relationship of the development to the road is of fundamental importance in creating an attractive edge to the town.
- Photographs on pages 11 and 12 show the existing character of the site.



Key to photographs

1. View to Cambridge Road through railway bridge

2. View to the railway bridge from Cambridge Road

3. Landscape quality at Loves Farm

4. View along Cambridge Road from the east

5. Looking east across the area from the railway

6. Cambridge Road from the east

7. A view from Priory Hill to open countryside

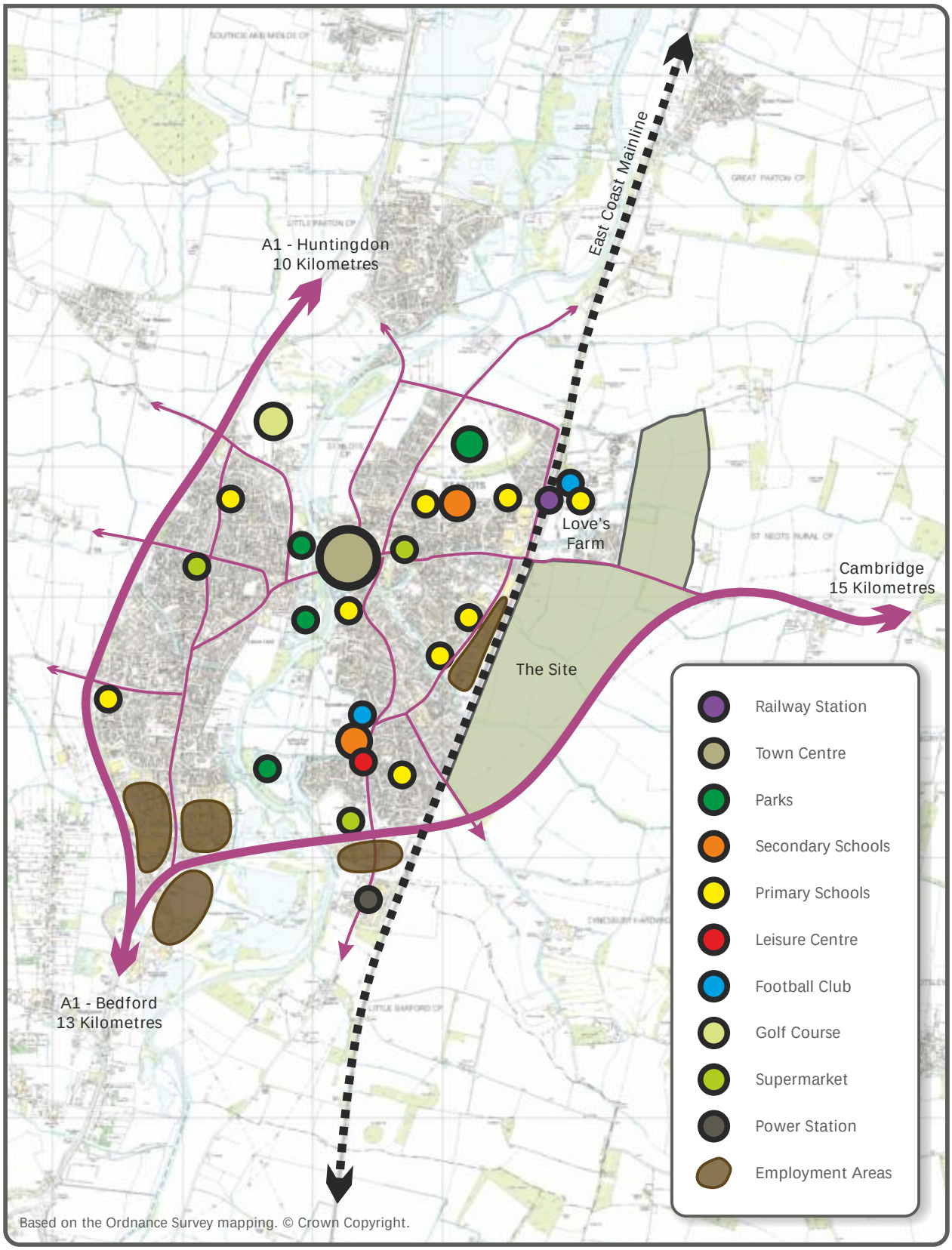
8. A view along Priory Hill

9. The current eastern edge of Loves Farm

10. The East Coast Mainline

11. A view down one of the vales

FIGURE 3. Context



St Neots Eastern Expansion

Urban Design Framework 2010

4. Constraints

The main physical development constraints are identified on the constraints map and described below.

4.1 Adjacent Land Uses

The northern site is bounded by the Loves farm development in the west, Cambridge Road and the southern site to the south and open arable farmland to the north and east. A listed tithe barn and farm buildings are adjacent to the eastern boundary.

The southern site is bounded by the A428 to the east and south east with arable farm land beyond and Potton road to the south. The railway lies to the west with mainly industrial buildings beyond with some residential. In the north west corner a small plumbing centre and a 20 unit travellers' site lie between the extension area and the railway.

4.2 Existing Landscape Features

The main landscape features are the hedgerows which follow the streams and those providing field boundaries. Other features include some recent structural planting and some copses.

4.3 Visual Impact Assessment

The northernmost part of the site sits on the highest part of the site. The visual impact of this part will constrain the line of development and require a significant set back from the boundary.

4.4 Contours

The land is not have any unusually steep or difficult to access. The contour map shows how the land naturally falls towards the streams, but with part of the southern site falling northwards towards Cambridge Road.

4.5 Flood Risk

An assessment of the 100 year flood risk has been carried out. No built development will be located within this area, without mitigation.

4.6 Noise Contours

The noise generated by the road, railway and adjacent industrial uses has been assessed. There will be restrictions on the types of development permissible in these areas unless mitigation measures are carried out.

4.7 Existing Vehicular Access

Existing spurs from the Cambridge Road roundabouts are available to access the southern site. The site to the north of Cambridge Road will be accessed from that road.

4.8 Existing Footpaths and Connections

A number of public rights of way cross the southern site from St Neots towards the countryside. However, only the path along the Hen Brook has a suitable access beneath the A428. Access across the railway line is via two

underpasses, one at Hen Brook and the other at Wintringham Brook, and an uncontrolled at grade crossing. A new pedestrian bridge is proposed between Loves Farm and the railway station. Pedestrian access is also available on the Priory Hill road bridge to the north of the site. Cambridge Road also provides improved pedestrian access.

4.9 Overhead Power Cables

A 132V overhead pylon and power cable slices diagonally across the lower part of the southern site. There will be restrictions on the type of development which can be located in the vicinity of these lines if they are to remain above ground. In addition these pylons will reduce the visual attractiveness of residential development and amenity on this part of the site.

4.10 Underground Services, Easements and Safety Zones

A number of services and easements run parallel with the railway line. Development adjacent to the high pressure gas main is subject to restrictions based on PADHI and HSE guidelines.

4.11 Road and Rail Corridors

In addition to noise issues as discussed above, the road and rail embankments create both a visual barrier and physical barrier to movement between the site and the rest of St Neots.

The road corridor also creates a visual and physical barrier to movement between the southern site and the wider countryside to the east.

Vehicular access is currently limited to the bridge at Potton Road in the South, the underpass at Cambridge Road and the bridge at Priory Hill in the north.

The constraints plan (Figure 4) provides a summary of the existing conditions on the eastern expansion site.

FIGURE 4. Constraints

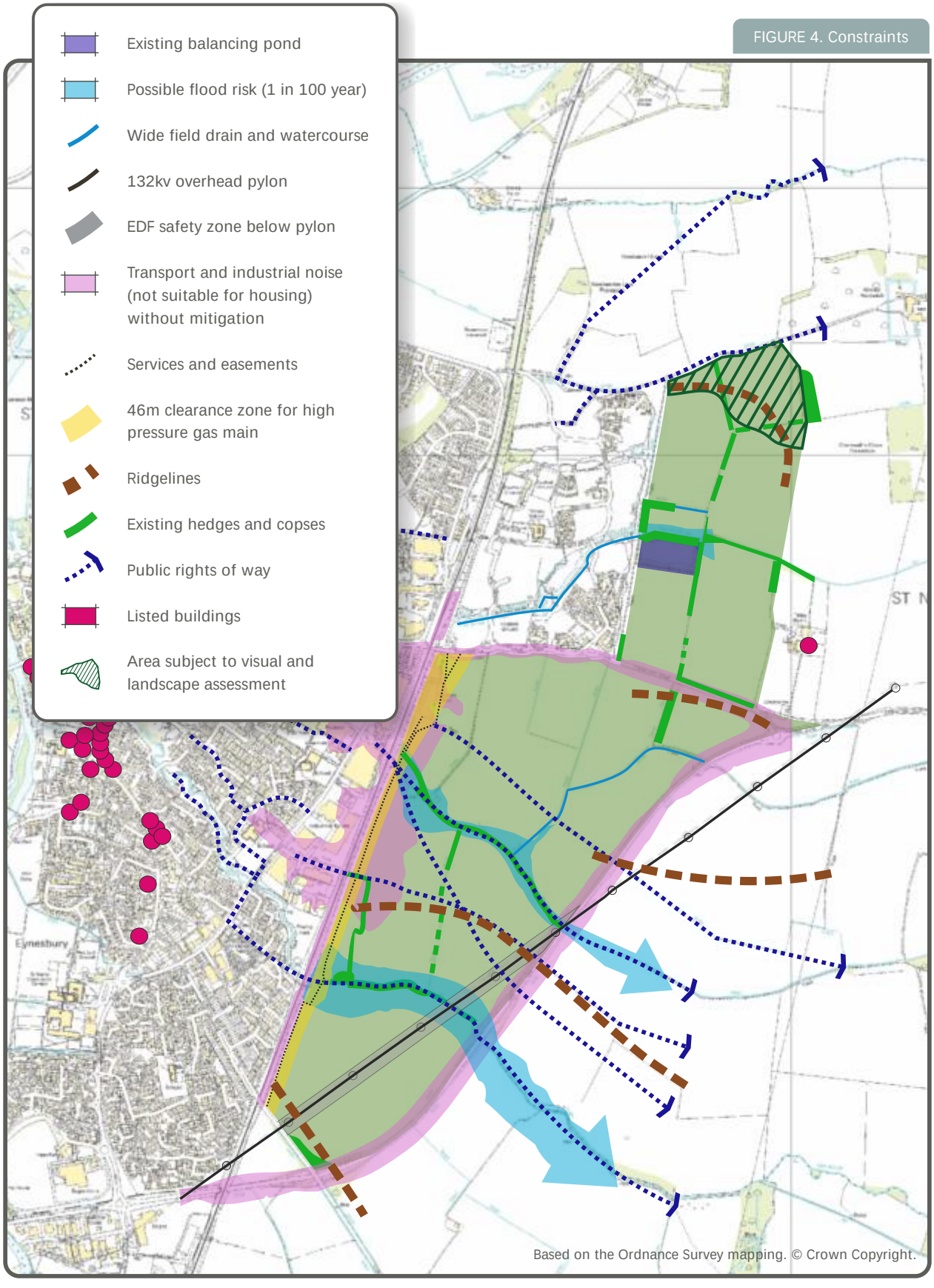
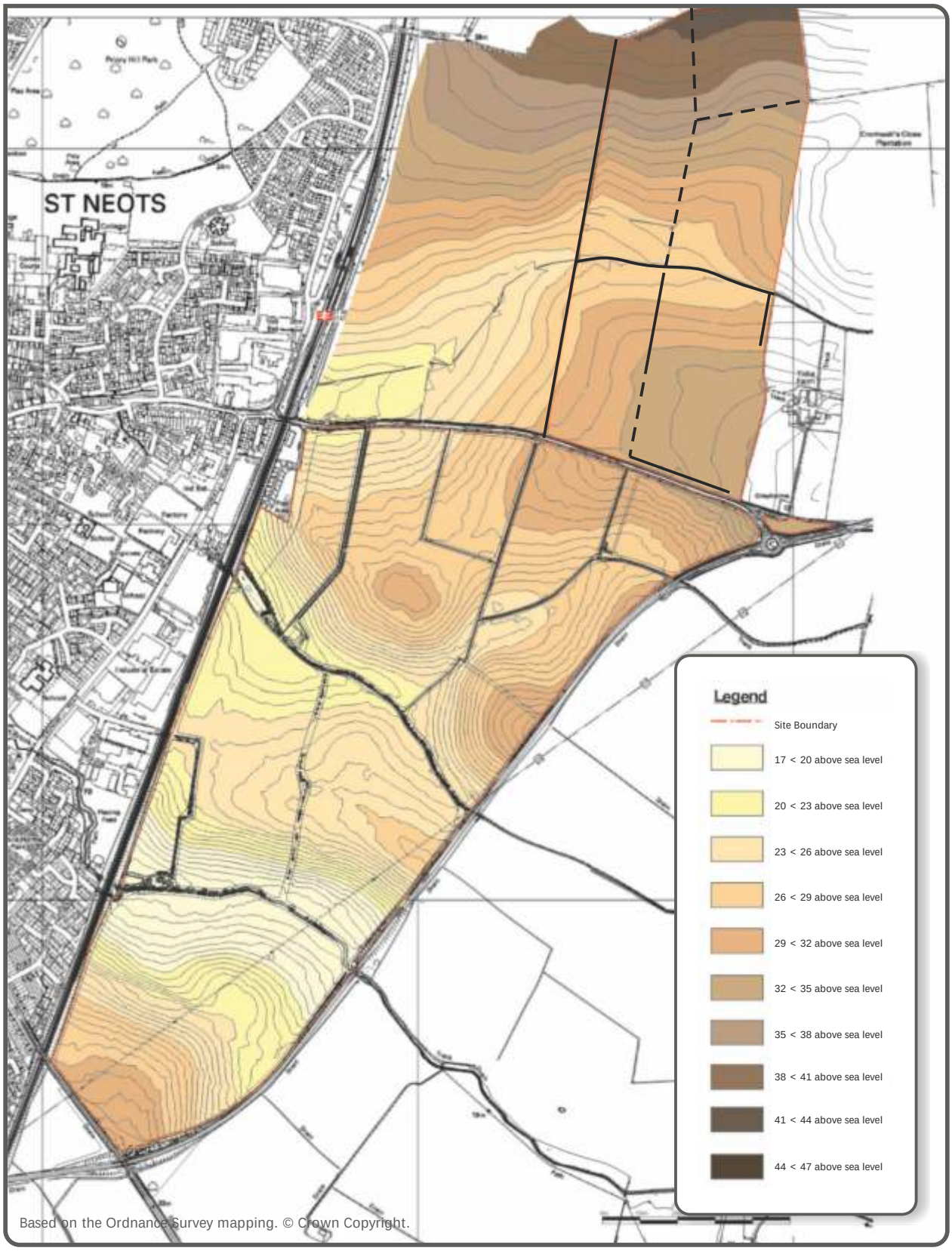


FIGURE 5. Contours



5. Place Making Principles

Introduction

The planned growth for Cambridgeshire provides an opportunity to create sustainable and vibrant new communities. It is crucial that we build high quality housing with unique identity that will provide visually pleasing environments where people will want to live. The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out core principles of the level of quality to be expected in new developments in Cambridgeshire.

This section describes the Quality Charter.

5.1 The Four Cs of Place Making

It is important that St Neots East is designed to be a distinctive and attractive place in its own right, and also one that integrates and benefits the whole town. To ensure distinctiveness and integration, the Urban Design Framework is based on the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter's four main place-making principles of:

- Community
- Connectivity
- Climate
- Character

5.2 Community

Individuals and families build into communities that live in and use places. The following community focused place-making principles provide a basis for ensuring that St Neots East will be a well designed and successful place whose community has the best chance to thrive:

- Involve communities from the start of the design and planning process.
- A range of housing tenures should be available, and homes should be built in a way that allows adaptation to different stages of life.
- Individuals should feel able to get involved in managing their communities.
- Social infrastructure including health, education and leisure opportunities is just as important as physical infrastructure.
- There should be a mix of formal and informal greenspace and links between them.
- Community activities should be encouraged by the provision of places to meet informally and formally.
- Public space should promote social interaction and healthier lifestyles.
- Community facilities and buildings should be flexible and able to make use of the latest technology.
- Space should be made available for local shops and services to develop and thrive.

