

Draft Strategic Options and Policies

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

Introduction



What is this about?

This document introduces how and why we need to produce a new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire. It discusses potential options we have for the strategy of how Huntingdonshire should develop in the period up to 2036. It is complemented by a series of documents that indicate potential development sites which could be included in the Local Plan and contribute to delivering the most appropriate and sustainable strategy option. A further document sets out draft policies to guide and manage development.

The Local Plan will guide the district's future sustainable development up to 2036. It will address a broad range of planning issues including the need to match up new homes with jobs, infrastructure and environmental protection. The best strategy for the future of Huntingdonshire will need to balance competing economic, social and environmental demands to ensure growth is sustainable.

What has happened so far?

We started off with an initial consultation which ran from 21 May to 24 June 2012. The purpose of that consultation was to indicate the key headline planning issues and put forward three initial growth options which were based on the best demographic data available at the time. It was targeted mainly at town and parish councils and key stakeholders although there was wider publicity in two local newspapers with free circulation across most of the district and on the council's website and Facebook page. The aim of this initial consultation was to start raising awareness of the new Local Plan prior to the current more detailed phase of engagement. The three initial growth options are discussed further in this document along with analysis of responses that have been received so far.

What is happening now?

This **non-statutory** stage of the Local Plan preparation is focusing on the strategy we should adopt for development up to 2036, the sites that might be suitable to deliver that strategy and the policies we should use to guide and manage development.

We encourage everyone to get involved at this early, non-statutory stage as comments made now can really help shape the content of the Local Plan. A draft Local Plan will be subject to consultation in 2013. At this stage we hope your comments will help us decide what the overall strategy and amount of development should be, as well as refining the identified potential development sites, proposing additional sustainable development sites and refining draft policies.

Consultation on this stage runs from **31 August to 23 November 2012**. This **12 week period** is longer than the usual legislative consultation period of six weeks to make sure that everyone who wants to get involved in shaping the new Local Plan has the opportunity to do so. There are lots of ways to find out more and to get involved.

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These include:

- 24 hour access to all documents available through our online consultation [website](#) with the facility to respond directly on individual elements of consultation documents
- Copies of documents in various libraries across the district during the consultation period
- A series of public exhibitions where information will be displayed and staff will be available to answer questions and queries about the consultation. The table below gives details of the exhibitions.

Exhibitions

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Ramsey	Ramsey Community Centre, Stocking Fen Road, Ramsey, PE26 1SA	1 October 2012	2pm to 8pm
Huntingdon	District Council Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN	3 October 2012	2pm to 8pm
St Neots	The Priory Centre, The Priory, St. Neots, PE19 2BH	8 October 2012	2pm to 8pm
Sawtry	The Old School Hall, Green End Road, Sawtry, PE28 5UX	11 October 2012	2pm to 8pm
Houghton	Houghton and Wyton Memorial Hall, St Ives Road, Houghton, PE28 2BJ	17 October 2012	2pm to 8pm
Great Stukeley	Great Stukeley Village Hall, Owl End, Great Stukeley, PE28 4AQ	24 October 2012	2pm to 8pm

This stage involves a lot of material that people can look at. The list below explains what information is covered by each of the documents. In addition there are Environmental Capacity documents which provide further detail on all the potential development sites and include a draft sustainability appraisal of them. The Environmental Capacity documents will be finalised following the comments received during this consultation process.

Document list

Document	Contents
Draft Strategic Options and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local plan production processes• Expected levels of development• Low, medium and high growth options• Scale of development policies• Sustainability appraisal of the overall strategy
Potential development sites: Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft policies for sites in Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester and Alconbury Weald
Potential development sites: St Neots Spatial Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft policies for sites in St Neots and Little Paxton
Potential development sites: St Ives Spatial Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft policies for sites in and around St Ives

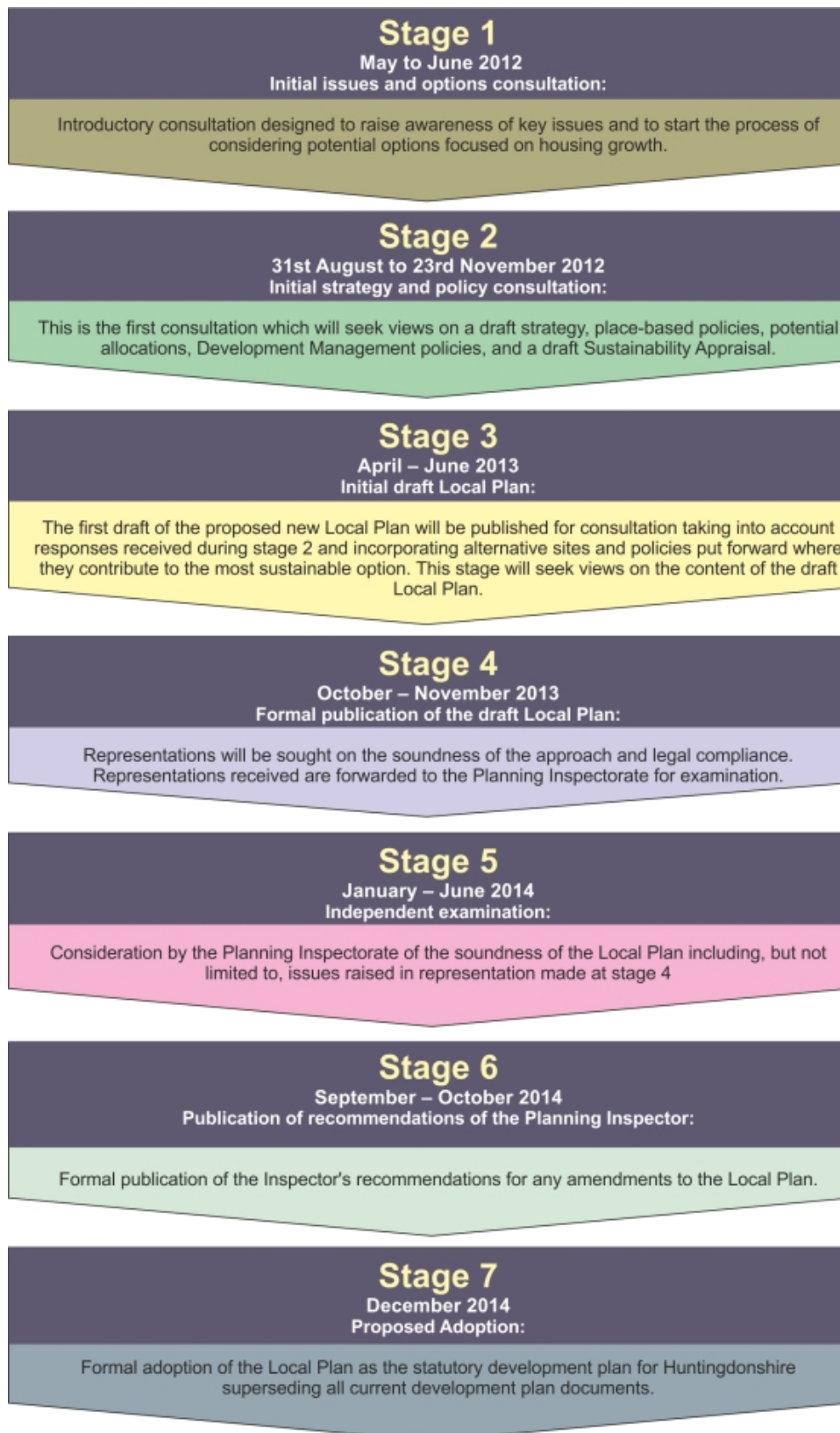
Document	Contents
Potential development sites: Ramsey Spatial Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policies for sites in Ramsey, Bury and RAF Upwood
Potential development sites: Key Service Centres and Small Settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policies for sites in the key service centres and small settlements including Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys, Yaxley, Little Staughton Airfield industrial estate, and Wyton Airfield/ Wyton-on-the-Hill
Draft Development Management Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policies to guide and manage development focusing on the economy, transport, new homes, quality of development, climate change, the natural and historic environments Draft policies to complement those in the National Planning Policy Framework and reflect local circumstances

What happens next?

The comments from this consultation will be considered prior to producing a full draft Local Plan, which we anticipate being ready for consultation early in 2013. The draft Local Plan will take comments from this current consultation into account and include refined versions of all the draft policies and potential allocations that are part of this consultation along with a vision and strategy for the district illustrated with a key diagram, and will also include information on how the Local Plan will be delivered and monitored. The draft Local Plan will be issued for consultation and following consideration of consultation comments a final version will be prepared for formal comments and submission for independent examination.

The following diagram illustrates the stages that the Local Plan will need to go through before it is finally adopted.

Stages of preparing the Local Plan



Why do we need a new Local Plan?

A new Local Plan is needed because of changing circumstances:

Alconbury Enterprise Zone

An enterprise zone was designated at Alconbury Airfield in August 2011. This designation was not anticipated by our adopted Core Strategy and means that our plan needs to be updated. The enterprise zone covers 150 hectares of land and will provide significant opportunities for new investment in the economy. It is envisaged that the Alconbury Enterprise Zone will lead to the creation of 8,000 jobs over the next 25 years. This has the potential to significantly change both the numbers and diversity of job opportunities available to local residents.