5.3 Connectivity

Whilst private cars will remain important they should not over-dominate the design process or the completed development. The following connectivity focused place-making principles provide a basis for ensuring that St Neots East will be well connected within and beyond itself by a range of transport choices and opportunities to safely walk and cycle:

- New development areas should be easily accessible by high quality and frequent public transport services.
- Public transport networks should interlink and serve main employment and activity areas.
- New developments should enhance the feasibility of walking and cycling.
- Developments should enable people to work close to home for part of their working time.
- Streets, footpaths and other links should provide for ease of mobility for all sectors of the community.
- Bus stops should be well designed and should provide information on services and local facilities.
- Reward to encourage alternatives.
- Road designs should include permeable surfaces and service infrastructure should go into green space corridors or service ducts.

5.4 Climate

All new development and environmental infrastructure at St Neots East will be built to meet the latest environmental standards, using the following climate change focused place-making principles:

- Generally, the pattern of development should allow people to easily adopt sustainable lifestyles.
- Parts of the development areas should aim to achieve the highest standards and act as examples of good practice as the development proceeds.
- New development should not be located in areas liable to environmental risks such as flooding.
- Sustainable waste management systems should be built into new developments to make recycling easy and unobtrusive and encourage people to waste less.
- Utility service providers should work together in designing infrastructure that promotes energy and water conservation and the use of locally produced renewable energy.
- All buildings should be designed to anticipate the potential impacts of climate change and have a capability to be easily adapted.
- Biodiversity and wildlife should be encouraged through a network of green spaces and sustainable urban drainage systems, that are specifically designed to foster greater ecological variety.
- Sustainable energy partnerships or trusts should be encouraged as part of new developments and within local communities.
- Trees and planting should be used to provide shade and cooling in summer and to soak up rain, as well as providing an attractive landscape.

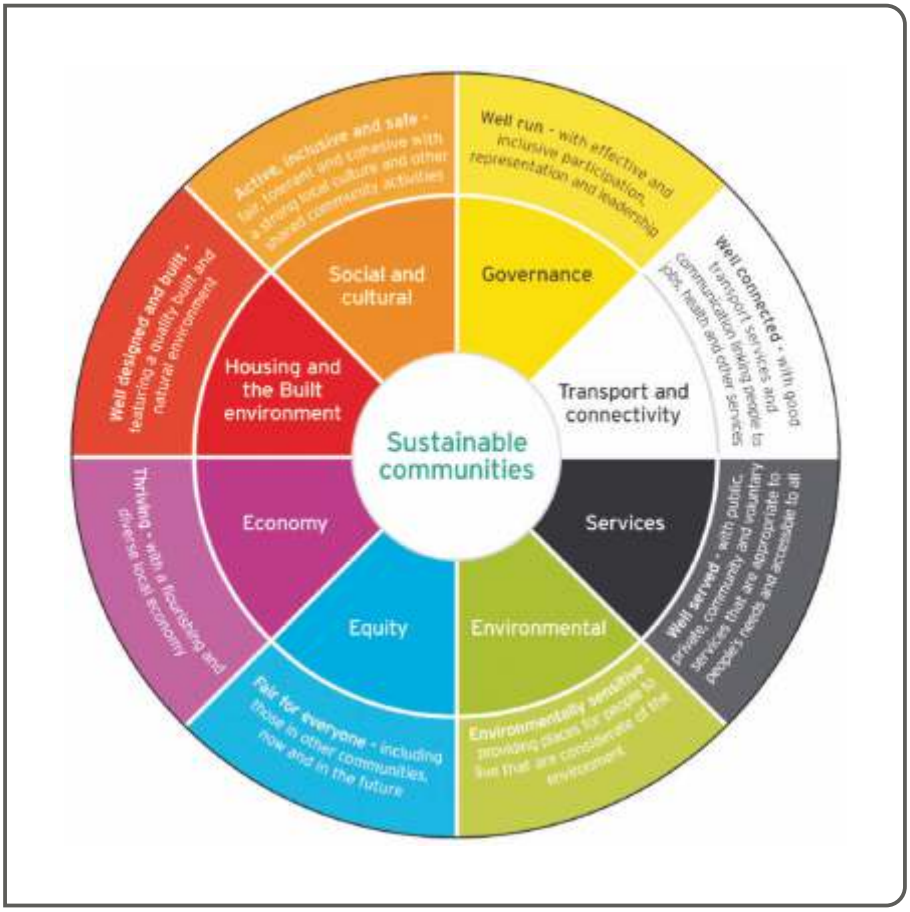
5.5 Character

The following design character focused place-making principles provide a basis for ensuring that St Neots East will be a well designed and attractive place:

- Existing landscape features should be identified and used to create a locally distinctive place.
- The Urban Design Framework should provide a sound basis for master-planning specific parts of the St Neots East area.
- Design quality should be promoted through the development of Design Codes for the development area.

- Densities and massing should vary with higher densities around local shops, services and transport nodes.
- Creative but simple designs, well built with good materials and detailing are often the most successful and durable approaches.
- Open space should be designed to be integrated with buildings and good landscapes are as important as good buildings
- All buildings should be designed to be flexible and adaptable.
- Car and cycle parking, storage and waste recycling should be integrated into the design process of all buildings.

FIGURE 6. The Egan Wheel



The Egan Wheel was designed by Sir John Egan. It is a tool that can be used to determine whether any community is sustainable. It highlights the various elements that makes a place work.

St Neots Eastern Expansion

Urban Design Framework 2010

6. Site Specific Urban Design Guidance

6.1 Site Specific Principles

This chapter identifies the various elements that in combination will make St Neots a successful place, with a particular emphasis on those areas of site specific importance, including:-

- Land Use. A land use plan, describes where different land uses are to be located and justifies their location.
- The Urban Landscape. Providing guidance to show how much and where the open space should be located, and demonstrating how the green grid has evolved
- Movement. Providing guidance to show how the development can address the issues of junction design and access, public transport access, cyclists and pedestrians movement, and countryside access
- Character and Distinctiveness. To provide early guidance on how the character of the site can be developed and learning from other highly regarded developments around the country

6.1.1 Particular Issues

- Energy. Providing recommendations on how to create an energy efficient sustainable urban extension
- Cambridge Street. Providing more detail on how to ensure a well designed attractive and fitting entrance to the town
- The edge to the development with particular reference to the A428 - to provide guidance to ensure that if necessary, highway access is created onto the A428, and to suggest options for any landscape treatment that will be provided along the edge of the development.
- Employment. Clarifying where and what type of employment will be provided, with an analysis of movement options
- District and Local centres. Describing where and how large these centres should be, looking at what uses there will be in these locations and what activities may take place there
- Community facilities. Providing guidance about what type of community facilities will be required throughout and outwith the site development boundary
- Connections. Guidance to ensure that the site is effectively integrated with the rest of the town through attractive connections that also reinforce shifts away from vehicular movement
- Drainage. Guidance to ensure that the drainage functions enhance the biodiversity of the site, and learning from innovative solutions in other places and using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- Places and spaces. To provide some examples of how to create attractive spaces and places. and how this will reinforce the site's distinctive quality
- Recap on Cambridgeshire Quality Charter. To remind ourselves that the aims and objectives of the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter have been met in the production of the document.

6.2 Land Use

The proposed land uses diagram (Figure 7) for the eastern expansion is the result of an extensive design process. This site presents the opportunity to create an attractive, sustainable mixed-use community in line with local planning policy. It will provide homes of mixed type and tenure together with schools, local centres and employment opportunities. The development should create a unique sense of place defined by a bold landscape framework whilst creating a very high quality setting for new homes.

The land uses have been located to create a holistic design which responds to the physical, historical, socio-economic and ecological context and also enables the provision of jobs, homes, shops and infrastructure.

The proposed land uses are summarised as follows:

6.2.1 New Homes

New homes will include a mix of building typologies. The homes will be provided at appropriate densities to create a broad mix of dwellings and a variety of character areas.

6.2.2 Public Open Space

The new community will be set within a significant framework of public open spaces which will include formal and informal play areas. Building on the inherent attributes of the site, a series of broad landscaped bands will cross the site from east to west to form a 'green ladder'. These will lead the countryside into the development and provide connections between urban and rural.

The open space known as “Railway meadow” together with a copse of mature trees provides the only significant existing landscape feature on the southern part of the site, and this must become a protected central landscape feature within the development.

6.2.3 District and Local Centres

Two new centres are proposed as part of the eastern expansion in addition to the local centre at Love’s Farm. These will be located along clearly defined and attractive pedestrian/cycle routes to ensure genuine ease of access and to help reduce car journeys. They will be the hub of local activity.

District Centre: The district centre on the south side of Cambridge Road will be generally within ten minutes walk from new homes on both sides of Cambridge Road and will be of a scale to serve both communities. It will provide a mix of uses including a range of retail and community facilities, and will include a new primary school.

Local Centre: The local centre will be located next to Hen Brook close to the existing pedestrian access to Eynesbury. Its location will help to provide a community focus and forge stronger links between new and existing areas. An option to be explored is its potential location on the Brickhills open space on the Eynesbury side of the link. Further work with the local community will be needed to determine the preferred location.

6.2.4 Primary Schools

In addition to the new school already built on the Love's Farm development, the potential locations of new primary schools are illustrated on the land use plan. The size of these schools is to be agreed with the County Council, as education authority.

The schools will be located along clearly defined pedestrian/cycle routes, encouraging these as the appropriate means of arrival. They will be

integrated into the proposed local/district centres, reinforcing them as the focus of the community. The schools will be designed to encourage their use as community buildings by allowing separate access to the main hall.

There is no requirement for a secondary school on this site, but links to the existing St Neots secondary schools will be reinforced.

6.2.5 Commercial and Mixed-Use

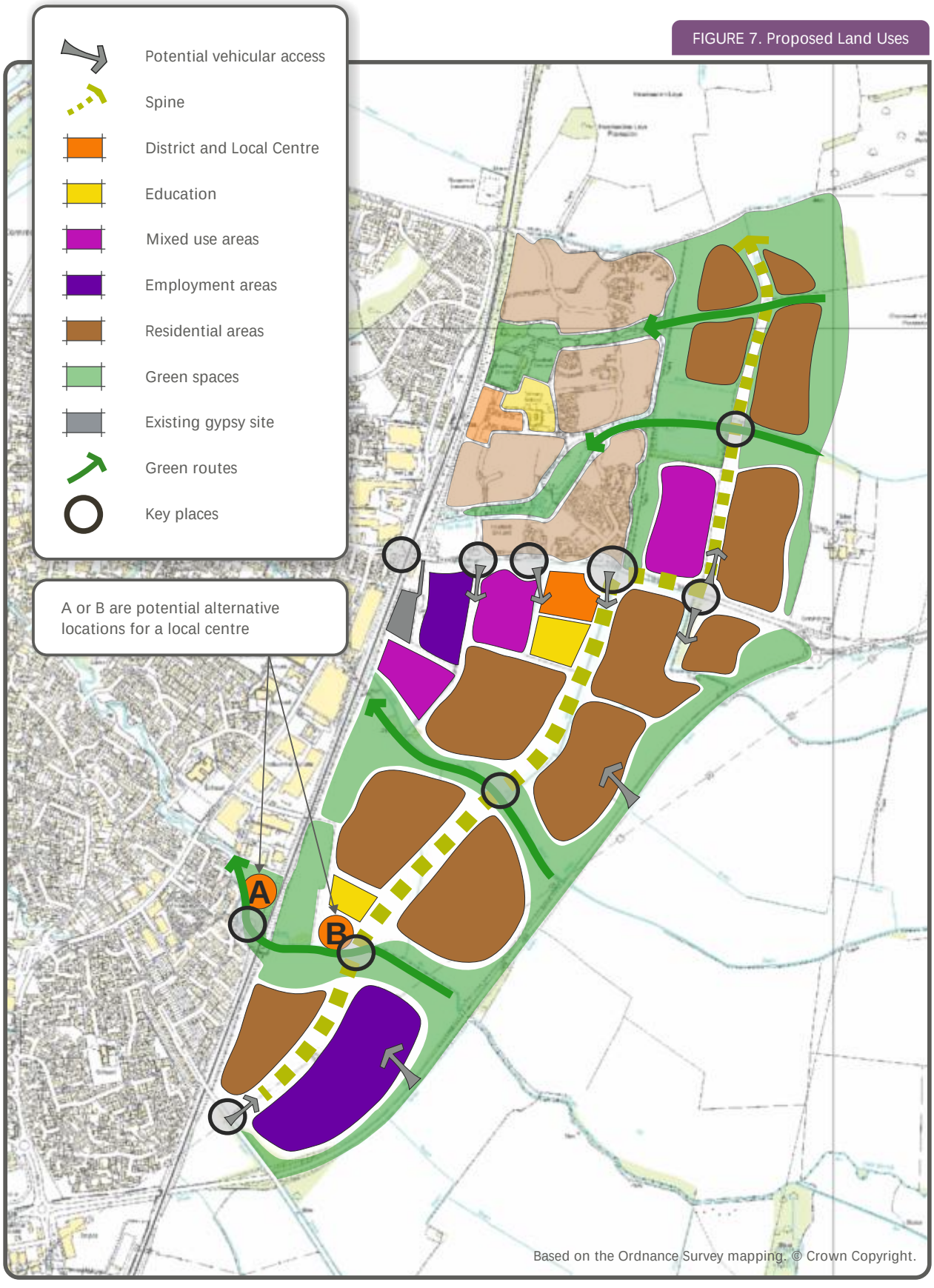
There are three general employment areas across the eastern expansion area, two sites along Cambridge Road and a third site in the south of the site adjacent to the A428.

Cambridge Road will be a new gateway to St Neots from the east. Buildings with frontage to this road would need to be of a high standard to meet this aspiration. Larger commercial units would be more appropriately located in the southern employment area. This would be subject to agreeing appropriate access from the A428.

The transition between the commercial areas and residential should be carefully managed and could contain a mix of uses. Specific employment uses which match the requirements of the local and regional market should be explored.

The plans shown on the following pages are indicative only.

FIGURE 7. Proposed Land Uses



6.3 The Urban Landscape

St Neots East presents a significant opportunity to provide a well designed urban landscape which takes advantage of the naturally undulating landscape and watercourses and provides opportunities to:-

- Enhance the town's setting and views to and from the open countryside
- Create and enhance an attractive green framework of public open spaces that supports active sports and informal recreation
- Create and enhance wildlife habitats and natural biodiversity
- Encourage more sustainable and healthier lifestyles

6.3.1 Vales, Grids and the Green Ladder

St Neots East is within the South East Claylands landscape character area (as defined in the HDC Landscape and Townscape SPD) where the predominant characteristics are subtle variations in topography, including valley sides, gently undulating landforms and plateaux.

Green vales are created by tree belts and the three east / west oriented streams and vales across the area form the natural skeleton for designing and developing new landscapes, which should retain and enhance existing landscaping features. The green vale approach is demonstrated at the Love's Farm development by Fox Brook which is harmoniously integrated into a new green corridor.

Green grids can be created to provide north / south linkages with the green vales. The green grid approach integrates urban nature conservation habitats within developments and these areas can also include public open spaces and green recreational routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Within the green grid framework, particular areas of the site will offer opportunities for the creation of unique open spaces including:-

- The northern edge of the area which offers opportunities for peaceful and tranquil space, with enjoyment of long views from above the ridge line. This could be a site for a burial ground and / or parkland, and could be accessed from the north over Priory Hill bridge.
- The paddock to the north of the existing balancing pond could be designed for use as a playing field. It will be easy to access by the new population.
- Allotments need to be provided on a phased basis in line with the needs of the expanding community and in accordance with HDC standards. It is envisaged this will require land on both sides of Cambridge Road to provide good access for future residents
- The landscaped setting along the A428 and the eastern edge of the northern part of the site requires sufficient structural planting along key lines of sight to create a soft interface to the wider countryside. The design approach will need to create a variety in the sequence of spaces and planting. Playing field uses could also be created within some of these structural landscaping areas, particularly where the ground is relatively flat.

Together, the green vales and the green grid form a “Green Ladder” which is the overall urban landscape rationale for the Urban Design Framework for the whole of St Neots East.

The Green Ladder will provide well designed, interconnected and safe green links between the town, within the development area, and to the open countryside beyond. Connected public access, via public rights of way, will be

retained and routes from the development areas to the town will be enhanced, particularly along Hen Brook and Fox Brook.

The green space contained within the Green Ladder should be of variable width to allow for the inclusion of sports and recreational facilities at locations along each route. These dimensions will be clarified in the masterplan and enforced through future design coding.