Localism Act 2011

A new Local Plan is also needed to respond to the Localism Act (2011) which aims to refocus decision-making at a local level. It introduced a formal neighbourhood planning system that enables local communities to promote the types of development that they think are right for their area. Any neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan so it is essential that we put an updated plan in place and communities engage with the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure it reflects issues that are specific to their area. The Localism Act provides for the abolition of regional spatial strategies which previously set requirements for housing and employment development. Without these regionally set requirements the Local Plan will now need to set targets locally whilst co-operating with neighbouring districts to ensure wider than local needs are met appropriately.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 covering all forms of development and setting out the government's economic, environmental and social priorities for planning. Its intention is to provide a new, simplified planning framework that better supports growth and helps create the homes and jobs that the country needs, further empowers communities, and helps protect and enhance our natural and historic environment. Local authorities now have to update their Development Plans to ensure consistency with the NPPF. At the core of the NPPF lies a presumption in favour of sustainable development; paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out what this means:

NPPF Paragraph 14

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

For plan-making this means that:

- local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The Development Plan for Huntingdonshire is currently made up of a number of different documents, parts of which have been produced recently and so are up to date but other parts are now out dated or have been replaced. This can be confusing for people trying to use the Development Plan and trying to work out which policies to use. Producing a new Local Plan gives the opportunity to put all of our planning policies into a single document. The most up to date parts of the Development Plan are the adopted Core Strategy to 2026 (2009) and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (2011) which were prepared following extensive public engagement each culminating in independent examination by a government planning inspector where both were found provide a sustainable strategy. They provide a sound basis for considering the way forward so at this stage the intention is to build on this strategy and adapt it to reflect changing circumstances.

What are the key issues?

The initial issues and options consultation document suggested that key issues for the Local Plan include:

- Scale, location and quality of new development
- Boosting the local economy
- Promoting lively town centres
- Better transport options
- Responding to predicted impacts of climate change
- Maintaining services and facilities across Huntingdonshire
- Providing new infrastructure and community facilities with new development
- High quality design to help make places better for residents and visitors
- Protecting important open spaces and nature conservation sites

Initial issues and options consultation responses

An Initial Issues and Options consultation was held between 21 May and 24 June 2012. This was a non-statutory consultation designed to raise awareness of key issues and potential growth options. Given that the Alconbury Enterprise Zone is formally designated the consultation focused on how the Local Plan could shape future housing growth. The table below sets out the level of importance respondents ascribed to each of the issues put forward in terms of their priority for the Local Plan. They show that the single most important issue was the scale, location and quality of new development with all respondents who answered the question indicating this to be very important or important. Other issues of particular importance were better transport options, maintaining services and facilities and protecting open space.

Table 1 Initial Issues and Options consultation responses on key issues

Issue	Very important (%)	Important (%)	Not very important (%)	Not important at all (%)
Scale, location and quality of new development	72	28	0	0
Boosting the local economy	55	40	4	1
Promoting lively town centres	28	50	21	1
Better transport options	59	39	2	0

Issue	Very important (%)	Important (%)	Not very important (%)	Not important at all (%)
Respond to predicted impacts of climate change	20	42	34	4
Maintaining services and facilities	33	65	2	0
Providing new infrastructure	57	38	4	1
Encouraging high quality design	43	46	11	0
Protecting important open space	58	40	2	0

In addition consultees were asked to suggest other key issues that the Local Plan should address. The most frequently cited issue was infrastructure provision; both to address existing deficits and to ensure adequate provision to keep pace with additional developments. Other issues of repeated concern were:

- The impact of growth on existing communities
- Affordable housing provision particularly of new homes in villages for local residents
- Vulnerability of the area to flooding and its potential limitation on growth
- The decision on A14 rerouting is required before major new growth commitments are made
- Conservation of the character of rural areas and the countryside
- The viability of key service centres and larger villages should be increased with a range of facilities and services
- Adequate commercial development is needed to balance with new homes
- Consideration of the re-use of RAF Upwood
- Protection of the historic environment
- Provision of a range of sizes for housing sites

Do you think the issues identified above outline all of the key issues that the Local Plan should address?

Are there any other issues you think should be considered in the Local Plan?

Vision and objectives

The Core Strategy (2009) set out a vision for the way Huntingdonshire would be developed by 2026. This reflected an aspiration that in 2026 Huntingdonshire would have retained its distinct identity as a predominantly rural area with vibrant villages and market towns. It focused on a series of issues:

- Sustainable development and responding to climate change
- Protection of the character of towns, villages and the landscape
- Sustainability of villages and countryside and promotion of the rural economy
- Sustainable patterns of growth and delivery of sufficient housing to meet needs
- Development and retention of employment that suits the needs of the population and reduces out-commuting
- Enhancing the role of market towns as retail and service centres
- Maximising the use of previously developed land for new developments
- Increasing capacity of the transport network

The vision was complemented by 18 objectives which summarised the key policy directions and helped to provide a framework for developing appropriate indicators and targets for monitoring purposes.

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Local Plan Vision and Strategy

The draft Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036 and the related Local Plan Strategy aim and objectives describe the Council's intentions for accommodating sustainable development and growth in the Huntingdonshire. These are based on the Huntingdonshire District Council Leadership Direction (2012) which sets out a corporate vision and a series of related themes.

Huntingdonshire Corporate Vision

The Huntingdonshire corporate vision states that:

'Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire by working with our communities and partners to achieve sustainable economic growth whilst providing excellent value for money services that meet local needs within a balanced budget'

Huntingdonshire Corporate Themes

The corporate themes that underpin the corporate vision are:

- To achieve a strong local economy
- To enable sustainable growth
- To improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire
- To work with our communities

Draft Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036

Huntingdonshire is an attractive and generally affluent place which is located within an economically vibrant part of Cambridgeshire which, in the context of the broader United Kingdom economy, has great potential for continued economic growth into the future. Huntingdonshire is a place that accommodates a diverse range of businesses in a series of growth sectors, which relate to nearby growth hubs at Cambridge and Peterborough. The district is relatively close to London, and has very good communications links with it. Huntingdonshire's communities are influenced by, and play an active part within, the economy of the wider south east of England.

Huntingdonshire has a successful track record of planning for sustainable development. A series of important strategic development areas are planned through the Core Strategy to 2026 and each of these is likely to come forward within that period. These will deliver a mix of new uses including new homes and employment facilities, and will need to be co-ordinated and balanced by the provision of new community infrastructure and environmental, countryside and green-space protection mechanisms.

The challenge is to plan for a further period to ensure that the district makes the most of the opportunities that arise from the designation of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone and to positively anticipate and address the issues that will face a growing population. The key to achieving good planning for Huntingdonshire in the period to 2036 will be to effectively balance and manage the competing economic, environmental and social pressures that will come forward as a consequence of the area's growth.

The Draft Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036 describes the type of place that Huntingdonshire should be in 2036. It is intended as a refinement and positive development of the vision set out in the Core Strategy to 2026, it takes account of the Huntingdonshire District Council corporate vision, and it should enable the district to achieve its potential in spatial planning terms.

Draft Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036

In 2036 Huntingdonshire will be a highly sustainable and economically vibrant place with thriving market towns and villages, a high quality built and natural environment, successful neighbourhoods, and a range of well designed homes for all sectors of the community.

Draft Local Plan Strategy Aim and Objectives

The purpose of setting out a draft Local Plan Strategy Aim and Objectives is to describe the basis for each draft policy within the new Local Plan which, taken together, will deliver the proposed spatial planning vision. The aim and objectives are compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework and reflect the issues that planning can influence in Huntingdonshire up to 2036.

Aim

The aim of the Local Plan Strategy is to achieve the Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036 through a plan to deliver the sustainable development that Huntingdonshire needs to grow and thrive to 2036.

Objectives

The key objectives of the Local Plan Strategy are:

- To create high quality job opportunities in a strong local economy
- To meet the housing needs of Huntingdonshire's growing population
- To promote well designed sustainable developments and lifestyles
- To protect and enhance our market towns and the historic and natural environment
- To promote high quality design as an integral part of sustainable development
- To secure the infrastructure required to deliver sustainable development
- To support our communities so that they achieve their aspirations

The vision, strategy and objectives for the Local Plan need to be developed through consultation to reflect the aspirations of local communities and comments are welcome.

Do you agree that the Draft Spatial Planning Vision for Huntingdonshire to 2036 satisfactorily describes the type of place that Huntingdonshire should be in 2036, or do you have suggestions for amending it?

Do you agree that the Draft Local Plan Strategy Aim and Objectives form an appropriate basis for the policies in the Local Plan, or do you have suggestions for amending them?

What will we need to plan for?

Status of this document

It should be noted that none of the suggested policy approaches made in this document currently represent council policy beyond the policy position established in the adopted Core Strategy and supporting documents, which will remain as the Development Plan until it is replaced by the new Local Plan.

Status of regional and other plans

The consultation documents do not refer to the East of England Plan or the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan as the government has stated its intention to revoke these in due course. If this does not happen then consideration will be given to how the Local Plan will be in compliance with them at the next stage in its preparation.

Planning for growth

Huntingdonshire has previously been identified as being well placed to provide new homes as part of a national 'growth area'. Designation of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone to help deliver the economic growth aspirations of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has reinforced Huntingdonshire's pivotal role in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

The Core Strategy for Huntingdonshire was adopted in 2009 setting out strategic directions of growth for the period up to 2026. The Core Strategy and current commitments provide for 9,100 more homes to be built in Huntingdonshire; mostly in and around Huntingdon and St Neots. Now that regional housing targets as expressed in the East of England Plan are expected to be abolished there is flexibility to decide locally how many new homes, on top of those which already have planning permission, would provide a sustainable development approach for the district. In determining our local target we will need to weigh the benefits that new homes and people may bring in shaping the future of the area against the pressures and problems they could create. We also need to think about the problems that may arise without new homes for local people who are unable to afford a home that meets their needs and how that may be constraining economic growth.

Homes

A major role of the new Local Plan will be to determine how many new homes will need to be built in Huntingdonshire up to 2036. For many years governments, including the present one, have recognised that not enough homes are being built across the country. This means that many people are finding it very difficult to find a decent home that they can afford, which in turn is holding back the national economy.

The amount of housing growth required will need to be provided sustainably, and the scale will need to be appropriate for Huntingdonshire. Masterplanning will be an important technique, often facilitated by council producing urban design frameworks. The national 'Code for Sustainable Homes' will help ensure that new developments use energy, water and materials to limit the environmental impact of housing; the 'Building for Life' standard will promote design excellence; and the 'Lifetime Homes' standard will help to ensure that homes are built to meet residents' needs. The draft policies for managing development set out requirements in respect of these national standards.

The Local Plan will also need to address the housing requirements of gypsies and travellers so the council has been working with other authorities in the area to assess the level of need for additional new pitches. The number of additional pitches currently anticipated suggest that a site specific allocation policy may not be necessary at present.

Economic growth

To complement housing growth an appropriate scale of economic growth will be needed. The Core Strategy required about 85 hectares of land for employment uses, mainly in Huntingdon and St Neots, to promote new jobs close to the majority of new and existing homes. The Alconbury Enterprise Zone has the potential to radically change the local economy as well as providing a focal point for high quality business development that will support economic growth in the LEP area. The new Local Plan needs to respond to the opportunities this offers and to its potential impacts on existing employment areas. Alongside this the Local Plan needs to consider opportunities for employment across the district to facilitate job opportunities close to existing communities and diversification of the rural economy. An Economic Assessment and Strategy have been commissioned and will be available to guide preparation of the next stage of the Local Plan.

Retail

The Core Strategy promotes 20,000m² of additional comparison retail floorspace across the district with priority given to proposals in the town centres; 9,000m² each is proposed in Huntingdon and St Neots and 2,000m² in St Ives. A further 4,000m² of convenience retail floorspace is also promoted. Since the Core Strategy was adopted proposals have come forward for two significant new retail schemes in Huntingdon involving the redevelopment of Chequers Court and new retail provision just to the west of the town centre between George Street and Ermine Street.

Retailing is highly sensitive to prevailing economic conditions and preferences can evolve very rapidly making longer term forecasting of requirements difficult. This Local Plan will need to have a strategy for how our town centres can best respond to the changing circumstances evident in recent times and likely in the future in order to identify how and where retail provision should be made. An updated retail study has been commissioned and will be available to guide preparation of the next stage of the Local Plan.

Infrastructure

The provision of new and improved infrastructure to support existing and future residents and businesses will be important to ensure the delivery of sustainable new growth in Huntingdonshire and the surrounding area. The types of new infrastructure required to ensure that the district functions effectively includes road and public transport improvements, energy and power distribution, water and waste facilities, schools and education facilities, health centres, community and leisure facilities, green infrastructure and communications infrastructure such as broadband.

Since the Initial Issues and Options consultation in May and June 2012, there has been progress by the Department for Transport (DfT) on identifying options on the future of the A14. The A14 is a crucial strategic route for the East of England as well as being vital for local traffic. Proposals for major improvements between Ellington and Fen Ditton were withdrawn in October 2010. The DfT subsequently undertook a joint study with local partners, including the council, on possible alternatives to the withdrawn scheme. In July 2012 the Transport Secretary announced that a major new A14 scheme involving tolling and other measures will be added to the Department for Transport's programme of major projects. Detailed design and statutory processes have been started. The A14 package as described in July 2012 includes construction of a new bypass to the south of Huntingdon re-routing the A14 between the A1 in the west and Fen Drayton or Trinity Foot beyond the eastern edge of the District. The existing route which may be changed by the removal of the viaduct over the railway at Huntingdon will become part of a local road network. This announcement enables the Local Plan process to proceed with more certainty. It is also recognised that the A428 may also need to be upgraded. As further details about the proposed scheme emerge they will need to be taken into account as preparation of the Local Plan progresses.

With reduced public funding for new and improved infrastructure provision new development will increasingly be important in addressing infrastructure issues. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new mechanism to allow local planning authorities to seek to raise funds to help provide infrastructure that is, or will be, needed as a result of that new development. The council introduced its CIL charging schedule on 1 May 2012. The CIL will generate funding to deliver a range of prioritised district-wide and local infrastructure projects that support residential and economic growth, provide certainty for future development, and benefit local communities. An Infrastructure Plan, developed in partnership with infrastructure providers, will help to identify the infrastructure needs and projects to receive funding. The Localism Act (2011) also requires CIL charging authorities to allocate a 'meaningful proportion' of levy revenues back to the neighbourhood in which they are raised for the town or parish council to spend on locally agreed and prioritised infrastructure. A further infrastructure study has been commissioned to update the existing studies and will be available to guide the preparation of the next stage of preparing the new Local Plan.

Environment

One of the key issues that the Local Plan will seek to address is the balance between providing land for new sustainable development across Huntingdonshire, and the need to protect the environments, landscapes and natural settings that characterise the towns and villages. The Local Plan will therefore need to identify and designate particular areas of land that should be protected from development. There is very limited scope for new development in the open countryside, other than for agricultural and related farm diversification and tourism

businesses, outside the established settlements. The Local Plan will include policies that describe the types of development that may be considered to be appropriate within the countryside. Large parts of Huntingdonshire are protected for their nature conservation importance, including The Great Fen, Paxton Pits, Grafham Water and the extensive River Ouse corridor. These areas are also potentially appropriate locations for sustainable active leisure and tourism developments of an appropriate scale and character. Within settlements, local communities may wish to ensure that locally important areas of open space, including local parks and recreation areas, are protected from inappropriate development. The Local Plan process will be used to test the opportunity to designate areas of strategic green space where only limited development will be allowed as a balance to new sustainable development within or directly adjacent to existing settlements. As well as affording protection to major nature conservation assets, the policy approach will be to identify, for comment through this consultation, areas of strategic green space around and between particular settlements, including St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Yaxley and Farcet.

Expected housing development to 2026

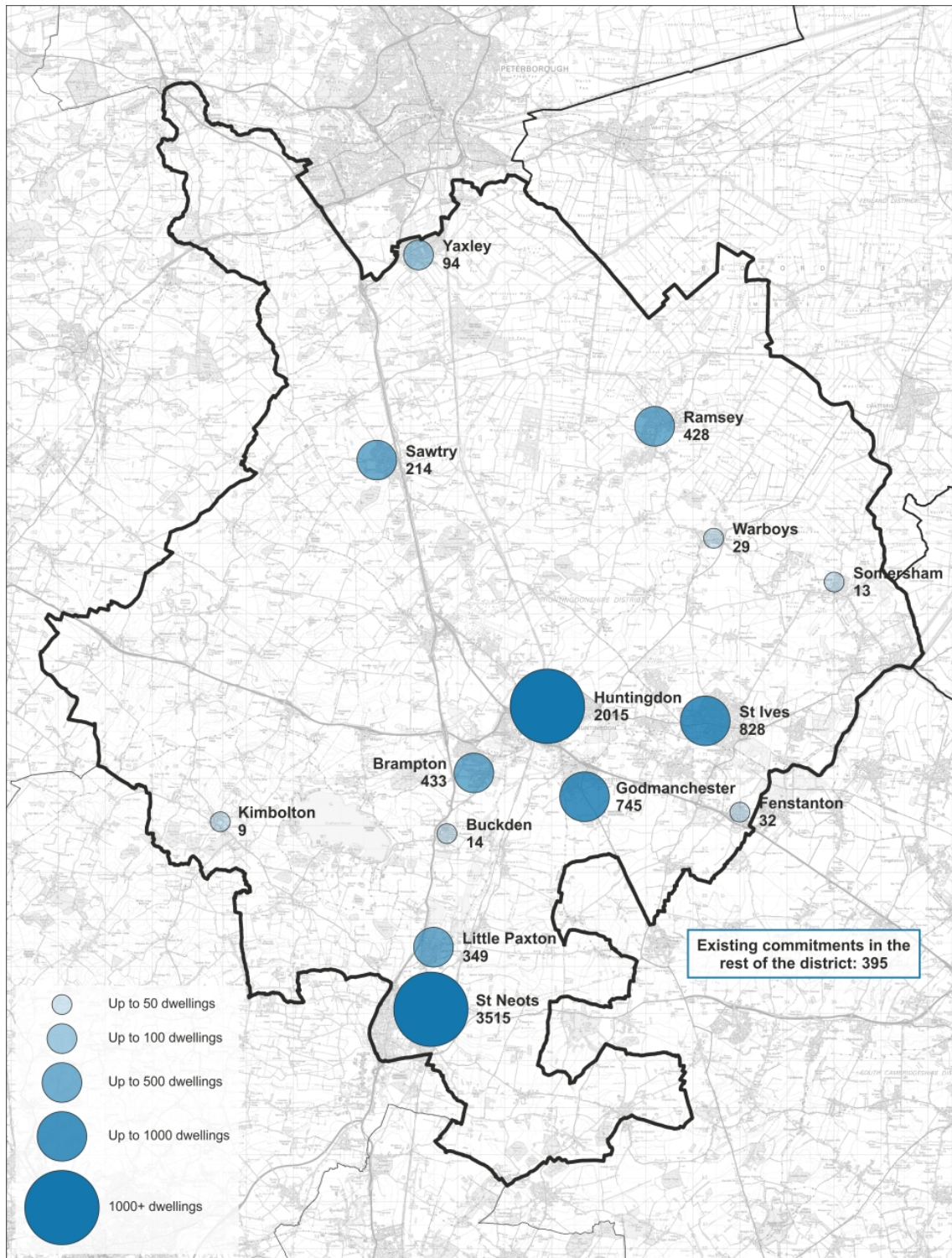
The table below sets out the number and status of sources of expected housing development in the largest settlements as at 1 April 2011 which is the base date of the Local Plan. As preparation of the Local Plan progresses these will be updated to reflect recent completions and new planning permissions granted. The old Local Plan (1995) and its Alteration (2002) allocated specific sites for housing use, some of which are still outstanding. The largest of these by far is at Ermine Street to the north west of Huntingdon. The Core Strategy (2009) does not allocate specific sites for development but in order to demonstrate how the district's growth needs could be met it identified broad strategic directions of growth to meet the housing needs anticipated to 2026.