6.3.2 Open Space and Recreation

The development of St Neots East must include the provision of a mix of formal and informal sports and recreation space and facilities to meet a wide range of community recreation needs and demands. These should:-

- Be in accessible places to ensure that they are well used
- Connect to the wider town's green space and green infrastructure networks
- Extend, where possible, the Rights of Way network to facilitate links with the wider countryside
- Be designed to assist the integration of new with existing communities
- Enhance the health and well-being of residents
- Encourage sustainable travel modes, such as walking and cycling
- Encourage biodiversity by forming green links between existing wildlife habitats
- Be designed to enable efficient and effective ongoing management and maintenance

The provision of sports facilities at St Neots East will be guided by the Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2009-2014 (and other appropriate guidance as it emerges).

The Council's evidence base and standards for open space provision are set out in its Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit (2006). Detailed open space, sports and recreation requirements will be developed through detailed master-plans associated with planning applications for specific parts of the development area.

The types of provision that could be provided at St Neots East include:-

- Playing pitches, courts and greens
- Equipped play for children and teenagers
- Informal open space
- Allotments

6.3.3 Biodiversity

Development at St Neots East should minimise risks to and avoid the unnecessary loss of trees, woodland, hedgerows and other valuable habitats. These elements provide ready made mature landscaping which helps to integrate new development into the local environment.

Important landscape features should be assessed and retained if appropriate. In selected locations increased tree planting should take place to create additional habitat and add visual interest. Selected hedgerows and other valuable habitats should be reinforced or managed based on their visual and wildlife potential.

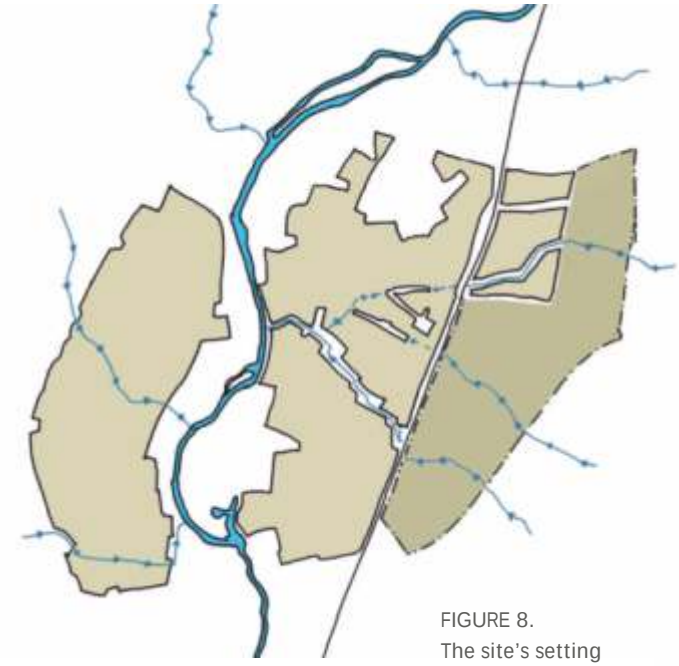


FIGURE 8.
The site's setting

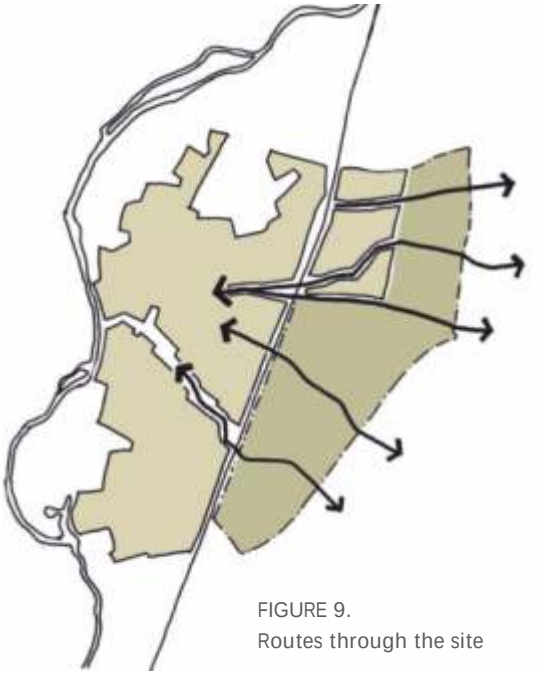


FIGURE 9.
Routes through the site

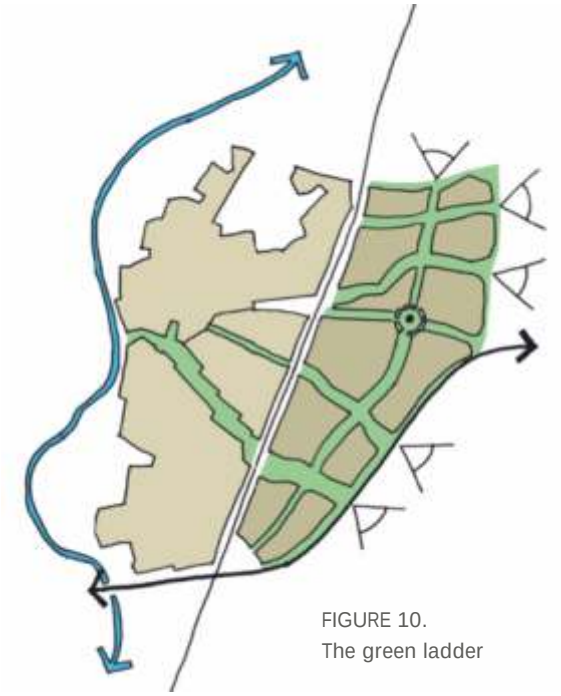


FIGURE 10.
The green ladder

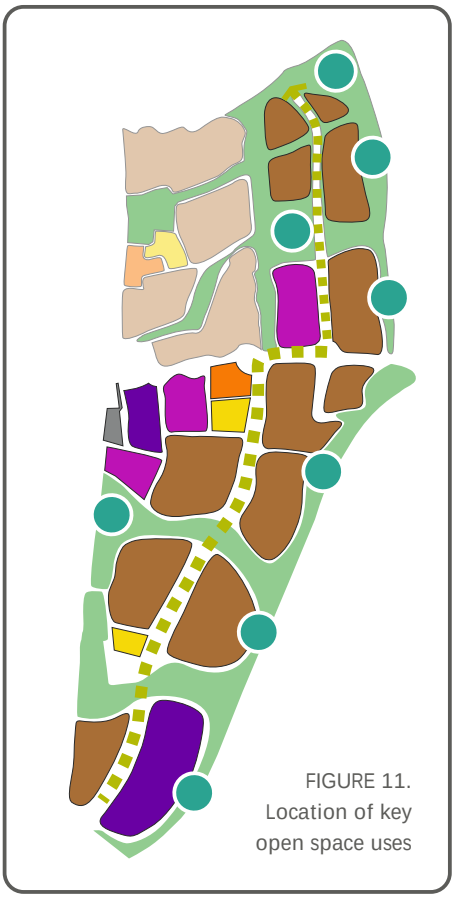


FIGURE 11.
Location of key
open space uses

Figures 8-10 describe how the design process evolved, with the east-west flowing streams and the east-west public footpaths have combined with the north-south routes to create a green ladder.

6.4 Movement

The development of a transport and movement strategy for St Neots East relies on the interrelationship of several key components. It is important that these components work together, and place sustainability at the heart of the strategy. These components include:-

- Principal road junctions
- Public transport
- Cyclists and pedestrians
- Countryside access

6.4.1 Principal Road Junctions

The principal road junctions within the St Neots East are:-

- New junctions along Cambridge Road
- A new junction onto Potton Road
- Potential accesses onto the A428
- Linkages through to the existing Love's Farm development
- Potential "break points" (public transport / taxi through movement only)

Each intersection requires detailed consideration in terms of the orientation and setback of buildings, landscape, signage, and pedestrian / cycle crossing points.

Cambridgeshire County Council and the Highways Agency are the authorities charged with the preparation and / or approval of the detailed road designs. The District Council will be working co-operatively with the County and the Highways Agency to secure compliant and well designed junction designs and connections for each location.

6.4.2 Public Transport Networks

Public transport strategies must be led by the County Council, in partnership with the local authorities, bus companies and developers. The District Council has prepared a strategy (see figure 12) which seeks to act as a basis for further discussion, negotiation and detailed route planning.

The proposed public transport strategy for St Neots East aims to build upon the existing network and to extend and enhance coverage to include the development sites on a phased basis.

The aim will be to ensure that there is a series of well connected and high quality pedestrian and cycle routes connecting to the public transport network to help make such modes more attractive than private car trips. This will be realised through ensuring that the majority of development is not more than a 5 minute or 400m walk to stops.

6.4.3 Cycling and Pedestrian Networks

Each development site within St Neots East will need to have both an individual walking and cycling route plan within the site, as well as a plan demonstrating well connected routes to other sites and existing development, especially to Eynesbury and to Love's Farm.

A key principle to implementing any high quality, sustainable development is safe, well designed and appealing pedestrian and cycling routes. There are already some well used and established pedestrian and cycle routes close to the eastern expansion.

However, opportunities exist to complement and further enhance this provision and create better connections with the countryside and to the town centre. Figure 12 indicates the principal cycle routes that will be developed in

and across the eastern expansion. Strategic roads within each development site must be designed to include a segregated cycle route.

6.4.4 General Principles for Cycling

Each development site should be as permeable to cyclists and pedestrians as possible. Cyclists can generally be accommodated, without any special provision, on roads that have been designed to achieve a target speed limit of 20 mph.

In addition to the road network, separate pedestrian and cycle routes will be necessary to link areas of housing to each other and to community facilities. Off-road links can generally be shared by cyclists and pedestrians if they are at least 3.5m wide.

However, where the flows are likely to be high, such as main links to schools, shops or other community facilities, segregation should be the default position and cycle links that are perceived as being 'pedestrian surfaces' should be avoided.

There is limited permeability between the eastern extension and the rest of St Neots, mostly due to the impact of the East Coast Mainline railway. There are several linkages either under or onto the railway line, including a (yet to be constructed) footbridge to the railway station and a bus bridge at the northern end of the site.

All of these linkages will have to be dealt with in different ways, following detailed assessment. Development east of Love's Farm will be much more easily linked to Love's Farm, across and through an attractive wide landscaped belt.

6.4.5 Countryside Access

Development at St Neots East should contribute toward the regional network of public rights of way for non vehicular traffic. This will enable better access to the countryside, encouraging more healthy lifestyles. In addition, the enhancement of existing rights of way will be necessary in order to achieve access improvements for the wider community. Some may also need to be realigned.

Negotiations with landowners and detailed analyses will be necessary to determine exact alignments of future rights of way. Public rights of way for the northern part of the site need to be enhanced to take advantage of the existing connections.

Figure 12 shows the key movement networks.

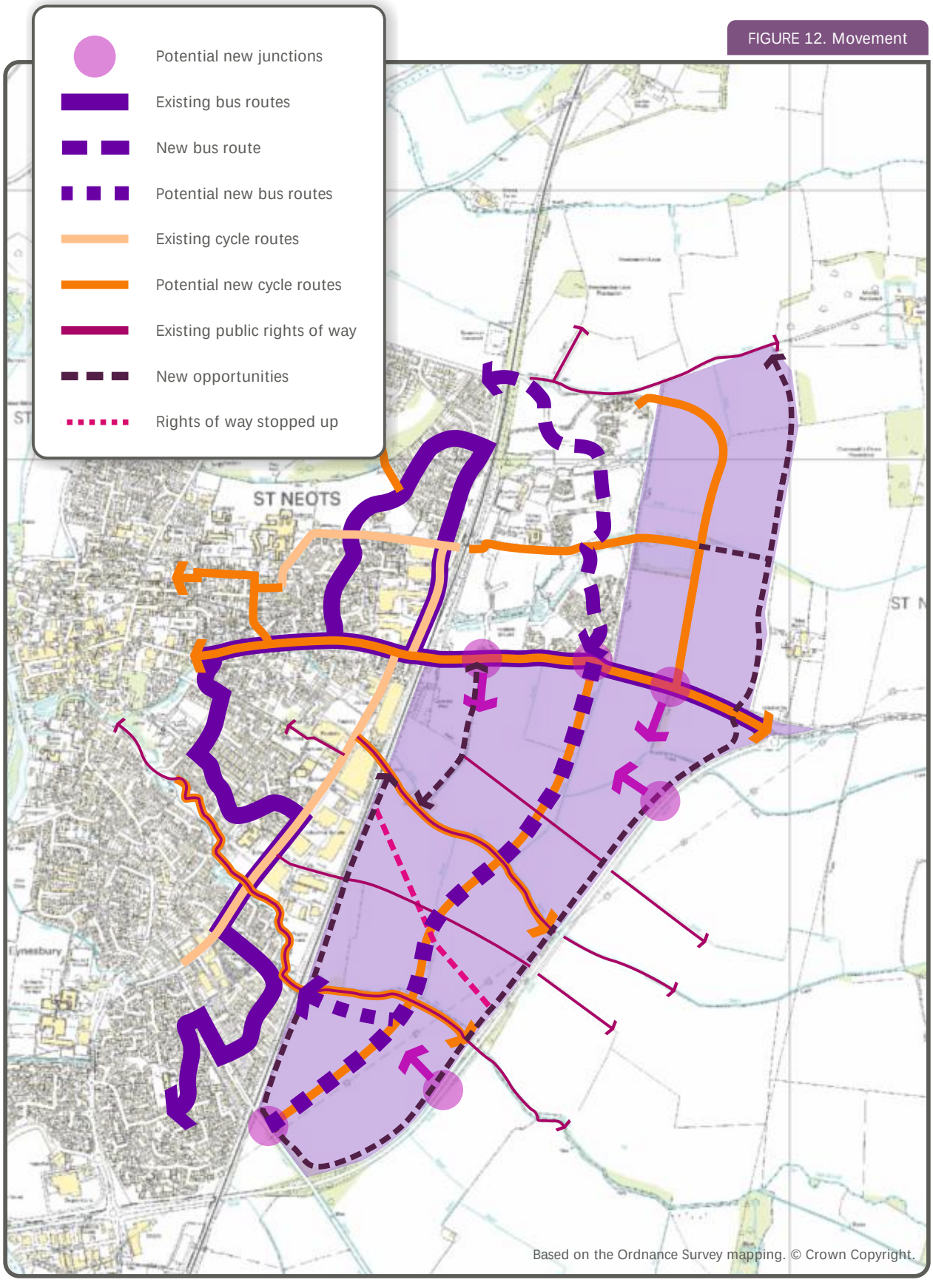
6.4.6 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. Its design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types. Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland.

Green Infrastructure is important as it can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits close to where people live and work including:-

- Places for outdoor relaxation and play
- Space and habitat for wildlife with access to nature for people
- Climate change adaptation - for example flood alleviation and cooling urban heat islands.
- Environmental education
- Local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture
- Improved health and well-being – lowering stress levels and providing opportunities for exercise

FIGURE 12. Movement



6.5 Character and Local Distinctiveness

A masterplan framework needs to respond to the regional context, accommodate the technical constraints of the site, incorporate an appropriate provision of schools, shops and jobs, and integrate existing site features. However, it requires a creative process to turn these individual design responses into a coherent framework, which is greater than the sum of its parts.

In the eastern expansion area the landscape concept is the overarching idea. The network of green spaces accommodates the open space provision but also provide innovative solutions to the site constraints, provides a structure to the arrangement of land uses and defines the overall character of the development.

6.5.1 Townscape Principles

Traditional English townscape is epitomised by the organically evolved village, with lively street frontages, a natural hierarchy and diminishing densities towards the countryside interface. The permeable urban structure allows ease of movement, from place to place, by foot, cycle or car. Streetscape and public spaces are full of variety and interest derived from their gradual evolution but distinguished by the ease of transition between one character and the next. The architecture whilst varied is unified by the limited palette of materials and regional details with occasional landmark buildings which stand out against the rest, thereby providing legibility, a sense of knowing where you are.

Together with the overarching strategic landscape, a model based on traditional townscape would aim to achieve the following:

- A range of distinct character areas unified by a cohesive architectural identity
- A variety of scale and enclosure of space based on both local urban and rural models
- A harmonious relationship between the natural and built environment
- A safe and vibrant public realm
- A design that combines the best of traditional forms and materials with modern lifestyle requirements and construction methods
- Contemporary, regional architecture, borne of local materials and detailing
- Features emerging from new design agendas (eg energy)

6.5.2 Character Areas

The creation of distinctive character areas is fundamental to the delivery of legible townscape. A variety of character areas will be defined through the masterplanning process with each area establishing a unique identity through its response to localised context, eg. 'The Countryside Edge' or 'Cambridge Street'

Through the use of design codes, transitions in the architectural language, the use of materials and the changing dynamic of hard and soft landscaping features between one character area and the next will be carefully orchestrated but without limiting the potential for variety and change. This will ensure that the development remains a coherent entity whilst maintaining the diverse range of buildings and spaces essential to a successful place. These principles will be translated into an architectural language during detailed design.