Table 2 Sources of expected housing development in Huntingdonshire

Location	Homes with planning permission or under construction	Outstanding Local Plan allocations (1995 and 2002) not in Core Strategy directions of growth (homes)	Core Strategy (2009) Directions of growth outstanding (homes)	Total existing potential (homes)
Huntingdon	316	1039	660	2015
Brampton	33	0	400	433
Godmanchester	5	0	740	745
St Neots	841	24	2650	3515
Little Paxton	349	0	0	349
St Ives	238	90	500	828
Ramsey	218	35	175	428
Buckden	14	0	0	14
Fenstanton	2	0	30	32
Kimbolton	9	0	0	9
Sawtry	214	0	0	214
Somersham	13	0	0	13
Warboys	21	0	0	21

Location	Homes with planning permission or under construction	Outstanding Local Plan allocations (1995 and 2002) not in Core Strategy directions of growth (homes)	Core Strategy (2009) Directions of growth outstanding (homes)	Total existing potential (homes)
Yaxley	64	0	30	94
Rest of district	395	0	0	395
Total	2732	1188	5185	9105

Core Strategy to 2026 and existing commitments: 9100 homes



This map shows a combination of all homes with planning permission or under-construction as at 1 April 2011. It also shows the outstanding allocations from the old Local Plan (1995 and 2002). These are supplemented by the numbers anticipated in the Core Strategy (2009) directions of growth. All proposed options should be read in conjunction with this map.

Expected employment development to 2026

The picture with expected employment development in Huntingdonshire is less straightforward than for homes as many sites have overlapping or alternative permissions and there are numerous small sites with planning permission across the district. In addition there are a large number of sites within established industrial areas which are suitable and available for redevelopment or in some cases available for development for the first time where plots have never been taken up. The largest outstanding permissions for employment development are at:

- Huntingdon - 5.6ha remainder of Hinchingsbrooke Business Park
- Alconbury Airfield - 412.2ha permission for warehousing and distribution
- St Ives - 3.0ha remainder of Compass Point and St Ives Business Park
- Ramsey - 6.4ha permission for mixed office and industrial use on St Mary's Road
- Fenstanton - 8.8ha for mixed office, industrial and warehousing use at The Lakes Business Park
- Little Paxton - 9.8ha permission for business park at Mill Lane
- Yaxley - 3.7ha permissions for remainder of Eagle Park and Norman Cross brickworks

In terms of land area the existing commitments are dominated by the extant planning permission for 651,510m² of warehousing across some 412ha at Alconbury Airfield. However, this is no longer expected to be implemented as it overlaps with land designated for the Enterprise Zone covering 150ha.

Growth options for consultation

One of the key requirements of the new Local Plan will be to demonstrate how the district's growth needs have been objectively assessed. The following sections present the options for the growth of Huntingdonshire up to 2036. The options for growth should always be read in conjunction with the housing numbers from expected to come from the 'Expected housing development to 2026' to ensure a complete picture of overall growth as well as the information from the 'Expected employment development to 2026'. The Alconbury Enterprise Zone should also be borne in mind when considering the options. This covers 150ha of land and aspires to provide 8000 jobs over the next 25 years. The Core Strategy and existing commitments should facilitate significant numbers of additional jobs at Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, Ramsey, Fenstanton, Little Paxton and Yaxley as well as at numerous small employment sites across the district. In addition, jobs arise from a wide range of activities such as retail, health, tourism and education that do not require traditional employment land. Thus, the proximity of residential growth options to other concentrations of employment such as town centres and business parks should also be considered.

How have the options been prepared?

The potential housing and jobs numbers are derived from the East of England Forecasting Model June 2012 forecasts. Possible growth options have been drawn up responding to the varying target numbers from these. The options show how many extra homes would be required on top of existing commitments and the numbers of homes allowed for in the Core Strategy 2009.

The ability to deliver the levels of growth set out in the options has been considered through the Environmental Capacity Study. This has been completed building on work in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2011) and the draft Employment Land Availability Assessment (2011). The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how, where and to what extent development can be undertaken without giving rise to irreversible damage to Huntingdonshire's environment. It assesses individual sites put forward for development and considers the availability of services and employment to meet the needs of potential residents as well as landscape and environmental implications of potential development. The Environmental Capacity Study incorporates the sustainability appraisal of the individual sites put forward as potential allocations to meet the identified growth options.

As listed in the 'Document list' at the beginning of this document a range of potential site allocations are set out for consultation in a series of related documents centred on main settlements in the district. These provide information on currently identified sites which could form part of packages of sites to deliver each option. They include some sites suggested only for housing use, some for just employment purposes and others for a mix of uses which may include housing, employment, retail, community facilities and strategic greenspace.

At the end of this document is a sustainability appraisal of the growth options which analyses the relative sustainability of each option. It takes the form of responses to a series of questions relating to environmental, social and economic issues which may help inform opinions on the relative merits of the options presented for consultation.

As the Local Plan develops it is likely that landowners will tell us about other sites that they would like considered as part of the packages of sites. These will be considered as preparation of the Local Plan progresses and those that prove to be more sustainable than currently identified sites may be included in future options for consultation.

Initial issues and options consultation responses

The Initial Issues and Options consultation contained three options for additional housing growth to 2036. All assumed the expected housing delivery of 9,100 as at 1 April 2011 would be delivered as explained in 'Expected housing development to 2026'. Two possible ways of delivering each target were illustrated and opinions sought on whether people supported or disliked each one.

Initial Low Growth Option

The initial low growth option was based on Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group's 2010 based population and dwelling stock forecasts. These are consistent with the targets in the draft replacement of the East of England Plan which is proposed to be abolished and hence are acknowledged by Cambridgeshire County Council as being very uncertain. The option was made up of the expected housing growth of 9,100 homes plus an additional 4,650 homes, equating to 550 new homes per year. Responses were strongly influenced by the variation in ways of delivering the homes with the choice allowing for a wider distribution across the district receiving significantly more support than that concentrating development just at Alconbury Weald and St Neots which was the least favoured of any option.

The first results from the 2011 Census published in July 2012 gave a total population for Huntingdonshire of 169,500 an increase of 8% on the 2001 population. In contrast the model assumes a population at 2011 of 166,600 growing by only 8.3% over the next 20 years as it is constrained by the targets in the draft East of England Plan. Given the differences between the initial results from the 2011 Census and the assumptions in this model the figure is not now considered to be realistic. If future housing growth were to be constrained to this level it could lead to significant housing stress with more households unable to meet their housing needs, higher demand for affordable housing and greater pressure for development on unallocated sites leading to greater uncertainty for local communities. For these reasons this option is not put forward in this consultation as it is not considered to be realistic.

Initial Medium Growth Option

The initial medium growth option was based on the East of England Forecast Model (EEFM) draft baseline forecasts of April 2012. The option was made up of the expected housing growth of 9,100 homes plus an additional 8,150 homes, equating to 690 new homes per year. A high proportion of people neither supported nor disliked this option. The choice which had 5,415 new homes at Alconbury Weald, the closest of any option to the number proposed by the promoters of the site, and allowed for some redevelopment at Wyton Airfield received the second highest level of support of all the options.

Work on the East of England Forecasting Model has continued and updated figures were published in June 2012. The baseline figures have been slightly adjusted resulting in a fractional decrease in the target number of homes such that instead of 8,150 additional homes being needed this has been revised to 8,025 new homes.

Initial High Growth Option

The initial high growth option was derived from the the Office of National Statistics trend based household projections for 2008-2031. The option was made up of the expected housing growth of 9,100 homes plus an additional 10,650 homes, equating to 783 new homes per year. The high growth options provoked more decisive responses with the choice including higher levels of growth at Alconbury Weald rather than any more homes in Brampton being favoured.

It is expected that the ONS will revise their projections in the light of results from the 2011 Census, although it is not yet known when such projections will be available. The council will continue to work with Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Strategic Planning Unit to analyse the impacts of the 2011 Census data on the potential options for growth in Huntingdonshire.

Growth Forecasts

Recent Growth Context

To provide a context against which to assess the options, the number of new homes completed in Huntingdonshire between 1991 and 2011 was just over 14,000; this is the equivalent of 700 new homes per year. Huntingdonshire's housing market has demonstrated its resilience during the recession with new home completions of 817 in 2008/9, 796 in 2009/10 and 798 in 2010/11 all of which are higher than the 20 year average. These completions have been consistently above the requirements of the Core Strategy target of at least 550 homes per year.

Growth options for consultation

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

We have also looked at the number of homes already available through existing planning permissions and planned for in the Core Strategy to 2026. These provide 9,100 new homes for which locations have already been identified. If this number is redistributed across the longer period up to 2036 it means locations for 364 new homes per year for 2011-2036 have already been found.

East of England Forecasting Model June 2012

The East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) was developed by Oxford Economics to project economic, demographic and housing trends. It is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of all counties, districts and unitary authorities in the East of England, the South East and the East Midlands.

The model provides forecasts through to 2031 so annual dwelling targets are calculated in each option and then rolled forward for an additional 5 years to produce potential targets for 2036. All options assume that in 2011 Huntingdonshire's population is 168,700, distributed across 70,000 households with the level of demand for dwellings being 72,200.

The model has not yet been updated to reflect the 2011 Census results so all options are subject to revision to take this into account. The model does not take account of the designation of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone either and the attraction that may have for drawing in both businesses and people; it aspires to create 8,000 jobs over 25 years. Further research will be done at the local level to consider the implications of this in terms of job numbers and distribution which will be taken into account as the Local Plan preparation progresses. Therefore it is likely that the current forecasts represent an underestimate of the potential number of jobs in Huntingdonshire by 2036. An Economic Assessment and Strategy are also being prepared to inform preparation of the Local Plan.

Do you think the East of England Forecasting Model provides sufficient evidence to objectively assess the district's future housing needs?

Are there other forecasts that we should take into account?

Low Economic Growth Option

The Low Economic Growth option is based on the EEFM's 'Lost Decade' scenario which reflects the recent years of economic recession and assumes another 5 years of sluggish economic growth. The number of jobs in Huntingdonshire at 2011 is 81,400 and is assumed to even out at around 79,000 before starting to rise very slowly after 2021.

In this option the demand for dwellings is forecast to increase from 72,200 in 2021 to 85,300 by 2031 giving an annual house building target of 655 homes. This would give a new homes target of 16,375 for 2011-2036. 655 homes per year is lower than the annual average new homes completions over the last 20 years.

In this option the total number of employee jobs and self-employed people in Huntingdonshire is forecast to decrease from 81,400 jobs in 2011 to 79,600 by 2031. Multiplying this by the average annual growth rate at the end of the forecasting period gives rise to an estimated 80,000 jobs in Huntingdonshire at 2036.

The Low Economic Growth option is made up of the existing commitments and Core Strategy targets for 9,100 homes plus an additional 7,275 homes for the period up to 2036.

The Low Economic Growth option suggests an decrease of 1,400 jobs up to 2036.

Medium Economic Growth Option

The Medium Economic Growth option is based on the EEFM's 'Baseline' scenario which reflects the recent years of economic recession but contains slightly more optimistic assumptions concerning economic recovery in Cambridgeshire given the dynamic nature of the local economy. The number of jobs in Huntingdonshire is assumed to recover between 2013-2018 followed by a slow but fairly steady rate of increase after that.

In this option the demand for dwellings is forecast to increase from 72,200 in 2021 to 85,900 by 2031 giving an annual house building target of 685 homes. This would give a new homes target of 17,125 for 2011-2036. 685 homes per year is similar to the annual average new homes completions over the last 20 years but below the more recent average.

In this option the total number of employee jobs and self-employed people in Huntingdonshire is forecast to increase from 81,400 jobs in 2011 to 86,400 by 2031. Multiplying this by the average annual growth rate at the end of the forecasting period gives rise to an estimated 87,020 jobs in Huntingdonshire at 2036.

The Medium Economic Growth option is made up of the existing commitments and Core Strategy targets for 9,100 homes plus an additional 8,025 homes for the period up to 2036.

The Medium Economic Growth option suggests an increase of 5,620 jobs up to 2036.

High Economic Growth Option

The High Economic Growth option is based on EEFM's 'High Migration' scenario which is a higher growth option using official Office of National Statistics migration assumptions. The number of jobs in Huntingdonshire is assumed to enjoy a faster recovery between 2014-2020 after that the rate of jobs growth is assumed to slow but remain at a higher rate of increase than in the other scenarios.

In this option the demand for dwellings is forecast to increase from 72,200 in 2021 to 88,400 by 2031 giving an annual house building target of 810 homes. This would give a new homes target of 20,250 for 2011-2036. 810 homes per year which is higher than the annual average new homes completions over the last 20 years but very similar to the more recent average.

In this option the total number of employee jobs and self-employed people in Huntingdonshire is forecast to increase from 81,400 jobs in 2011 to 91,800 by 2031. Multiplying this by the average annual growth rate at the end of the forecasting period gives rise to an estimated 93,650 jobs in Huntingdonshire at 2036.

The High Economic Growth option is made up of the existing commitments and Core Strategy targets for 9,100 homes plus an additional 11,150 homes for the period up to 2036.

The High Economic Growth option suggests an increase of 12,250 jobs.

Summary

Based on the available forecasts we have produced 3 housing targets for consideration as part of this consultation which are illustrated in the following sections.

Expected housing development from the Core Strategy and existing commitments of 9,100 homes plus:

- Low Economic Growth option: 7,275 more homes
- Medium Economic Growth option: 8,025 more homes
- High Economic Growth option: 11,150 more homes

In terms of setting a local target for additional housing numbers which growth option do you consider to be the most realistic and why?

2011 Census

An initial release of 2011 Census estimates at Local Authority level and above were released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 16 July 2012. The results show a usual resident population of 169,500 in Huntingdonshire in March 2011. Of these, some 167,000 people live in households and some 2,500 in communal establishments.

Growth options for consultation

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

Comparing the latest results with the 2001 Census shows an increase of over 12,500 residents in Huntingdonshire during the ten years to March 2011, an 8% increase in population. This is the lowest percentage population increase of the Cambridgeshire local authorities. The percentage increase for Cambridgeshire as a whole is 12.4%. The highest proportion of usual residents in Huntingdonshire is in the age groups from 40 to 49.

The Census shows a total of 69,300 households in Huntingdonshire in 2011, a 9.8% increase on the 2001 result. This is the second lowest percentage increase of the Cambridgeshire local authorities, where the increase as a whole is 12.7%.

More detailed Census data at a lower geographical level is anticipated in November 2012, which may necessitate revisions to population forecasting and the number of new homes required in the district. The council will continue to work with Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Strategic Planning Unit and other authorities to develop robust population and economic forecasts for the area.

Options

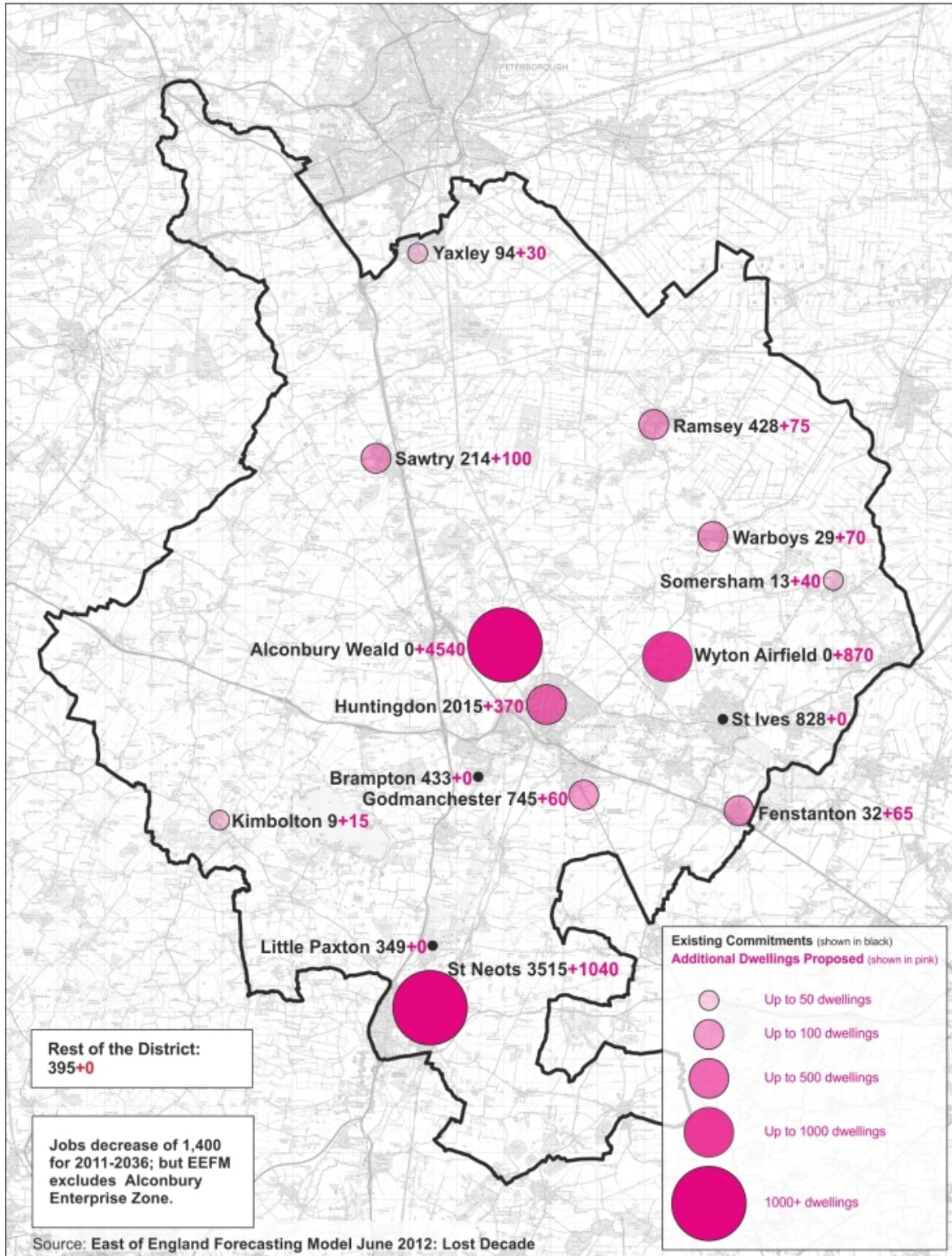
The following 6 pages illustrate how the options could be delivered and some of the issues to be considered for each option. For the next stage of the Local Plan it will be necessary to formulate a preferred strategy which may involve adaptation of one of the options, a combination of options or another alternative in response to updated forecasting.

Is there an alternative growth option that you think would be sustainable and should be considered at this stage? Please explain what it would be and why you consider it to be a sustainable strategy.

If you own or control land which you think could help deliver a sustainable growth option that has not already been considered please see the relevant 'Potential development sites' document to submit details of your site.

Low Economic Growth Option

EEFM June 2012: Low Economic Growth Option - Core Strategy and existing commitments of 9,100 homes with an additional 7,275 homes



Low Economic Growth Option

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

This option puts forward the lowest level of housing growth up to 2036 with a total of 16,375 new homes being required in Huntingdonshire for 2011-2036 to successfully deliver this option. To achieve this would need the 9,100 new homes anticipated through the Core Strategy and existing commitments and an additional 7,275 new homes in other locations. The preceding diagram illustrates how this might be achieved.

In addition to the 9100 new homes on potential development land known about through the Core Strategy and existing commitments a further 1865 additional homes are anticipated in Huntingdonshire's towns and key service centres. Just over a thousand of these are to the east of St Neots to complete the urban extension at Loves Farm and Wintringham Park. The option would allow for additional growth in the largest villages to help sustain local facilities. Within the towns and key service centres this makes use of all the potentially sustainable sites for development that are known to be available.