Smaller development parcels and self build plots will be required to help create a distinctive and diverse range of places.

6.5.3 Architectural Language

The development is sufficiently large to absorb a gradual change in architectural approaches without creating an 'architectural zoo'. However, sudden changes in the architectural approach between development parcels must be avoided. Where serviced land parcels are proposed, consideration must be given to drawing the boundaries to incorporate both sides of the road in order to establish a consistent street design. Individual self-build plots on the other hand would offer an element of variety. Smaller land parcels will also offer the opportunity to add to sum of the parts.

The architectural language will relate to this location through the incorporation of traditional local forms, materials and detailing. The use of traditional townscape principles does not always imply a vernacular approach to the architecture. Enduring townscape can be drawn from local tradition, but with contemporary interpretation. Contemporary design combined with traditional local materials and details can create a style of 'modern regionalism' that is both current and contextual.

6.5.4 Examples

Images on the following pages highlight successful developments both within Huntingdonshire, and nationally (by both volume house builders and smaller developers, as well as social housing providers). These are all sites that demonstrate the best principles of town building and of urban design, something that we must aspire to here.

Public space - good use of materials
(Princes Street, Huntingdon)

Architectural detailing (Station Road, Ramsey)

Small scale brownfield redevelopment showing good use of materials and scale (Thrapston Road, Brampton)

Attractive boulevard with street trees (Love's Farm development, St Neots)

Buildings facing onto green corridor (Love's Farm, St Neots)

Recently completed development with shared space acting as a focus (Moorhouse Drive, Huntingdon)

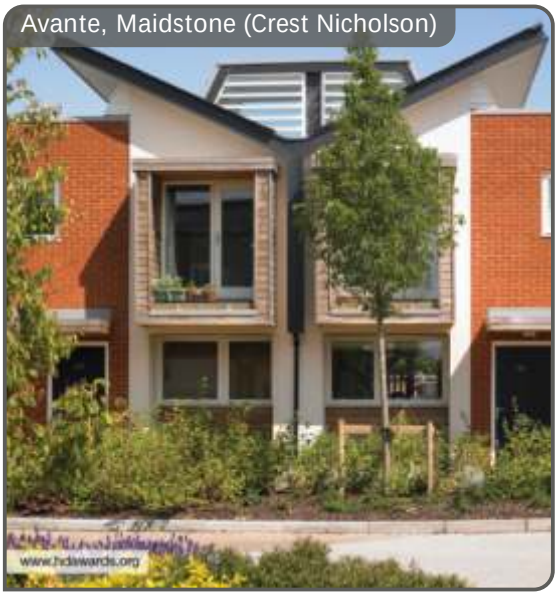
Water's edge (Watersmeet, Mill Common, Huntingdon)

The Triangle, Swindon (Hab Oakus)

2010 Project winner - Housing Design Awards

This development consists of Code level 4 homes, with familiar floor plans and comfortably wide frontages. External walls will be built in hempcrete and a passive stack ventilation system will drive hot and stale air via the stairwell to vent through a chimney. Elegant ventilation cowls, or ecohats, create a distinctive design solution.

Avante, Maidstone (Crest Nicholson)



2008 Project winner - Housing Design Awards

This development uses Modern Methods of Construction, the next generation of construction systems. Avante is also built to Lifetime Homes standards, ensuring that they are flexible and adaptable.

Icon, Street, Somerset (Crest Nicholson Homes)

2010 Overall winner of best housing scheme - Housing Design Awards
This development succeeds with its public realm. With public squares, housing squares, boulevards, streets and mews laid out in a hierarchy to manage traffic speed, and the change in character supported by a lavish landscape architecture of mature trees and street tables.

2006 winner - Housing Design Awards
This scheme demonstrates how for more specialised housing requirements such as care homes, we must not forget the opportunity to create attractive living environments for those residents who may not be able to visit the parks and other gardens on the rest of the development.

Colliers Gardens, Bristol (Brunelcare)

Broadclose, Bude (Guinness Trust)

2007 Project winner - Housing Design Awards

This scheme again showed a generousity of spirit with open space, using level changes to create an attractive public realm. The architecture is pleasing, with interest and variety using simple house type form. The scheme shows how much quality a little thinking brings.

The Staithes, Gateshead (George Wimpey)

2005 Project winner - Housing Design Awards

This scheme is successful with an innovative approach to public space, with shared open spaces containing such items as concrete table tennis tables. The housebuilder has also used some highly legible house elevations, with bright colours and interesting roof details to highlight specific locations within the development.

6.6 Energy

The Council's aspirations for sustainable development in the eastern expansion of the town are based on the 'St Neots Energy Study' (STNES) that was produced in early 2010. The Council wishes to ensure that the town's expansion is sustainable and that renewable energy plays a major part in the opportunities for zero carbon growth, across the town.

The STNES provides recommendations for the way forward for the low carbon energy supply to both the existing town as well as the proposed town extension. Although a) technological advances in renewable energy are rapid, b) financial incentives to enable the implementation of renewable energy systems change, and c) that it is not the responsibility of either the STNES or the Urban Design Framework to prescribe any one particular solution for this site, the STNES does suggest three policy approaches to be considered, listed below.

6.6.1 A Code for Sustainable Homes based approach

This sets Code standards for different size developments on a scale of 0-6, with level 6 being zero carbon development. A 'zero carbon home' is one that produces as much energy as it consumes, be it heating, lighting, hot water and all other energy uses in the home.

The Code is intended as a single national standard to guide industry in the design and construction of sustainable homes. It is a means of driving continuous improvement, greater innovation and exemplary achievement in sustainable home building.

The STNES demonstrates that Code level 5 (and for that matter, level 6) is technically viable on the eastern expansion of St Neots, but consideration needs to be made on financial viability. To achieve Code 6 means that a development would be 'carbon neutral'. Central government has indicated that by 2016 it expects all new development to be carbon neutral.

Central government has also indicated that it will consider 'Allowable Solutions' as a means to satisfy the zero carbon requirement through off site solutions. Access to seed investment provided through a 'Community Energy Fund' established as an 'Allowable Solution' can be dealt with as part of the definition of zero carbon buildings.

The advantages of this type of policy is that it provides the opportunity to raise funds to improve the existing building stock or other low / zero carbon measures within a town or wider afield. These funds may actually provide larger CO2 savings than if the developer was simply required to meet a prescriptive target on site.

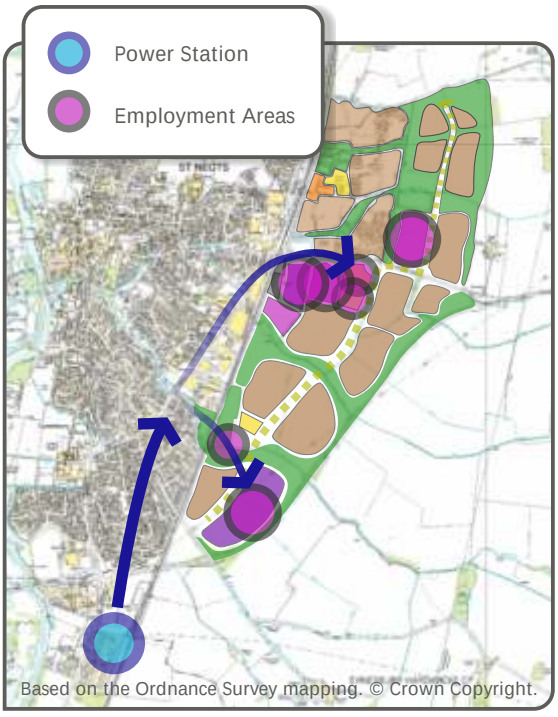


FIGURE 13. Potential heat main route

It also provides the opportunity to raise funds to provide low carbon infrastructure, such as heating networks in a district energy centre. The use of a fund from developments can help finance a Community or District Heating scheme to a level where it becomes a commercially attractive option.

6.6.2 A Connection Based Approach

This would encourage or enforce developers to connect to a community heating scheme where possible. This kind of planning support helps to de-risk investment in district heating schemes, and planning authorities can set specific requirements to facilitate connection. Such a policy would secure market demand for a community heating system in areas of development.

6.6.3 An Opportunities Based Approach

This requires developers to consider what the local energy related opportunities and constraints are (particularly relating to Little Barford power station) and to develop strategies whilst providing a significant degree of flexibility.

A commitment for new and existing public sector buildings to commit to connect to planned heat networks or community networks at the next available opportunity will help to provide a sizeable and certain 'anchor' customer base for such a scheme.

Figure 13 below shows how a potential heat main linked from Little Barford power station could link to the potential employment and education sites.

6.6.4 More Generic Considerations

There are also more generic urban design considerations that need to be taken into consideration when deciding how to use renewable energy resources in any new development. The order of consideration in this location in East Anglia, the sunniest and driest part of Britain, should be:-

- Solar
- Rainwater
- Earth
- Wind

6.6.5 Solar Design

The power of the sun can be gathered by:-

- using solar gain
- by using photovoltaic panels to generate electricity or
- by using solar panels for heating water.

The key to optimising the potential of the sun is to orientate buildings generally to the south, and to have a broadly east – west street pattern. It is also important to let the sun in, with natural light penetration into buildings. This means larger windows than would have been the norm in recent years.

6.6.6 Rainwater Harvesting

This is relatively easy to achieve, and rainwater can be used inside the home to feed WCs and washing machines. Installing a domestic system is more straightforward in a new-build home than existing houses.

6.6.7 Earth

The development should consider how underground energy sources can be used for environmentally friendly heating and cooling systems. This can either be by using heat pumps that take advantage of the temperature difference between the ground and the air, and for buildings that produce a great deal of heat such as industrial buildings, using the cool water from aquifer boreholes to cool the buildings.

6.6.8 Wind

Wind turbines will not be a large source of on-site energy in this location. However that is not to say that some of the larger buildings such as schools and offices could not have appropriately scaled wind turbines to help generate their on-site energy. There are now some highly efficient wind turbine designs being developed.

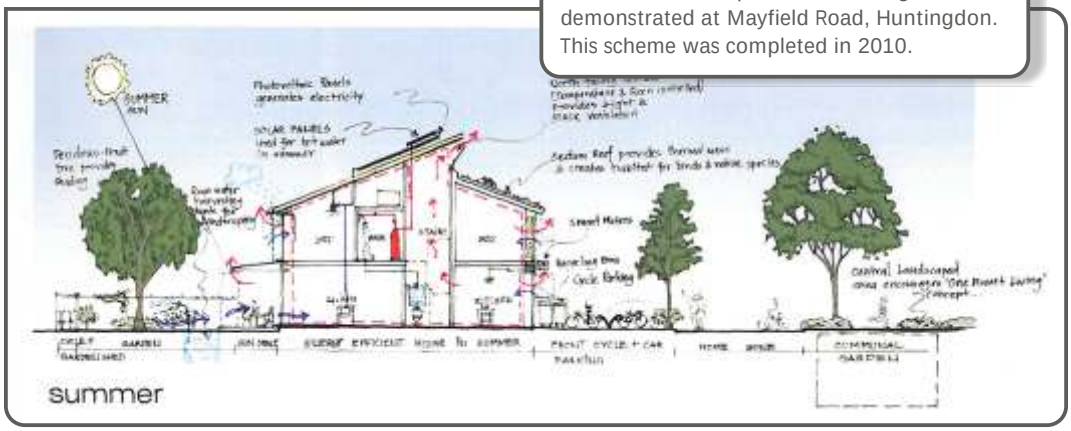
6.6.9 Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

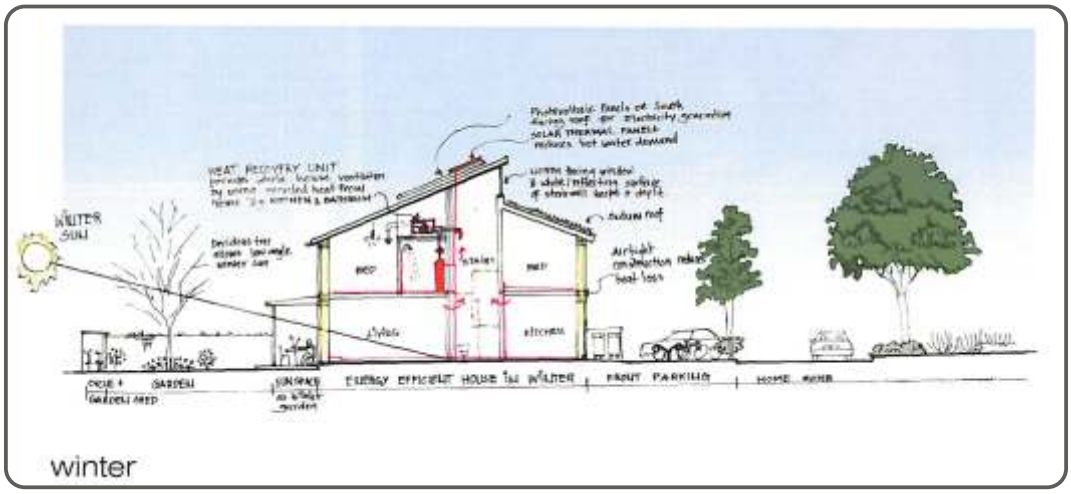
The opportunity for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) should be encouraged in this development as appropriates, as well as the rest of St Neots. Combined heat and power (CHP) integrates the production of usable heat and power (electricity), in one single, highly efficient process. The STNES focuses on this method of energy generation. CHP generates electricity whilst also capturing usable heat that is prod uced in this process and can be created as either Mini-CHP as well as Micro-CHP.

To conclude, such innovation must be grasped if we are to “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” – Bruntland Commission

FIGURE 14 & 15.

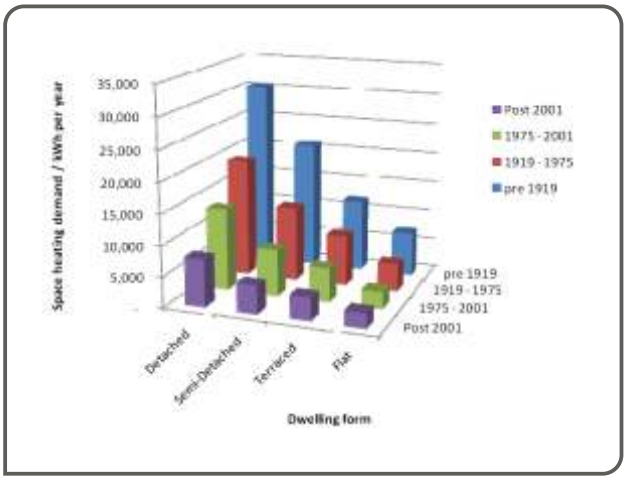
These two illustrations show the principles of sustainable development at building level, demonstrated at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon. This scheme was completed in 2010.



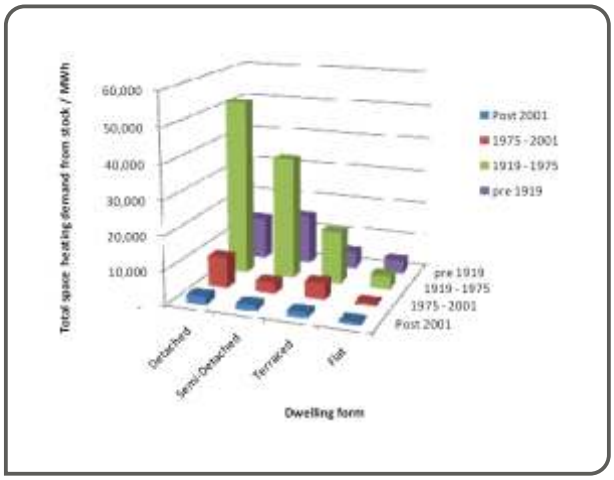


Mayfield Road, Huntingdon

FIGURE 16. Sustainable Development Principles



Graph 1



Graph 2

Graph 1 demonstrates that pre-war detached houses are the least energy efficient. However graph 2 shows how the 1919-1975 detached house emits most C02, as there are more of these houses. It is these houses that need to be targeted with energy efficiency measures if “allowable solutions” are followed.