This leaves an outstanding requirement of 5410 homes to be found on other sites. To reach this target two further growth locations are suggested:

- 4540 new homes at Alconbury Weald in association with the 150ha Enterprise Zone; these would be complemented by new schools, limited retail facilities to meet daily needs, substantial open space and community facilities appropriate to the level of need generated. This is a slightly lower level of growth than that sought by Urban&Civic who are promoting the development of the site.
- 870 new homes at Wyton Airfield; these should be complemented by local scale convenience retail provision to help improve the sustainability of Wyton-on-the-Hill

Considerations when looking at the Low Economic Growth option include:

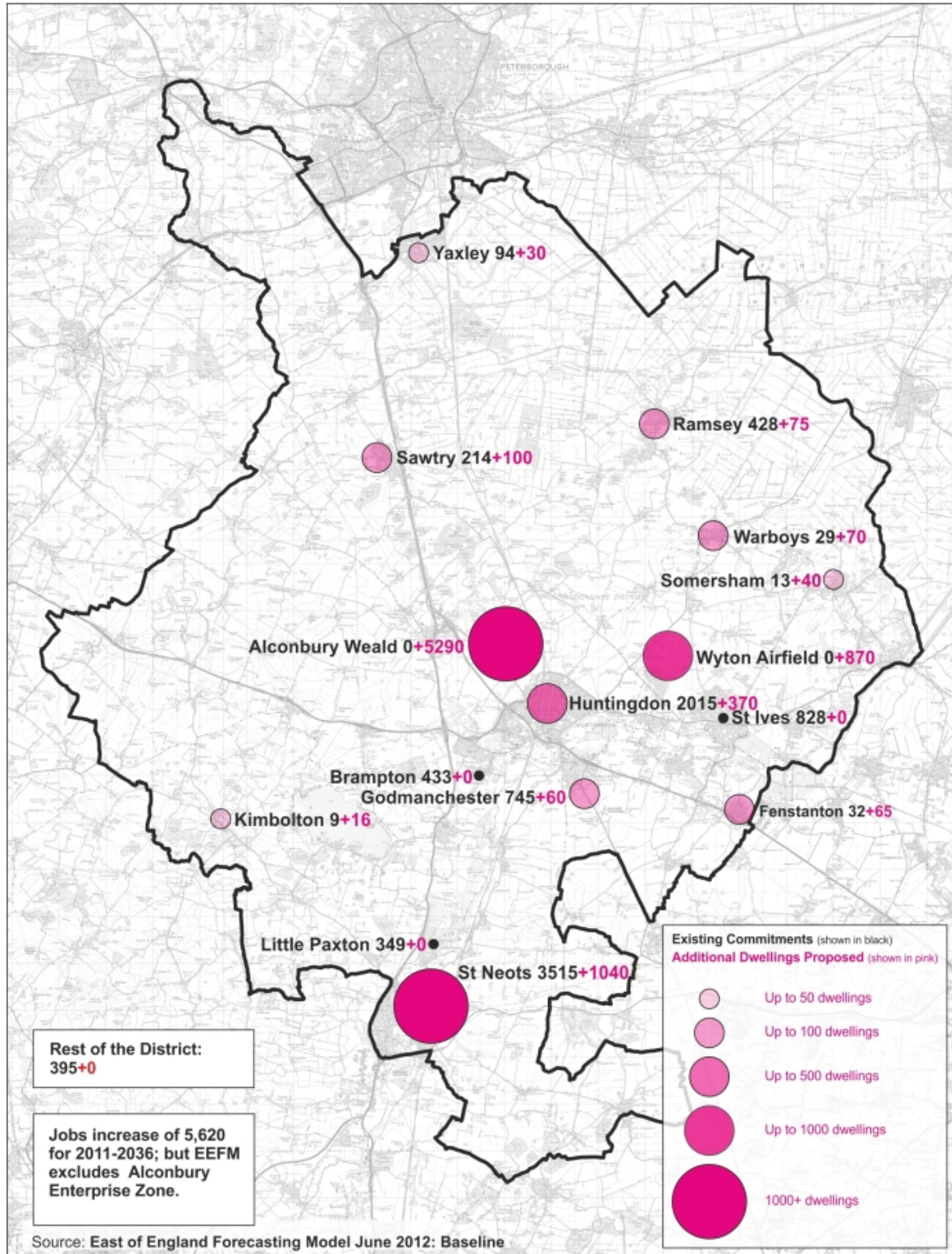
- whether it would adequately meet our housing needs
- what it might mean for residents having to commute out of Huntingdonshire to work
- how it would affect access to basic services and infrastructure
- whether it would constrain economic growth.

The 'Sustainability Appraisal' helps answer these questions and enable comparison with the other options.

See Core Strategy and existing commitments information in 'Expected housing development to 2026'.

Medium Economic Growth Option

EEFM June 2012: Medium Economic Growth Option - Core Strategy and existing commitments of 9,100 homes with an additional 8,150 homes



Medium Economic Growth Option

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

This option puts forward a slightly higher level of housing growth up to 2036 with a total of 17,250 new homes being required in Huntingdonshire for 2011-2036 to successfully deliver this option. To achieve this would need the 9,100 new homes anticipated through the Core Strategy and existing commitments and an additional 8,150 new homes in other locations. The preceding diagram illustrates how this might be achieved.

As in the Low Economic Growth option in addition to the 9100 new homes on potential development land known about through the Core Strategy and existing commitments a further 1865 additional homes are anticipated in Huntingdonshire's towns and key service centres. Just over a thousand of these are to the east of St Neots to complete the urban extension at Loves Farm and Wintringham Park. The option would allow for additional growth in the largest villages to help sustain local facilities. Within the towns and key service centres this makes use of all the potentially sustainable sites for development that are known to be available.

This leaves an outstanding requirement of 6285 homes to be found in additional growth locations. The difference with this option is that to reach this target the same two further growth locations are suggested but with more housing potentially being delivered at Alconbury Weald:

- 5290 new homes at Alconbury Weald in association with the 150ha Enterprise Zone; these would be complemented by new schools, limited retail facilities to meet daily needs, substantial open space and community facilities appropriate to the level of need generated. This is very close to the level of growth sought by Urban&Civic who are promoting the development of the site.
- 870 new homes at Wyton Airfield; these should be complemented by local scale convenience retail provision to help improve the sustainability of Wyton-on-the-Hill

Considerations when looking at the Medium Economic Growth option include:

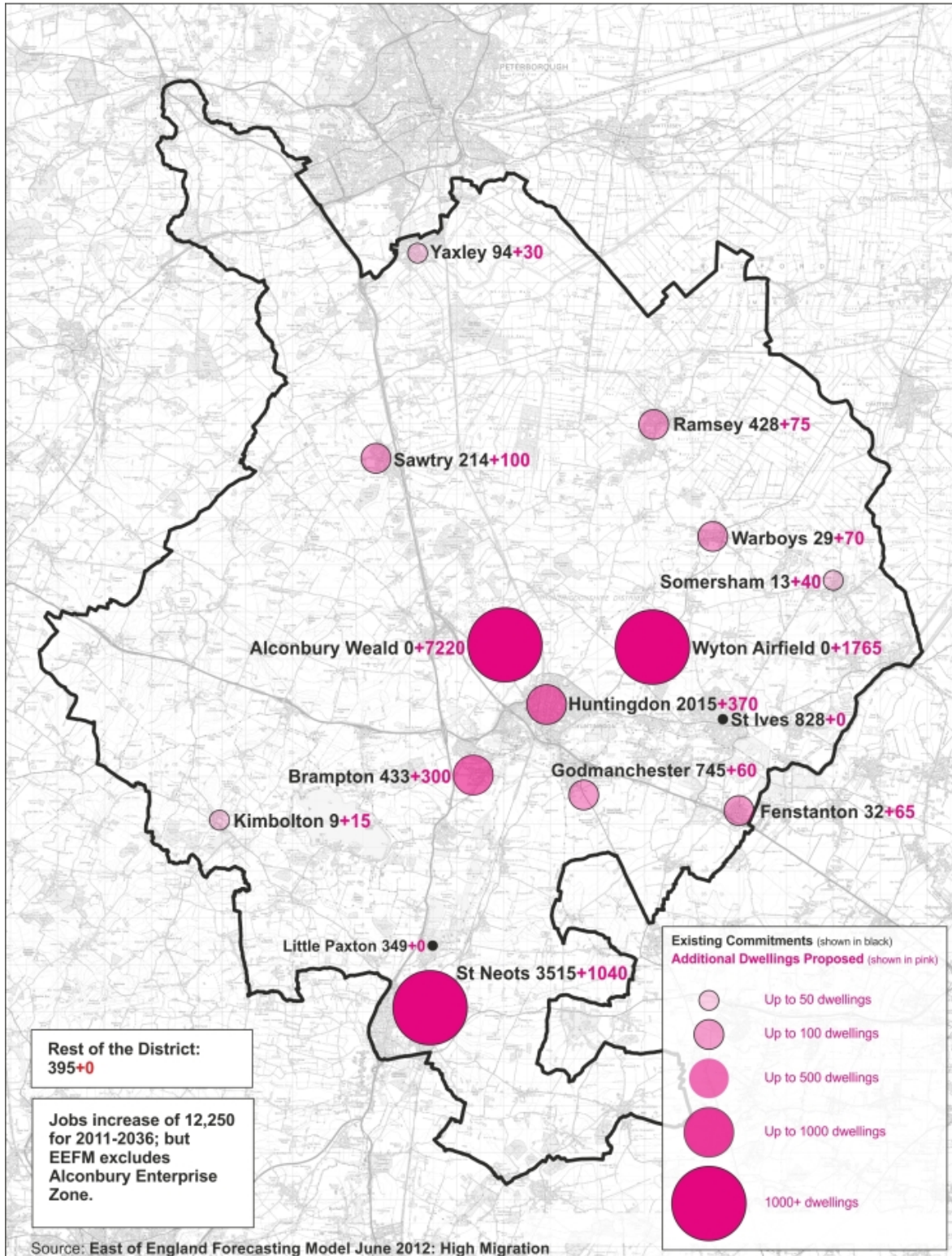
- whether it would meet our housing needs
- how it would affect access to basic services and infrastructure
- whether it would adequately enable economic growth

The 'Sustainability Appraisal' helps answer these questions and enable comparison with the other options.