Figure 16 shows how some sustainable development principles can be applied to building design at a small scale.

6.7 Cambridge Street

The development proposals for the eastern expansion will enable a more attractive entrance to the town to be created. The main road that enters the town is currently called Cambridge Road. It could be changed to Cambridge Street and must take on the characteristics and functions of a street.

A clear distinction can be drawn between streets and roads. Roads are essentially highways whose main function is accommodating the movement of motor traffic. Streets are typically lined with buildings and public spaces, and while movement is still a key function, there are several other functions, of which 'place' is the most important

Streets have five principal functions:-

- place
- movement
- access
- parking
- drainage
- utilities
- street lighting.

6.7.1 Place

The place function is essentially what distinguishes a street from a road. This comes largely from creating a strong relationship between the street and the buildings and spaces that frame it. It should have:-

- Local distinctiveness;
- Visual quality; and
- Propensity to encourage social activity

6.7.2 Movement

Providing for movement along a street is vital, but it should not be considered independently of the street's other functions. The need to cater for motor vehicles is well understood, but the passage of people on foot and cycle is of paramount importance as well. The street must have a segregated footpath and a segregated cycle path along the route of the road.

6.7.3 Access

Access to buildings and public spaces is another important function of streets. Providing frontages that are directly accessible on foot and that are overlooked from the street is highly desirable in most circumstances as this helps to ensure that streets are lively and active places, and it is important that linkages accross the street are reinforced, from north and south.

6.7.4 Parking

Parking is a key function of many streets, although it is not always a requirement. A well-designed arrangement of on-street parking provides convenient access to frontages and can add to the vitality of a street. For example, car parking that is perpendicular to the street along elements of Cambridge Street, particularly around the district centre will increase the density of car parking and hence activity.

6.7.5 Drainage, Utilities and Street Lighting

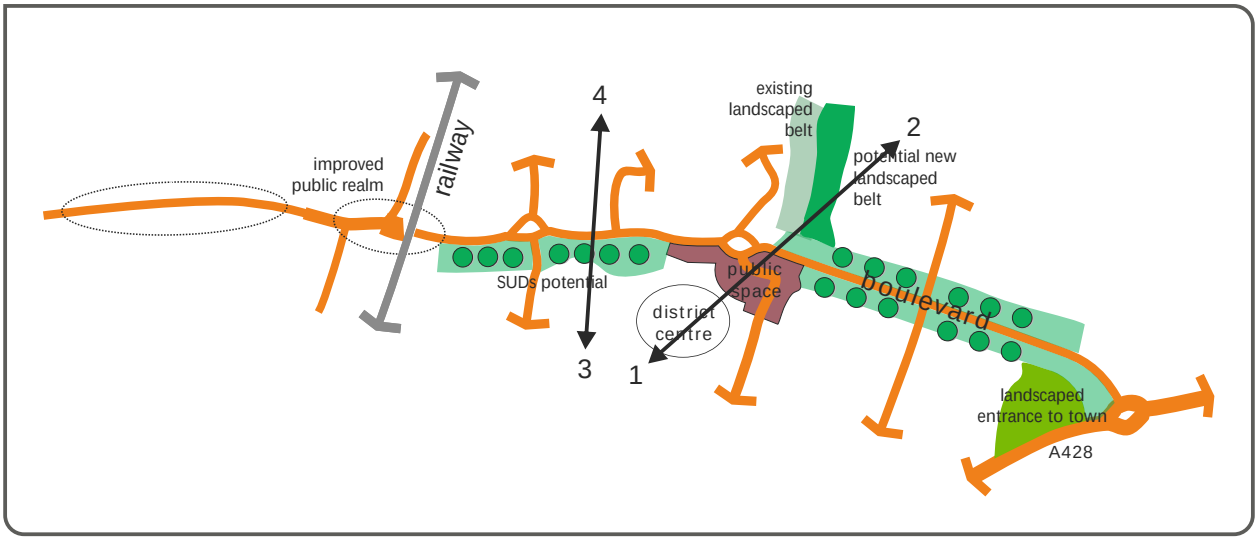
Streets are the main conduits for drainage and utilities. Buried services can have a major impact on the design and maintenance requirements of streets. Street lighting should be innovative, in design and function and this will enable a more interesting sense of place and arrival. Sustainable drainage systems can bring

environmental benefits, such as flood control, creating wildlife habitats and efficient wastewater recycling. Changes to Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 place a duty on the County Council to adopt Sustainable Drainage Systems. However in prominent locations it is important to understand what kind of SUDS feature the Council would want to see in such a prominent location.

To meet these five functions, proposals for Cambridge Street must include the following elements:-

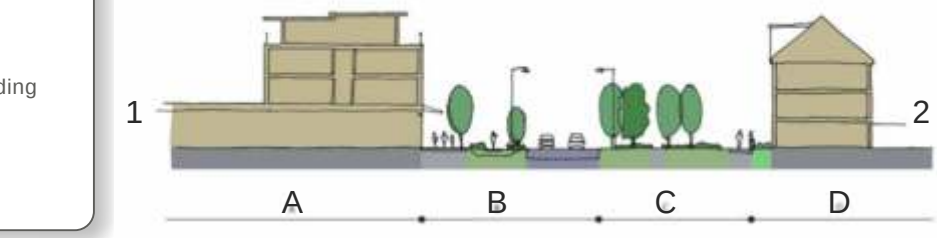
- An attractive landscaped setting to the entrance to the town. This should consist of a wide landscaped belt closest to the entrance to the town, narrowing when getting closer to the town centre. Wide verges could be applied, with heavy standard street trees and a sense of formality in their location and design. Tree planting has the most significance for a road, street or spaces. Trees can slow traffic, be a barrier between traffic and the pedestrian and/or cyclist. Trees can offer shade, shelter, improve air quality, be a habitat for wildlife, provide a sense of general well-being and be a reflection of the local character. To avoid the future loss of trees, space must be allowed at the design stage for their mature size.
- Attractive junction designs along the street, that do not detract from the overall visual appeal of this route.
- An attractive district centre with a focal space that is not designed for the vehicle above all others.
- Segregated pedestrian and cycle routes.

FIGURE 17. Cambridge Street Principles



This plan and section of Cambridge Road illustrates how the entrance to the town could look if it took on the attributes of a street

- A Food store with residential above
- B Existing road with footway and formal landscape
- C Existing set back to Love's Farm frontage re-landscaped to coordinate with new setting
- D Existing Love's Farm residential
- E New mixed uses at Cambridge Street
- F Informal landscape with footway
- G Highway corridor
- H Informal landscape including hedgerow
- I New employment and residential uses



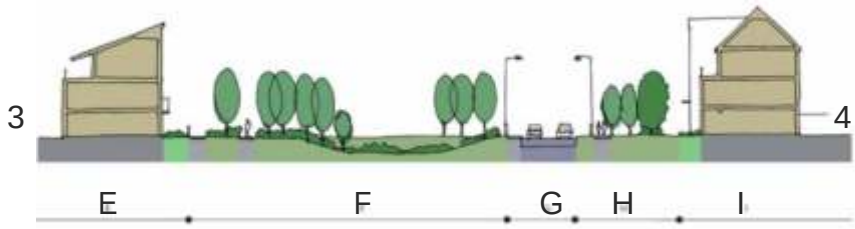


FIGURE 18. Cambridge Street Sections

6.8 Edges

The eastern boundary of the proposed development will be the new edge to St Neots. This will be the interface between town and countryside. In the north this is a direct relationship between development and arable farmland. In the south the A428 and its embankment provide the edge.

6.8.1 North East Edge

Too often the modern urban/rural interface is unconsidered. Most often the development stops with back gardens facing the fields. In sensitive locations this is screened by a bund or a belt of trees. Neither response is entirely acceptable. The boundary between town and countryside should be a soft edge consisting of public realm based on the following principles:-

- The density of the development should reduce towards the countryside edge with a larger proportion of detached dwellings set in the landscape.
- Buildings lines should be varied with some gables turned to face the edge.
- The landscape treatment should be designed to minimise but not obliterate views of the development except where required by the visual impact assessment.
- Stands of trees should be used to either restrict or focus views of the development and to break up the form of the buildings.

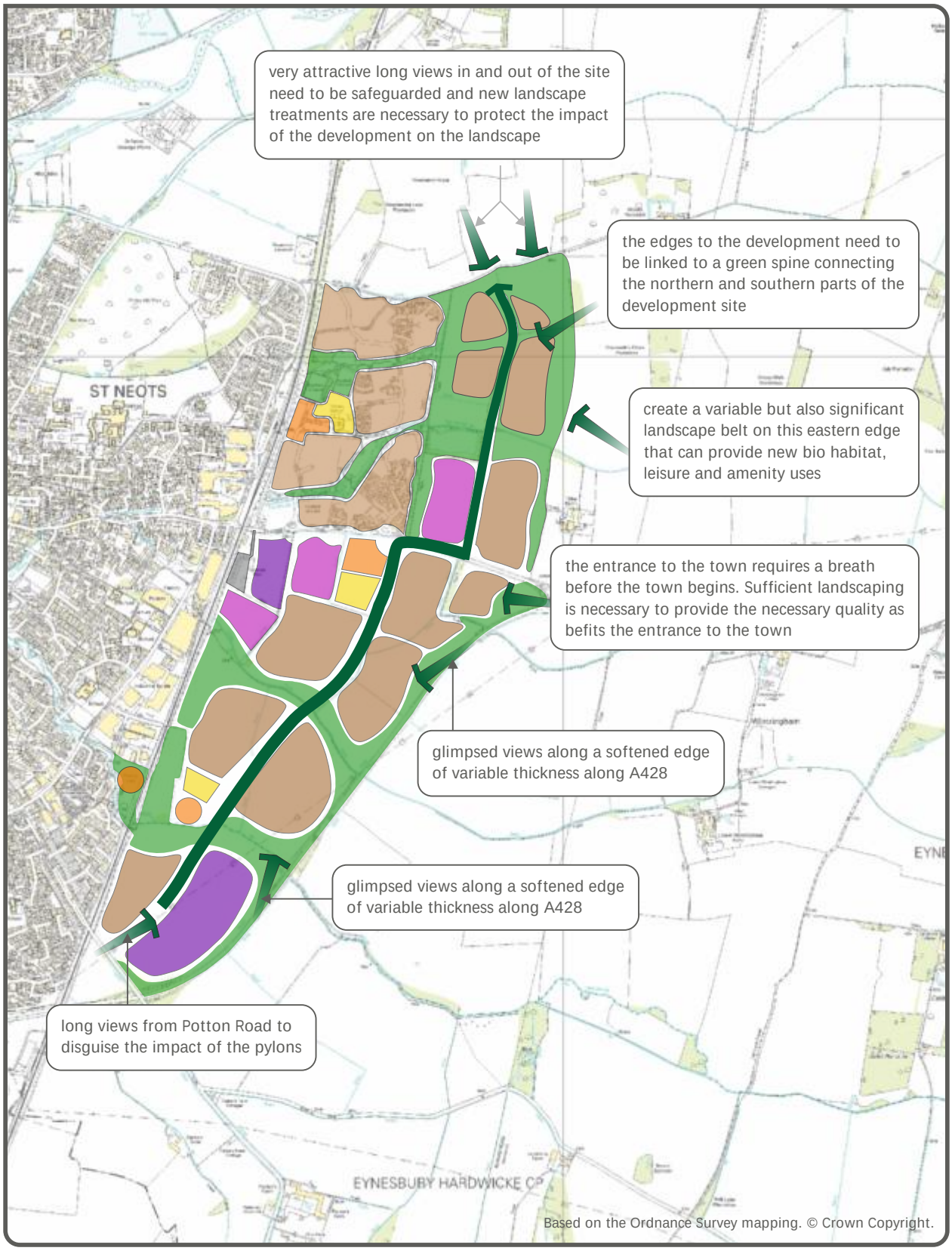
6.8.2 Boundary to A428

The A428 forms the eastern boundary to the southern site. It sits on an embankment at a constant level as the site levels rise and fall. At three locations the site levels and the road levels coincide. At any of these points it may be possible (subject to Highways Agency requirements) to achieve a level vehicular site access. Up to two accesses may be beneficial to the eastern expansion proposals. One could be an alternative residential access point; the second could enable the commercial units in the southern employment area to have direct access to the regional road network.

As in the north, this boundary is the new edge of St Neots and is the boundary between town and country. A continuous landscaped buffer should be avoided in favour of the creation of a more positive edge to St Neots. This should be a mixture of tree screening, where the views are to be restricted, ie towards the employment area, and more perforated planting areas, allowing views though to the vales and buildings to be glimpsed through the trees and with the possibility of longer views to the church spires and towers in the town. Open spaces containing amenity spaces, leisure routes and wildlife corridors would be incorporated into this edge.

The masterplanning process will detail the widths of landscaping belts.

FIGURE 19. Edges



6.9 Employment

6.9.1 Location of Employment Development

Huntingdonshire's Core Strategy has identified a requirement to provide some 25 hectares of employment land within St Neots East. Employment development can be provided at higher densities in this urban area, making more efficient use of land than on traditional low-density business parks. There is demand for new and expanded employment premises, and for a wider variety of employment types.

New employment development at St Neots East needs to meet the town's employment needs, giving people the opportunity to live close to their work, but also ensuring that industrial development does not harm residential amenity.

These are of course existing employment sites in and around St Neots. These are highlighted on figure 3.

6.9.2 Specific Requirements

New employment development projects need to demonstrate:-

- Functionality, defined by good road access and availability of labour
- Locations close to population centres to reduce the need to travel to work and on site or nearby facilities (such as convenience shops, cash points, nurseries) during business hours
- Flexibility as no two users have the same requirement and to allow for the in situ expansion of firms, the relocation of firms to nearby sites (to enable the retention of their workforces) and the location of spin out businesses
- Low carbon buildings that minimise lifetime energy consumption through site layouts, construction materials and building design to reduce the need for energy (for cooling and heating) and maximise on site renewable energy generation

6.9.3 Employment and Mixed Use Areas

The 25 hectare requirement should be located at a variety of locations, not on a single site. The developments should complement the existing and planned employment areas either side of Cambridge Road, and subject to market testing could include:-

- A landscaped business park
- Office accommodation in the central part of the area offering good access to town and the railway station and support the role of a district centre
- Lighter clean industrial units to the south of the area that offer ease of access to the main arterial road and the regional transport network
- Small-scale local B1 employment within the district and local centres, of an appropriate scale to a generally residential area, utilising space above shops in particular.

Light industrial and office (B1) development can be located within residential areas without harming residential amenity through excessive noise, dust or smell. This type of employment can therefore successfully be mixed with residential development in any part of the site. Small units including 'live and work units' will be appropriate throughout the site.

General industrial (B2) development is not appropriate immediately adjoining residential uses. Rather than being mixed through the site this needs to be concentrated in specific areas.

Specific areas have been identified and are shown in figure 22.

A buffer area of light industrial and office (B1) employment development will be necessary between general industrial (B2) development and residential areas. This means that the general industrial (B2) development will never directly adjoin the residential areas. Employment areas located alongside the A428 will require heavy landscaping to effectively screen the buildings from the trunk road.

An area for general industrial (B2) and a small area of storage and distribution (B8) may also be needed, serving a local function for St Neots and its immediate hinterland. The Council's aim is to provide a significant amount of high quality new employment opportunities in this area. Warehousing is unlikely to fulfil this aim.

Employers in St Neots East will be required to prepare Green Travel Plans to show how they intend to ensure that travel to work by car by their employees is not encouraged.

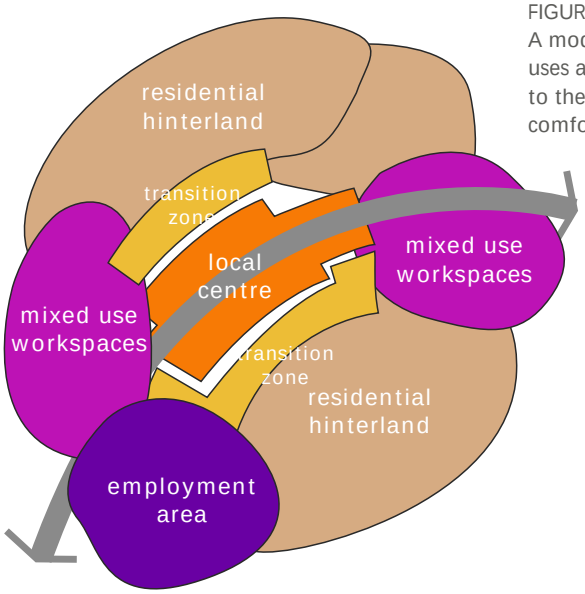


FIGURE 20.
A model for blurring the distinction between uses and designing places that make walking to the local centre as convenient and comfortable as possible

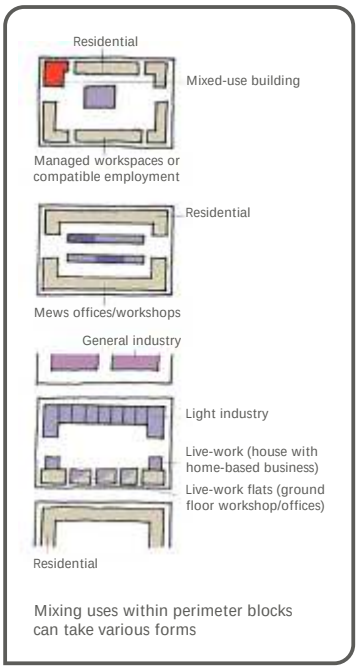


FIGURE 21. Some examples of how to mix uses

FIGURE 22.
Proposed Employment Areas

6.10 District and Local Centres

Two new mixed use centres, complementary to the town centre, will be provided within St Neots East. These will consist of:-

- A single district centre that will provide facilities of a scale to meet the needs of the whole area and to complement the existing town centre retail offer subject to detailed assessment
- A smaller neighbourhood centre that will provide more local facilities and help to integrate St Neots East with neighbouring Eynesbury

6.10.1 District Centre

The provision of a district centre within St Neots East will allow the concentration of those facilities intended to meet the needs of the whole of this development where they are most accessible, along a newly configured 'Cambridge Street'. As illustrated in figure 23, a significant proportion of the whole development will be within 500 metres of either centre.

The district centre will be a genuine mixed use area, with integrated retail, community facilities, employment opportunities and residential uses. These uses must not be segregated, and it is important that there are flats and offices above the shops to create activity and a more intimate and active space.

The creation of a district centre will also provide a visual focal point for the development and a focus for community activities. The district centre should create an attractive public realm, a space for interaction. The scale of the buildings and the quality of the architecture will need to be appropriate for this important function.

The activities within the district centre should reflect its status. For this reason, larger shops and commercial uses will be allowed that will attract custom from a wider area than would any local centre. Uses may include a small supermarket of appropriate scale to serve the area, the scale and sale of goods to be informed by a retail impact assessment. It will also be important to ensure that no single store sells such a range of comparison and convenience goods that it would threaten the development of the remainder of the district centre or impact on the town centre.

Restaurants, cafes and pub uses are also facilities it would be reasonable to see provided in such a district centre, as well as a number of smaller retail units. These may only appear later on in the development. It could be appropriate to allow flexibility of tenure and uses.

The district centre must have a well designed public space which will need to provide an area for open air community activities. The accessibility of this location also means that it will also be a suitable location for other community facilities such as a primary school with shared community hall provision, medical facilities and other community facilities such as dentists.

The district centre will generate the need for a large number of car parking spaces. These will be shared rather than segregated, and will be used by businesses, schools and surgeries, as well as by passing custom. Such car parking should not detract from the overall vision for this district centre, and must be a combination of carefully designed car parking to the rear of buildings, within a landscaped setting, and car parking to the front which will be both easily accessible and also integrated into the wider street scene.

6.10.2 Local Centre

The local centre has another role in effectively linking St Neots East to Eynesbury. This local centre is of fundamental importance in providing an effective link under the railway line between new and existing communities.

The local centre will provide a community focus with landmarks and other points of interest to create a legible sense of place.

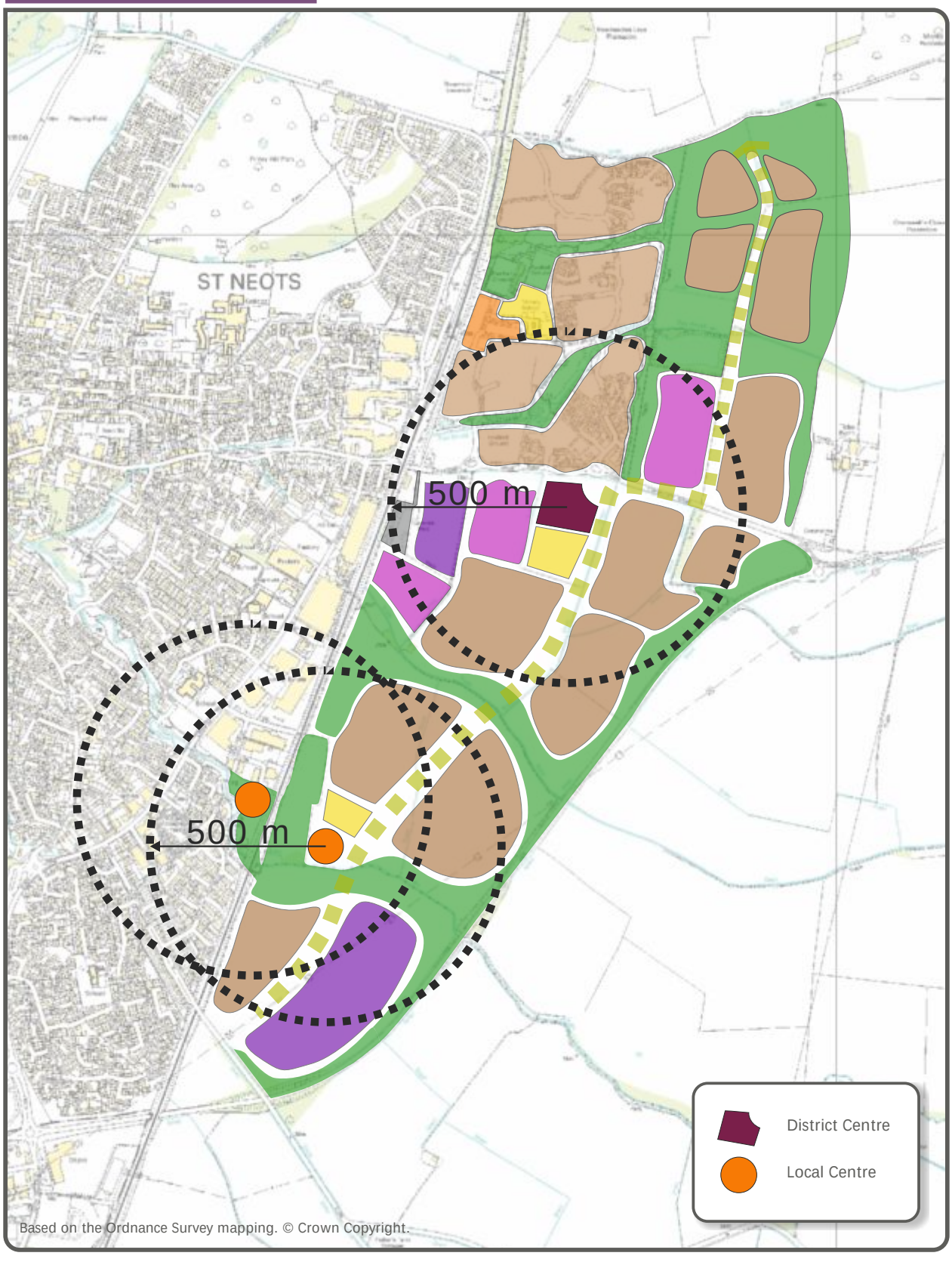
It will have modest shopping facilities and, subject to master planning, it is anticipated that it should be located close to the primary school and other facilities. It could provide the basis for local shops meeting day-to-day needs such as a newsagent, hot food takeaway or a small convenience store typical of many local centres in Cambridgeshire's market towns.

The local centre will be appropriately phased to the development of a neighbourhood, and will also provide an opportunity for:-

- Small scale office and other employment uses appropriate to a generally residential area
- Community uses
- Children's play area
- Neighbourhood recycling point (the RECAP waste management design guide suggests a 'bring point' for every 800 dwellings)

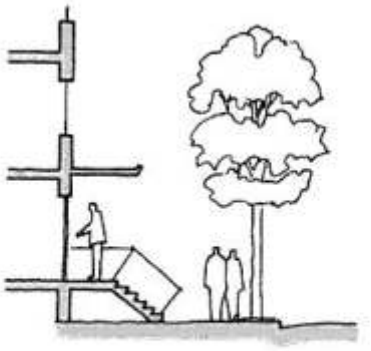
It may also be a location for active sports facilities and associated playing fields, located in association with the primary school.

FIGURE 23. District and Local Centres

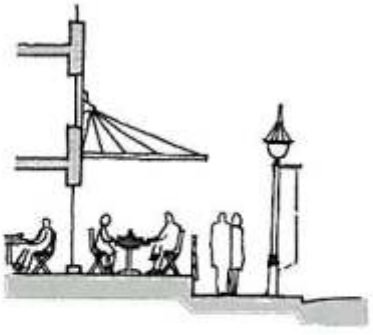


Well landscaped public space

Flats and offices above the shops and cafes



Level changes can promote surveillance while retaining privacy



'Spill out' space adds vitality to the public realm

6.11 Community Facilities

A range of community facilities will be needed to meet the further needs of the expanding population of St Neots. Where appropriate, certain community facilities can be co-located with other appropriate uses in single, multi-use buildings. These may include on-site provision or financial contributions towards off site provision for facilities that could include:-

- Community centres and faith buildings
- Primary schools
- Health, social and library facilities
- Leisure centre
- Youth facilities
- Recreation and allotments
- Cemetery

6.11.1 Community Centres

St Neots Football Club, on the Love's Farm development, has facilities that can be used by the wider community. Love's Farm has also been provided with a fund for a community building.

This further growth in the town to the east will require further community hall provision. This was emphasised during early public consultation, particularly with residents of Eynesbury. New additional community space should be located within easy walking distance for as many residents as possible, preferably in the district centre.

The scale and type of facility will be determined through detailed assessment and could include a range of rooms of varying sizes so as to enable flexible use from sports to performing arts. The potential for accommodating a main hall as a shared facility (for example with the new primary school) should be explored. Other community space should be located in the local centre. This will have the additional benefit of helping to connect the residents of Eynesbury with the new urban extension.

6.11.2 Education Provision

At least two primary schools will be required within the eastern expansion. These must be located where it is accessible on foot and cycle to as many of the catchment population as possible. These school buildings should front onto the road forming a positive element in the street scene.

Locations adjoining the district centre and the local centre are likely to be the most appropriate places for the primary schools and will help support these locations as centres of activity.

Playing areas and pitches will be required on the site, for security reasons and so that they are specifically designed for the relevant age range, though they should be able to use other publicly accessible playing fields for activities requiring more space. Each school should be designed in such a way that it could be easily used for other community uses outside school hours.

It is not intended that there will be any new secondary school on the site, but that the development should contribute towards the improvement/expansion of the town's existing secondary schools.

6.11.3 Health, Social and Library Facilities

Additional health facilities may be required and these should be located in the district centre, further reinforcing that role of the district centre.

Other social service provision such as elderly care or supported living should be located close

to or as part of the district and local centres or along key public transport routes.

Contributions will be sought towards the increased provision of other health, social and library facilities that will be required to cater for the needs of the new population. The level of contribution sought will be based upon the need for such services arising from the increased population in St Neots. This will involve consultation with the relevant service providers.

Innovative childrens' play areas

6.11.4 Leisure Centre

The leisure centre at St Neots Community College is currently being expanded and measures to encourage safe access by public transport and cycling will be considered. It may be the case that this facility will be expanded further to cater for this increased population.

6.11.5 Youth Facilities and Play Areas

Play areas are designed for younger children and while it is necessary to provide further play areas in the development, it is also important that the needs of older age groups such as teenagers are met. These requirements and standards of provision will be met in accordance with prevailing policy. Play areas need to be located at the masterplan stage, when the number and type will also be clearly defined.

6.11.6 Allotments

Allotments will be required on the site, in various locations, and provided with facilities. More detail will be considered at masterplan stage.

6.11.7 Cemetery

An area of land needs to be safeguarded for a cemetery. This could be designed as a woodland cemetery and would be well located in a tranquil location to the north of the site.

Primary school, Great Notley, Essex (CABE)
Designed through a design competition and uses a sedum roof and modern methods of construction

Community allotments

6.12 Connections

The development of the eastern expansion will create clear, attractive and safe connections between the separate development parcels and the existing community. Whilst connectivity by private car will be very important, most of these connections will be for high quality cycle and pedestrian linkages, therefore helping to create a modal shift away from car usage towards more sustainable modes of transport.

These connections and links all illustrated on figure 24 and will be located at:-

A. Love's Farm 1 - pedestrian / cycle link to existing development site H2, through a wide band of structural landscaping. This will contribute to linking the new community to the existing Love's Farm community.

B. Love's Farm - pedestrian / cycle link connecting to the existing green corridor to the south of development site H1. This will provide clear connections through to wider parts of the town, notably the Priory Hill bridge over the railway line and to the north of the town connecting to Priory Park.

C. Love's Farm - pedestrian / cycle link through the existing green corridor to the south of development site F1 and the north of site A4. This is potentially the most important linkage north of Cambridge Street, as it is centrally located within the existing Love's Farm development, and will enable access to wider areas of open space on the new development site as well as direct links to the existing Love's Farm primary school, local facilities at St Neots football club and to the railway station.

D. Love's Farm - between sites A1 and A2, and A3 and A4. These will enable ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists between the two sites. There is potential for vehicular access in this location as well, although it may harm the desire for the modal shift in traffic to take place, could be used as a bus access.

E. The entrance to the town underneath the railway line on Cambridge Street - this will require improvements to the public realm. There are opportunities to improve this entrance for the benefit of those not just in cars but on bicycle and pedestrians as well, and just generally improve the quality of the area, and improve the quality of design around the mini roundabouts connecting Cambridge Street, Cromwell Road and Station Road.

F. The public right of way underneath the railway line - this will need to be improved to enhance both the access and the general public realm in this location. It is accepted that this route is through an active employment site, with moving vehicles sometimes impeding the movement of pedestrians. However, it is of utmost importance that the new development sites provide easy and direct access under the railway line towards the wider town. It is very important that this access is improved to make it safe and secure for users at all times of the day.

G. The public right of way at grade across the railway line - this could enable direct access across the railway towards town, along Marston Road. This will need careful consideration as part of an overall transport strategy.

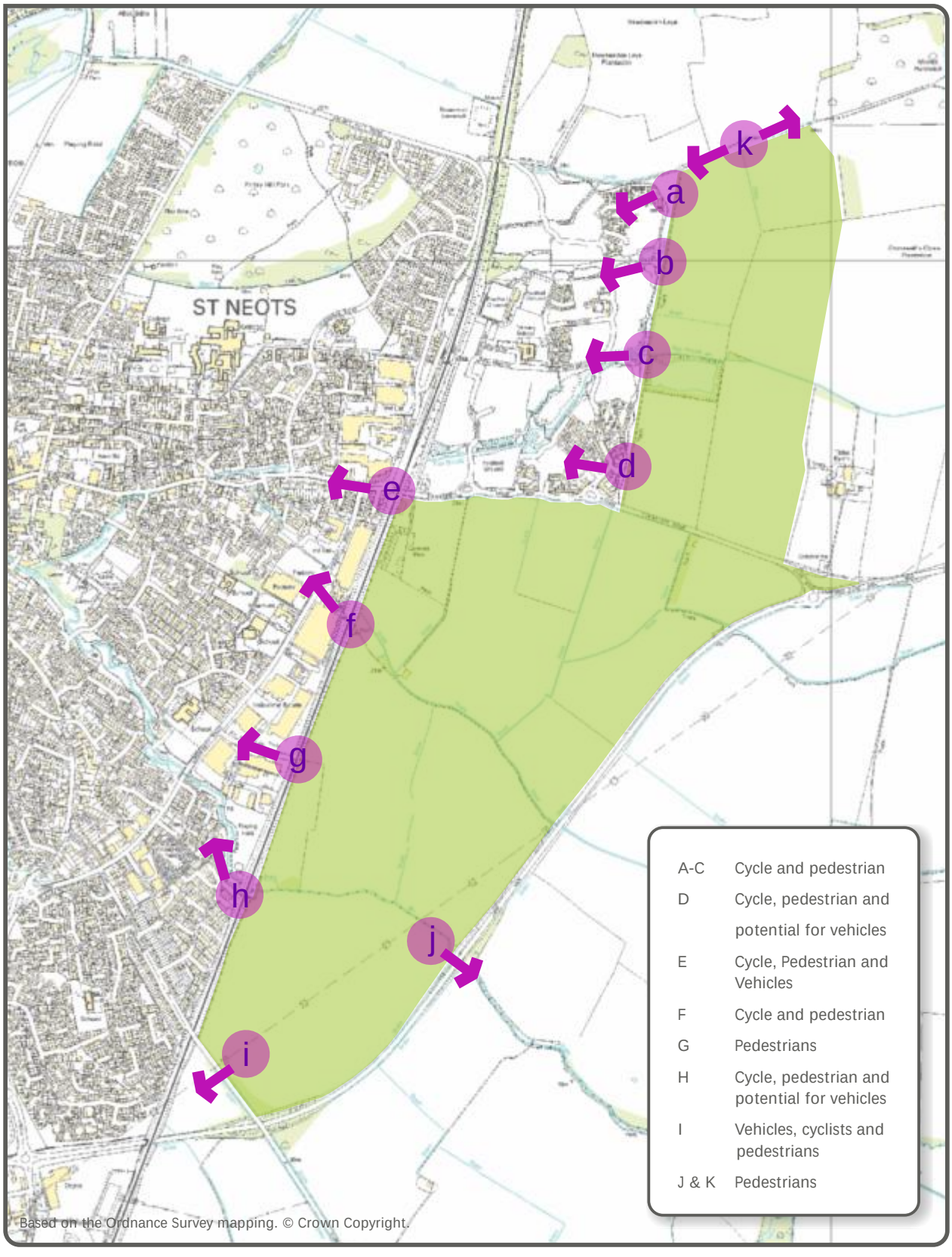
H. The public right of way between Eynesbury and Howitt's Lane - this will provide an excellent opportunity to create a high quality link between the eastern expansion and wider town. Of particular importance is investigating the opportunity for a public transport access in this location. The access is not wide enough or high enough for conventional access, however an imaginative solution should be explored.