See Core Strategy and existing commitments information in 'Expected housing development to 2026'.

High Economic Growth Option

EEFM June 2012: High Economic Growth Option - Core Strategy and existing commitments of 9,100 homes with an additional 11,150 homes



High Economic Growth Option

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

This option puts forward a significantly higher level of housing growth up to 2036 with a total of 20,250 new homes being required in Huntingdonshire for 2011 to 2036 to successfully deliver this option. To achieve this would need the 9,100 new homes anticipated through the Core Strategy and existing commitments and an additional 11,150 new homes in other locations. This option is the most difficult to achieve with currently known sites but needs to be tested in case further growth forecasting incorporating the implications of the enterprise Zone at Alconbury Weald suggest a higher growth rate is most realistic. The preceding diagram illustrates one way this might be achieved.

As in the other options in addition to the 9100 new homes on potential development land known about through the Core Strategy and existing commitments a further 1865 additional homes are anticipated in Huntingdonshire's towns and key service centres. Just over a thousand of these are to the east of St Neots to complete the urban extension at Loves Farm and Wintringham Park. The option would allow for additional growth in the largest villages to help sustain local facilities. Within the towns and key service centres this makes use of all the potentially sustainable sites for development that are known to be available.

This leaves an outstanding requirement of 9285 homes to be found in other growth locations:

- 7220 new homes at Alconbury Weald in association with the 150ha Alconbury Enterprise Zone; these would be complemented by new schools, limited retail facilities to meet daily needs, substantial open space and community facilities appropriate to the level of need generated. This level of growth exceeds that sought by Urban&Civic who are promoting the development of the site and further investigation will be needed to see if it is deliverable.
- 1765 new homes at Wyton Airfield; these should be complemented by local scale convenience retail provision to help improve the sustainability of Wyton-on-the-Hill, low density employment and strategic greenspace to maintain separation between settlements
- 300 new homes to the south of Brampton camp

If the increased capacity at Alconbury Weald is not deliverable we will need to look for alternative ways of delivering this level of growth if further forecasting indicates it to be necessary. Alternatives could include:

- Significant extension to one or more of the most sustainably located key service centres
- Reliance on small, windfall sites spread throughout the district

Considerations when looking at the High Economic Growth option include:

- whether it could be delivered
- the impacts on infrastructure, particularly roads and secondary schools
- the impact on Huntingdon with this level of growth at Alconbury
- whether alternative sustainable approaches to delivery could be achieved

The 'Sustainability Appraisal' helps answer these questions and enable comparison with the other options.

See Core Strategy and existing commitments information in 'Expected housing development to 2026'.

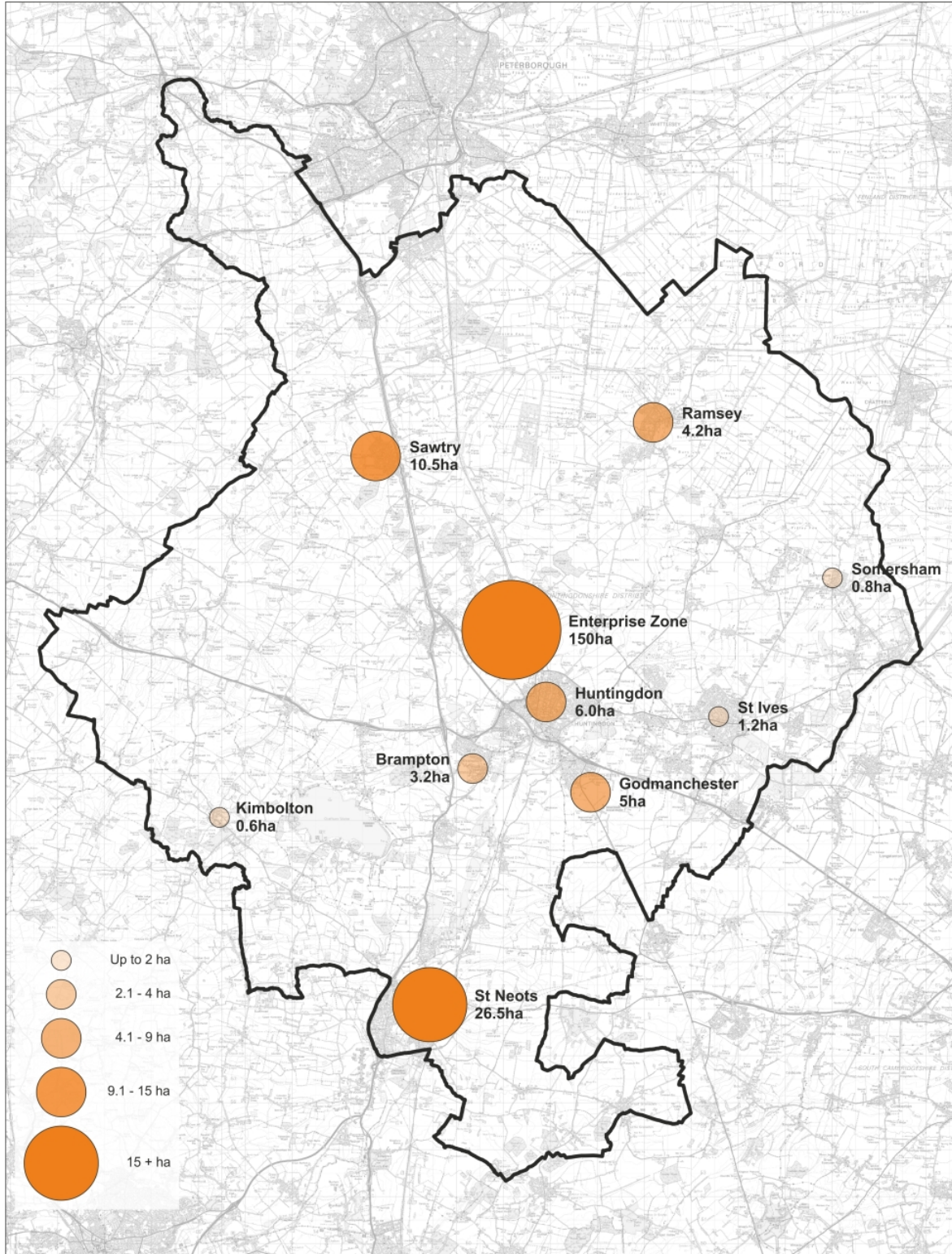
Employment

The employment land market operates rather differently from that for housing land and the choice of a potential location for new business development is a key consideration. Rather than potentially restrict economic growth the map below simply shows all land thought to be suitable and available for employment use. This is intended to help consideration of the most appropriate overall growth strategy.

The designation of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone has the potential to give rise to trend-breaking opportunities for economic growth in Huntingdonshire in the period up to 2036. Alongside many opportunities, the Alconbury Enterprise Zone may also pose potential risks to established employment areas of displacement of jobs from current sites into the enterprise zone and displacement of businesses currently on Alconbury airfield. Research has been commissioned to consider the potential impacts of displacement related to the enterprise zone. Further employment opportunities are essential across the district to continue to facilitate a balanced provision of jobs in close proximity to homes. This is also necessary to help promote a balanced economy.

The Core Strategy designated a major employment direction of growth to the north west of Huntingdon; given its proximity to the Enterprise Zone it is considered appropriate to review this as its implementation may be affected in the light of incentives offered to businesses locating within the nearby Enterprise Zone.

Employment: Potential New Sites



Scale of development policies

This section sets out a series of draft policies that will provide a framework for determining the scale of development proposals that may come forward during the plan period on sites that are not allocated in the finalised Local Plan. These draft policies follow the strategic aim established in the adopted Core Strategy of concentrating sustainable development in the larger settlements that offer the best levels of services and facilities and to seek to protect the character and scale of smaller settlements and the countryside.

Sustainability Appraisal

The draft scale of development policies have been developed from policies in the adopted Core Strategy and should therefore perform well in terms of sustainability because the Core Strategy was subject to Sustainability Appraisal. However they will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal in the same way as all draft policies. Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out in preparation for the next stage of consultation on the draft Local Plan, currently expected to take place in spring 2013.

Important note

It should be noted that none of the suggested policy approaches made in this document currently represent council policy beyond the policy position established in the adopted Core Strategy and supporting documents, which will remain as the Development Plan until it is replaced by the new Local Plan.

Spatial Planning Areas

The relationship between the district's four towns and the settlements that surround them is important. While each settlement possesses its own distinctive character and identity, there are strong functional, economic and social links between settlements. Smaller settlements therefore benefit from their proximity to larger settlements through greater sustainability than they would otherwise have if they were more isolated. The range of services in the towns is also supported by people who live in the villages that surround the towns. Within the areas of the market towns and their nearby settlements existing and future residents enjoy greater opportunities for a sustainable lifestyle. The adopted Core Strategy defines these areas as Spatial Planning Areas (SPAs).

There are four Spatial Planning Areas:

- Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area
- St Neots Spatial Planning Area
- St Ives Spatial Planning Area
- Ramsey Spatial Planning Area

Each SPA is defined through a description of the settlements and key areas that are considered to form part of it. The SPAs are not identified on a map specifically so that attention is focused on the wider spatial relationship rather than the simple geographic relationship. This approach is deliberate as it maintains flexibility in the strategy and does not artificially constrain sustainable development.