I. B1046 Potton Road - provides an opportunity to create close links between this development and the existing community in Eynesbury. It may be appropriate to reconfigure the access to the site as the priority road, as it is likely that this will generate the greatest

amount of traffic and will help to slow traffic down that currently drives along the Potton Road. Junction improvements along Potton Road / Cromwell Road will also be required.

J & K. Public rights of way to the north and east - there are currently several public rights of way that criss-cross the site, particularly to the south of Cambridge Street, and these will be able to provide a focus for wider access to the east. To the north of the site the existing right of way along the northern boundary will provide the focus for linkages.

FIGURE 24. Connections



6.13 Drainage

The site currently consists of arable fields. Drains and brooks flow east to west, and these are shown on figure 26. Hen Brook is designated as 'main river' beyond the railway line and has a history of flooding, and Winteringham Brook sometimes causes problems due to the culverting under Cromwell Road. Fox Brook to the north of Cambridge Road has been attenuated by a balancing pond constructed in association with the Love's Farm development.

The development should deal with both land drainage attenuation relating to the existing brooks, as well as surface water flow attenuation from the new development itself.

The District Council commissioned work as long ago as 1974 and 1985 to see how upstream attenuation of Hen Brook could be implemented, before any proposals for development in this location were being considered.

Developing this site could increase the rate of storm water run off and flows through these drains and brooks, so it is important that the surface water run-off is provided with flow balancing ponds to attenuate (store) off site flows. For a development of this size, a Surface Water Drainage and Flood Risk Strategy will be required that will clarify how this will be achieved.

Attenuation ponds could also have the following additional functions:-

- Improve water quality
- Form a visual feature in the amenity areas of open space
- Provide a natural habitat for wildlife
- Provide on site storage for irrigation and potential rainwater harvesting

Figure 26 shows how a potential drainage strategy could work, using existing streams and vales to locate the ponds.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are systems designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments on surface water drainage. SUDS try to replicate natural drainage systems that can drain away dirty and surface water run-off through collection, storage, and cleaning before allowing it to be released slowly back into the environment, often via watercourses.

Changes to legislation in England in 2010 (Flood Management Act 2010) has enabled SUDS to be more widely accepted. The Environment Agency has recently produced guidance on SUDS, which use a wide range of techniques that have been tried and tested on projects throughout England and Wales.

The Government's planning policy on development in the floodplain highlights the important role that SUDS can play and introduces a general expectation for their use at all sites, and The Council will expect developers to submit proposals that incorporate the SUDS approach and there is an increasing body of case study research to show what works in what situation.

In a separate piece of work Cambridgeshire Horizons has produced a Water Cycle Strategy with the input of local councils and the Environment Agency. The overall objective of such a Water Cycle Strategy is to provide a sustainable approach to the provision of water services infrastructure. The following topics have been covered as part of this process:-

- Flood Risk Management: Identifying areas where development is likely to increase flood risk (both on-site and downstream) and to suggest necessary improvement measures.
- Water Supply: Reviewing the existing water supply sources, and identifying any required upgrades to ensure adequate water provision for new developments.

- Drainage: Reviewing the underlying geology for growth sites to understand the possible SUDS (sustainable urban drainage systems) that can be applied.
- To help minimise the environmental impacts of growth.
- Waste Water: Understanding the current capacity of sewage works and the sewer network to identify whether any upgrades are required to accommodate new developments.
- Ecology: Identifying the impact of growth relating to water quality, nature conservation areas and protected species, then suggesting possible mitigation measures where required.
- Sustainable Infrastructure: Suggesting how water services infrastructure can contribute to sustainable development in terms of increased water efficiency and reduced water consumption in new developments.

Existing flood attenuation pond at Love's Farm

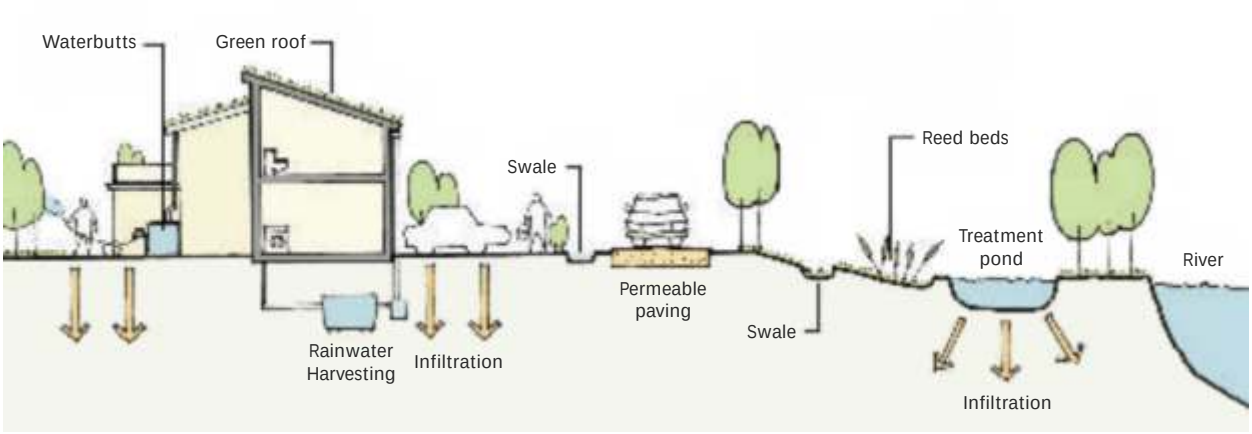


FIGURE 25. SUDS system

Green roof system to help deal with intercepting rain water

SUDS system at Hannam Hall, Bristol

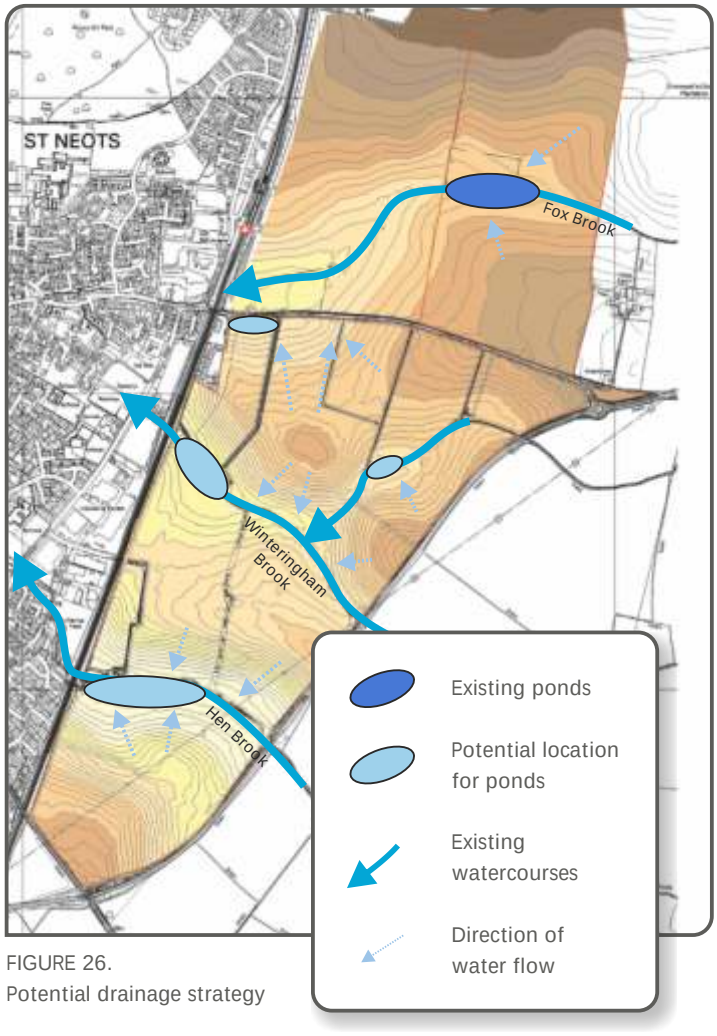


FIGURE 26.
Potential drainage strategy

6.14 A Thriving Public Realm

The design of the eastern expansion of St Neots must incorporate many opportunities for social interaction. There must be social spaces. The best public spaces have areas of activity complemented by quiet zones for people watching.

These spaces need to have:-

- Visibility – enabling people to have views across spaces and giving them a choice
- Orientation – providing sunny and well sheltered spots to sit and linger
- Places to sit
- Places for children to play – not just designated spaces but general areas

These spaces need to be designed to include uses that introduce an activity source. There could for example be changes in level so that shallow auditoria can be provided.

Different user groups must be able to use the same space with different activities. These spaces will be best provided on routes that follow desire lines.

Successful spaces also stimulate the senses. These senses do not just include sight, but also touch, sound and smell.

These public spaces and places could be located in a myriad of locations. They must be located where the district and local centres will be, and adjacent to new primary schools, but could also be located within the green ladder, and at junctions to roads and lanes. They could include interpretation materials.

Interesting public space

Civic space that acts as a focus for activity

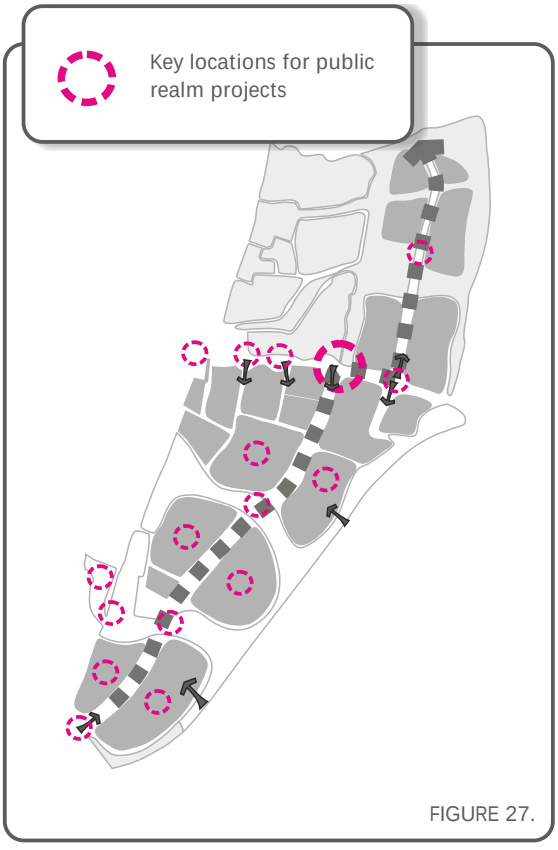


FIGURE 27.

Successful examples of public art

6.14.1 Public Art

Public art can make a major contribution to giving a place and the public realm generally character and identity, bringing people into places. For the eastern expansion a public art strategy will be required, providing a framework for commissioning artists. Public art can also be called 'art in the design of the public realm' and is used to describe work produced by artists within the built or natural environment, which encompasses many art forms and approaches.

Publicly accessible art, craft and design is a great way to celebrate cultural diversity and local identity. Public art can also be used to support and celebrate the sustainability objectives of the development, for example biodiversity, energy efficiency and low carbon transport, and could also reflect any archaeological finds on the site. It can enhance the unique characteristics of a locality and involve local people in artist selection, design process and the installation. Once in place, public art can provide a lasting mark of community and heritage for residents and visitors to enjoy. It can also include temporary artworks including artist installations, community celebrations, musical compositions, digital projects and publications.

The previous page identifies appropriate locations where public activity is most likely, together with examples of public realm projects and how they have helped to create successful communities.

These locations could include:-

- The district centre
- The local centre
- Primary schools / community centres
- Locations for playing fields and childrens play areas
- Intersections with the main spine road
- Locations along the perimeter cyclepaths and footpaths

FIGURE 28. Design ideas for key public realm locations

St Neots Eastern Expansion

Urban Design Framework 2010

7. Phasing and Delivery

7.1 The eastern expansion of the town will consist of two separate development areas, one to the north of Cambridge Road, and one to the south. These two developments will be built out in accordance with the urban design framework (UDF).

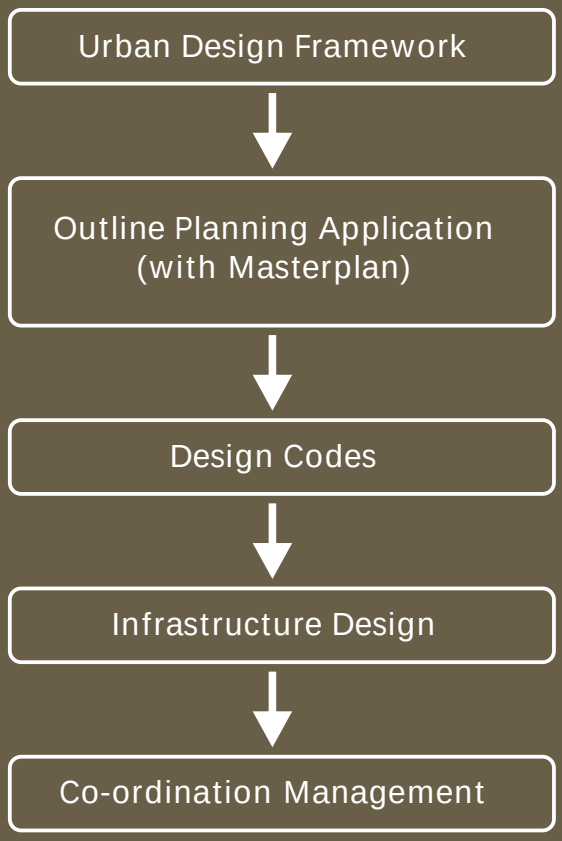
7.2 Both developments will make their own separate 'outline' planning applications and these planning applications will include a Design and Access Statement that will amplify the ideas within the UDF, and will be followed up by Design Codes. Design Codes are a set of illustrated design rules and requirements that instruct and advise on the physical development of a site or an area. The graphic and written components of the code are precise and detailed, and build upon a design vision for a site. Evidence shows that when used alongside good designers, effective design codes can help deliver high quality developments.

7.3 Subject to the granting of planing permission, the anticipated rate of development at the St Neots eastern expansion is likely to average 200 dwellings per year, with construction envisaged to start in 2013. The Adopted HDC Core Strategy has indicated that about 2500 homes will be delivered by 2026.

It is intended that the early phases of construction will begin along Cambridge Road.

The rate of development will govern the rate at which services, facilities and infrastructure are provided.

7.4 Development at Loves Farm followed the following model, and has generally worked well, although fine tuning of the Design Coding process will be required as everyone needs to learn from using such a useful planning and design tool.



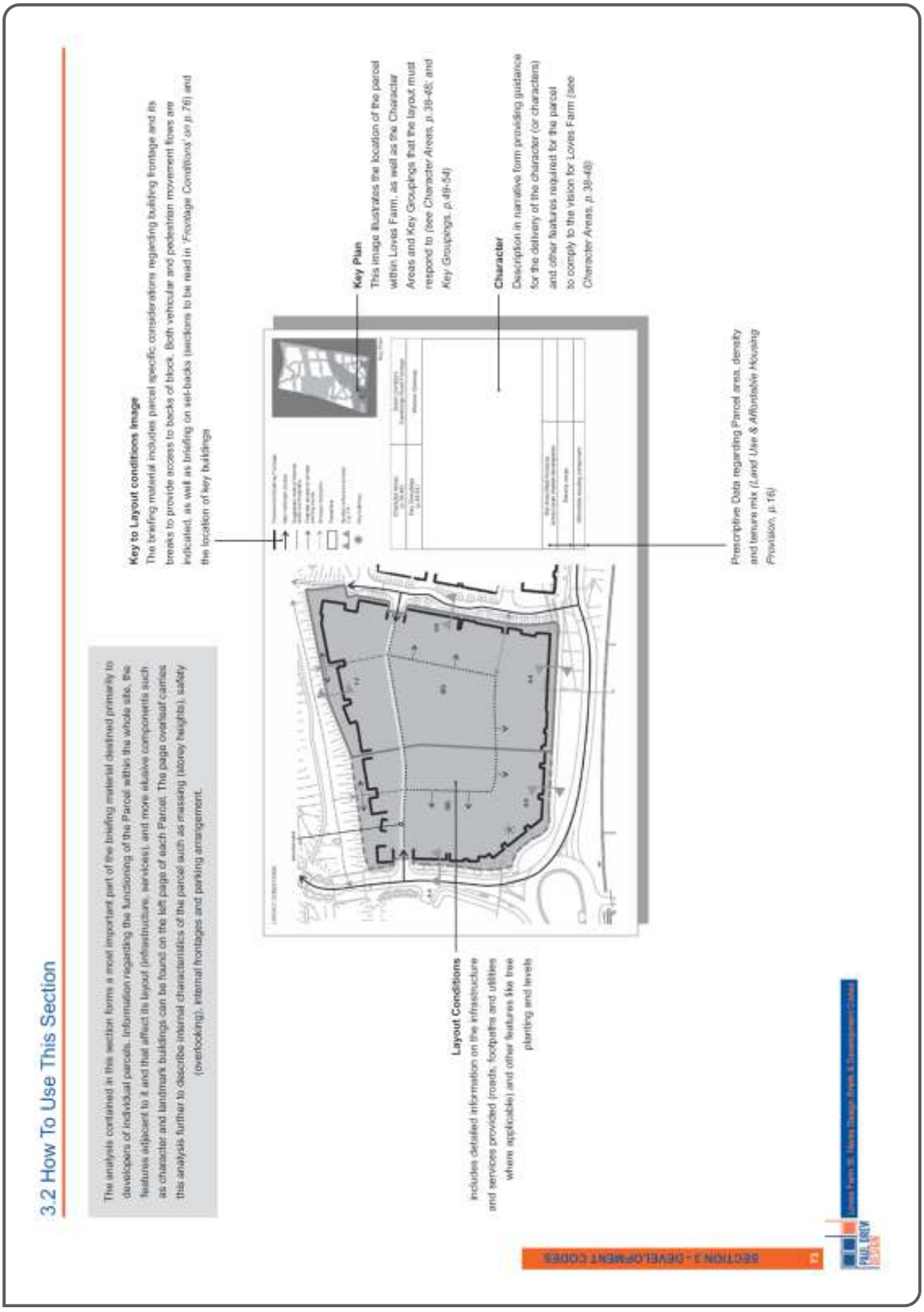


FIGURE 29: Extract from Loves Farm Design Code

8. Planning Policy

Introduction

This UDF provides a précis of the Council planning policies most relevant to this large development site.

The Core Strategy, as the primary element in the Local Development Framework (LDF), sets the spatial framework for Huntingdonshire's future up until 2026. It will help to shape the provision of housing development, services, economic growth and environmental improvements.

The Core Strategy is a strategic document. The vision and objectives are overarching and form the basis for the whole LDF.

The Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies seek to address the spatial implications of a wide range of environmental, social and economic concerns, so that it provides an overall framework for managing the pattern of change in Huntingdonshire. This 'spatial planning' approach requires a wide range of other plans and programmes to be taken into account. The most significant include: the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan, the Housing Strategy for Huntingdonshire, the Local Economic Strategy for Huntingdonshire, the Huntingdonshire Environment Strategy and the Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy.

Core Strategy Policies

The adopted spatial planning policies relevant to the eastern expansion of St Neots include:-

Policy CS1 Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

All plans, policies and programmes of the Council and its partners, with a spatial element, and all development proposals in Huntingdonshire will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development.

Policy CS2 Strategic Housing Development

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area at least 2650 homes will be provided. Of these at least 150 homes will be on previously developed land, about 2500 homes will be on greenfield land and about 1060 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:

- in the first phase of a significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town.
- and as redevelopment of previously developed land within the built-up area of the town.

Policy CS3 The Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy provides a framework to manage the scale of housing development appropriate on unallocated sites.

The hierarchy identifies St Neots as a 'Market Town' in which development schemes of all scales may be appropriate within the built-up area.

Policy CS4 Affordable Housing in Development

In order to address the need for affordable housing in the District, housing proposed in developments should seek to achieve a target of 40% affordable housing. Subject to specific site contributions and other material considerations such as viability and mitigation of contamination.

Policy CS6 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Account will be taken of the need to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services such as water and sewerage are provided and with good access by foot, cycle or public transport to services such as education and health.

Policy CS7 Employment Land

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area about 25ha of land, all of which is greenfield land, will be provided in a significant mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the east of St Neots. In addition to this there is an existing commitment at Little Paxton, which might come forward during the plan period.

Policy CS8 Retail and Town Centre Uses

At least 9,000m2 of comparison floorspace will be located in St Neots, with priority given to proposals in the town centre. Complementary and appropriate development will be located as part of a significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town;

Policy CS9 Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement

The Council will actively support projects through the Planning System that aim to create new Green Infrastructure, where these projects demonstrate a high degree of public benefit in the form of increased access for quiet recreation and increased provision for biodiversity. In the longer term the enhancement of green corridors will provide additional corridors and connections with key areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and enhancement of a coherent network. The relevant corridor in this location is linking the Great Ouse and the East of St Neots area with the proposed Forest of South Cambridgeshire.

Policy CS10 Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements (Proposed Submission Version 2010)

Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing appropriate infrastructure, and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms where this complies with the requirements set out in Circular 5/2005 or successor documents.

Development Management Policies

The Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD), will be part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). It will set out the Council's policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire and will be used to assess and determine planning applications. The Development Management Policies reflect the spatial vision and objectives of the Core Strategy.

Policy C1 Sustainable Design

All development proposals should take account of the predicted impact of climate change over the expected lifetime of the development.

Policy C2 Carbon Dioxide Reductions

Proposals for major development will include renewable or low carbon energy generating technologies. These should have energy generating capacity equivalent to 10% of the predicted total CO2 emissions of the proposal. This should be achieved on-site wherever possible, although off-site systems will be considered favourably where on-site provision is not feasible or viable or CO2 emissions can be reduced by a greater percentage.

Policy C5 Flood Risk and Water Management

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:-

- it is not located in an area at risk from flooding, unless suitable flood protection/ mitigation measures can be agreed, satisfactorily implemented and maintained:- there will be no increase in the risk of flooding for properties elsewhere (e.g. through a net increase in surface water run-off, or a reduction in the capacity of flood water storage areas), unless suitable compensation or mitigation measures exist or can be agreed, satisfactorily implemented and maintained :- sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) are to be used to manage surface water run-off where technically feasible; and there is to be no adverse impact on, or unacceptable risk to, the quantity or quality of water resources.

Policy E1 Development Context

All development proposals shall demonstrate consideration of the character and appearance of the surrounding environment and the potential impact of the proposal.

Policy E3 Heritage Assets

A development proposal which may affect the District's heritage assets (both designated and undesignated) or their setting should demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved and where appropriate enhanced. The District's heritage assets include: the landscape character areas defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) or successor documents landscape features including ancient woodlands and veteran trees, field patterns, watercourses, drainage ditches and hedgerows of visual, historic or nature conservation value.

Policy E4 Biodiversity and Protected Habitats and Species

Development proposals will be accompanied by appropriate assessments of the likely impacts on biodiversity, including protected species and habitat.

Policy E5 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Development proposals shall avoid the loss of, and minimise the risk of, harm to trees, woodland or hedgerows of visual, historic or nature conservation value, including ancient woodland and veteran trees. Where they lie within a development site, they should wherever possible be incorporated effectively within the landscape elements of the scheme.

Policy E8 Sustainable Travel

Development proposals must demonstrate how the scheme maximises opportunities for the use of sustainable travel modes, particularly walking, cycling and public transport. This should include planning the layout of development to favour more sustainable modes and contributions from development to the extension, linking, or improvement of existing routes to achieve:-

- the provision of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes,
- Improved public transport, including infrastructure,
- improved access to the countryside and links to strategic green infrastructure provision,
- the provision of new circular routes and connections between local and long-distance footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes

Policy E9 Travel Planning

To maximise opportunities for the use of sustainable modes of travel, development proposals should make appropriate contributions towards improvements in transport infrastructure, particularly to facilitate walking, cycling and public transport use. Proposals should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local or strategic transport network, nor cause harm to the character of the surrounding area.

Policy H1 Efficient Use of Housing Land

To promote efficient use of land proposals for housing developments will optimise density taking account of the:

- nature of the development site;
- character of its surroundings; and
- need to accommodate other uses and residential amenities such as open space and parking areas.
- To help reduce the need to travel, proposals will be supported which:
- includes higher densities in locations in close proximity to concentrations of services and facilities;
- integrate commercial and community uses amongst new homes of a scale and nature appropriate to their location.

Policy H2 Housing Mix

The Council will require a mix of housing types and sizes that can:

- reasonably meet the future needs of a wide range of household types in Huntingdonshire; and

- reflect the advice and guidance provided within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SHMAs and relevant local housing studies. This includes the provision of a proportion of homes built to 'Lifetime Homes' Standards or successor documents.

Policy H3 Adaptability and Accessibility

The location and design of development should consider the requirements of users and residents that are likely to occur during the lifetime of the development by:

- incorporating appropriate and conveniently located facilities that address the needs of potential user groups;
- maximising the adaptability of buildings and spaces by incorporating elements of Lifetime Neighbourhoods and Lifetime Homes Standards;
- incorporating features that will promote social cohesion and inclusion; and
- enabling ease of access to, around and within the proposal for all potential users, including those with impaired mobility.

Policy H7 Amenity

To safeguard living conditions for residents and people occupying adjoining or nearby properties, the Council will take into consideration the following in assessing the impact of development proposals:

- access to daylight and sunlight, overshadowing and the need for artificial light
- overlooking causing loss of privacy and how this is addressed by design or separation
- potential levels and timings of noise and disturbance
- potential for pollution, including air quality, light spillage and contamination of land, groundwater or surface water
- the effect of traffic movement to, from and within the site and car parking
- resultant physical relationships being oppressive or overbearing

Minimising the extent to which people feel at risk from crime by:

- incorporating elements of Secured By Design or similar standards;
- enabling passive surveillance of public spaces and parking;
- distinguishing clearly between public and private areas; and
- incorporating appropriate security measures, such as lighting, CCTV and hard and soft landscape treatments.

Policy D1 Green Space, Play and Sports Facilities Contributions

Implementation

All development proposals should take into account the Green Infrastructure Strategy (2006), the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit (2006) and the Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire (2009) or successor documents as appropriate. Provision of green space, play and sports facilities will be secured by condition or through S106 agreement which may include commuted payments towards off-site provision where facilities cannot reasonably be provided within the development site or where this secures the most appropriate provision for the local community.

Contributions will be calculated taking into account any provisions of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Detailed guidance on the requirements for green space, play and sports facilities will be provided in the Planning Obligations SPD.

Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement

Whilst some sites are listed, this is not an exhaustive list and the Council will actively support projects through the Planning System that aim to create new Green Infrastructure, where these projects demonstrate a high degree of public benefit in the form of increased access for quiet recreation and increased provision for biodiversity. In the longer term the enhancement of green corridors will provide additional corridors and connections with key areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and enhancement of a coherent network. The relevant corridor in this location is linking the Great Ouse and the East of St Neots area with the proposed Forest of South Cambridgeshire.

9. Community Engagement

Numerous community engagement events have taken place throughout the year to inform the design process encompased within this framework. Many of these have been undertaken with the assistance of the St Neots Town Centre Initiative (SNTCI).

The SNTCI has hosted several meetings to discuss this potential development, covering various topic groups and these groups have made several recommendations.

The SNTCI transportation group discussed the implications for road access to the rest of the town, particularly for the southern part of the site. The group looked at access onto Potton Road as well as access onto the A428, and cycle and pedestrian access underneath the railway line.

The SNTCI manufacturing club was particularly interested in how employees would access new business locations, had useful contributions to make about what type of employment should come to St Neots, how different types of employment relate to each other and why St Neots is a good accessible location for employment growth.

The SNTCI retail club was enthusiastic about the location for the district centre, and generally reinforced the idea that the district centre should not adversely affect the vitality of the town centre.

The SNTCI redevelopment and environment group was concerned about open space and environmental issues generally, and making sure that whatever environmental assets the site has should be enhanced and integrated into the new development.

A presentation was made to St Neots Town Council at their annual town meeting, highlighting issues that may impact upon the town, such as where the employment should go, how Cambridge Road can be improved, and where the facilities could go.

Discussions with the Eynesbury Residents Association (EVA) have been concerned with how the new development relates to Eynesbury, how it will affect this part of the town, and how the linkages and connections under the railway line can be made to work. Other discussions related to what community facilities the new development could provide for the benefit of the residents of Eynesbury. A particular issue raised was whether the recreation land on the Eynesbury side of the railway line (known as Brickhills) could be used for a community building for both Eynesbury and the new community.

Discussions with the Loves Farm Community Association have been concerned about the impact of new development on them. Issues raised included how the eastern extension would be linked to Loves Farm, access issues generally, where the District Centre would be located and what it would consist of, employment opportunities of all types, and how the new development would use sustainable infrastructure. They made valuable contributions relating to how the current Loves Farm development worked, discussing the

width of the roads, car parking, and asking why the bridge across Priory Hill is closed to Loves Farm road traffic.

There will be ongoing community engagement throughout the lifetime of the development.

Appendix

Useful Information

Government has set out urban design principles in documents such as:

- Better places to live, a companion guide to PPG3, CABE 2001

  http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications planningandbuilding/betterplaces

- By Design - Urban design in the planning system, DETR, 2000

  www.cabe.org.uk/publications/by-design

- Car Parking - What Works Where - English Partnerships

  www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/qualityandin novtionpublications.htm

- Creating successful masterplans, CABE, 2008

  www.cabe.org.uk/publications/creatingsucce sful-masterplans

- Start with the park, creating sustainable urban green spaces, CABE 2005

  www.cabe.org.uk/publications/startwiththep ark

- The Value of Housing Design and Layout

  www.cabe.org.uk/publications/the-value-of-housing-design-and-layout

- Urban Design Compendium – English Partnerships

  www.urbandesigncompendium.co.uk

Other useful documents that have been published by various agencies and organisations include:

- Guidance for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Environment Agency

  www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/36998.aspx

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Creating and Sustaining Mixed Income Communities

  www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/9781905018314 .pdf

- Manual for Streets, Department for Transport, 2007

  www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets

- Sport England , Active Design 2007

Corporate documents published by or affecting Huntingdonshire District Council and will inform the development of the eastern expansion to St Neots include:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan
- Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record
- Cambridgeshire Quality Charter
- Growing Awareness: A Plan for Our Environment 2008

- Growing Our Communities: Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2028
- Growing Success 2010-2011
- Housing Strategy 2006-2011
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
- Local Economy Strategy 2008 -2015
- Local Investment Framework 2009
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for New Communities in Cambridgeshire [Department of Health, (2007) Commissioning framework for health and well-being]
- RECAP Waste Management Design
- St Neots Heathcheck (2009)

Contacts Details

Huntingdonshire District Council

Planning Services

Pathfinder House

St Mary's Street

Huntingdon

Cambs PE29 3TN

w. www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

e. CRM_Planning@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

t. 01480 388388