Key Service Centres

Huntingdonshire has seven larger villages which provide focal points for local service provision across the district and are considered to be free-standing Key Service Centres. These villages are Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley. Each is considered capable of accommodating a degree of sustainable development, subject to appropriate parameters and contributions to services, facilities and infrastructure, and where services, facilities and infrastructure provision can be accommodated.

Scale of development policies

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

Small Settlements

Small Settlements are much less sustainable than the Spatial Planning Areas and Key Service Centres due to the need to travel to access services and facilities elsewhere. However, given the variation in size and location between them it is recognised that some are more sustainable than others and could sustainably accommodate development.

The Countryside

Limited development in the countryside can help to maintain the vitality and viability of our rural economy but care is needed so that the aspects of the countryside that are valued and contribute to the character of Huntingdonshire are not adversely affected.

Strategic Green Space

A number of areas have been identified as strategic green space around and between settlements and other important environmental areas with the intention that they be protected from future development.

Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

Meeting the planning requirements for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is addressed in this document in recognition of the Government's requirements.

Definition of the built-up area

All the draft place based policies use the concept of the built-up area. The draft definition of the built-up area is therefore presented as part of this document to enable full consideration of the draft policies. The draft definition is based upon the provision originally established in the adopted Core Strategy that was further developed in the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission version.

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area

The Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area incorporates Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester which are all related by their location in the River Great Ouse valley. It also now incorporates the former Alconbury airfield where Alconbury Enterprise Zone was designated in 2011 on 150ha along with land southeast together promoted as 'Alconbury Weald'. It excludes the Stukeleys which are partially surrounded by this area, to encourage a clear distinction between the Stukeleys and the proposed development at Alconbury Weald. Huntingdon is situated centrally in the district with Brampton to the south west and Godmanchester to the south east. All are accessible from the A14 with the A1 lying immediately to the west of Brampton.

The area is a key driver of the local economy, particularly in the retail, leisure and office sectors. The majority of services and facilities are concentrated in Huntingdon but are accessible to Brampton, Godmanchester, Alconbury Weald and beyond by public transport, cycling and walking. Further education and medical services are also provided in Huntingdon.

Huntingdon

Huntingdon's historic core lies north of the River Great Ouse centred on the High Street. Major expansion to the town occurred to the north and east in the 1960s and 1970s bringing substantial housing and industrial areas and leading to the coalescence the village of Hartford with Huntingdon. The East Coast Mainline Railway bisects the town on a north-south axis restricting linkages from the west to the town centre. The 1980s saw major housing growth at Stukeley Meadows to the north west of the town centre. The Hinchingsbrooke area to the west has a distinctive character with extensive public service buildings, modern housing and Hinchingsbrooke Country Park formed from grounds formerly associated with Hinchingsbrooke House. The A14 bisects the south west of the town, much of it on an elevated carriageway. The River Great Ouse and its flood meadows form the southern and eastern boundaries to Huntingdon.

A natural extension to Huntingdon's town centre is possible to the west of the ring road, where an area for growth was established in the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan adopted in 2011. A subsequent planning application has been approved for a new link road between George Street and Ermine Street which will enable new retail and mixed use development in the area and re-route some traffic currently using the ring road.

Brampton

Brampton comprises two distinct areas. Firstly, the main village with its historic core running along The Green, High Street and on to Buckden Road with expansion, particularly to the west, since the 1960s. This is linked by linear development along Buckden Road to the second area, the soon to be redundant RAF Brampton, which lies south of the main village separated by a wedge of arable land.

Godmanchester

Godmanchester lies immediately south of Huntingdon to the east of the River Great Ouse. Its historic core was shaped by the pentagonal layout established in Roman times. Major growth to the east occurred in the 1950s and 1960s with southern expansion following from the 1980s onwards. The Ouse valley flood meadows dominate the western boundary of Godmanchester with the A14 forming the northeastern boundary.

Alconbury Weald

Alconbury Weald is located at the former Alconbury airfield and adjoining land to the north of Huntingdon close to Great and Little Stukeley. An enterprise zone was designated on 150ha and further land in the same ownership offers the potential of a new road link with Huntingdon. The site also lies adjacent to the East Coast Mainline railway and the provision of a new railway station is possible.

Purpose of Draft Policy 1

The purpose of this policy is to set out the council's criteria for planning for a range of uses in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area.

Draft Policy 1

Scale of development in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area

Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (SPA) comprises Huntingdon, Brampton and Godmanchester as well as Alconbury Weald as allocated in 'Potential Allocation (Mixed Use) HU 29'. Huntingdon is the primary settlement within this SPA and is the focal point for services and facilities for surrounding settlements.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Plan in order to promote sustainable growth within the Huntingdon SPA. In addition to these other sustainable development proposals located within the Huntingdon SPA will be acceptable where they are in accordance with other policies of this Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme, including a residential institution⁽¹⁾ and supported housing, will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the built-up area of Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester or Alconbury Weald⁽²⁾.

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the built-up area of Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester or Alconbury Weald. An appropriate location for office development will be determined by applying the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Town centre uses

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the defined *town centre*⁽³⁾ of Huntingdon. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available within the town centre the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will be followed for other sites. Where the proposal includes more than 600m² of net retail floorspace an impact assessment will need to be provided.

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme including 600m² or less of net floorspace will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the built-up area of Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester or Alconbury Weald where the scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the locality.

Other uses

A sustainable non-residential institution⁽⁴⁾ or tourism facility or attraction will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the built-up area of Huntingdon, Brampton, Godmanchester or Alconbury Weald.

Mixed use development

A mix of uses will be acceptable where each use accords with the specific requirements detailed above.

Relationship of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area

Sustainable development proposals will not undermine the primacy of Huntingdon within the SPA or adversely affect the relationship between the settlements of the SPA whether this is through its scale or other impacts.

1 Falling within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

2 This is the name given to the area by the developers.

3 The town centre will be identified on the Local Plan proposals map. The starting point for the area to designate is shown in the Maps appendix of the 'Managing Development' document

4 Falling within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

Reasoning

The Huntingdon SPA has the widest range of facilities and employment in the district and is a sustainable location for promoting additional growth. Allocations will be made for new development including a major growth area at Alconbury Weald.

Further development is also encouraged within the *built-up area* where there are vacant plots or opportunities to redevelop land. In addition to individual homes, provision is made for residential institutions and supported housing, which may include care homes for the elderly, disabled or vulnerable. Major new investment in retailing is expected within Huntingdon town centre and to the west of the existing town centre. Restaurants, hotels and leisure uses are encouraged and expected to be located within the town centre. Additional office space within the town centre will help to ensure that services within the town centre are well used. Town centre uses will therefore be located in the town centre unless a sequential approach and impact assessment prove a different location is justified.

Proposals for shops, offices, leisure and tourist accommodation facilities of a small scale outside of the town centre must be directly related to the local area. For example, a local corner shop may be expected to serve residential areas.

Non-residential institutions, which may include medical centres, day nurseries and schools, may be located on suitable sites in appropriate locations anywhere within the built-up area. Such sites will need to be large enough to cater for the use and associated car parking and well located on the transport network.

Huntingdon is the primary settlement within this SPA and is the focal point for services and facilities for surrounding settlements. Sustainable development proposals will not undermine Huntingdon's role within the SPA or adversely affect the relationship between the SPA's settlements whether this is through its scale or other impacts such as the extent to which trade is attracted to locations outside of the town centre of Huntingdon or the local centres within Brampton, Godmanchester and Alconbury Weald. This applies as much to development proposals located within the SPA as to those elsewhere in the district.

Is this proposed approach sufficiently flexible to facilitate development on unidentified sites within the spatial planning area?

Will this approach help to maintain and promote Huntingdon as a focal point for service provision and the town centre as a primary destination for retail development?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

St Neots Spatial Planning Area

The St Neots Spatial Planning Area incorporates St Neots and Little Paxton. St Neots itself incorporates Eynesbury, Eaton Socon and Eaton Ford each of which retain their own distinct character; while Little Paxton remains separated to the north by the River Kym and St Neots Golf Club. Significant residential development is being built at Loves Farm to the east of St Neots and to the south of Little Paxton on the site of the former paper mill.

The River Great Ouse bisects St Neots and flows to the east of Little Paxton. The area is also characterised by the A1 and the A428 roads which in effect form the western and southern boundaries. The East Coast mainline railway historically formed the eastern boundary to development, but development beyond this has taken place at Loves Farm, and further development is planned as part of the St Neots East Urban Extension.

St Neots is the largest town in the county after Cambridge and plays a significant role in the local economy with several large established employment areas. Retailing is centred on St Neots High Street on the east side of the River Great Ouse. The area boasts significant heritage assets with the entire St Neots *town centre* being designated as a *conservation area*.

Purpose of Draft Policy 2

The purpose of this policy is to set out the councils criteria for planning for a range of uses in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area.

Draft Policy 2

Scale of development in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area

St Neots Spatial Planning Area comprises St Neots and Little Paxton. St Neots is the primary settlement within this SPA and is the focal point for services and facilities.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Plan in order to promote sustainable growth within the St Neots SPA. In addition to these, other sustainable development proposals located within the St Neots SPA will be acceptable where they are in accordance with other policies of this Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme, including a residential institution⁽⁵⁾ and supported housing, will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Neots or Little Paxton.

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Neots or Little Paxton. An appropriate location for office development will be determined by applying the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Town centre uses

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the defined *town centre*⁽⁶⁾ of St Neots. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available within the town centre the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will be followed for other sites. Where the proposal includes more than 600m² of net retail floorspace an impact assessment will need to be provided.

5 Falling within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

6 The town centre will be identified on the Local Plan proposals map. The starting point for the area to designate is shown in the Maps appendix of the 'Managing Development' document

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme including 600m² or less of net floorspace will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Neots or Little Paxton where the scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the locality.

Other uses

A sustainable non-residential institution⁽⁷⁾ or tourism facility or attraction will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Neots or Little Paxton.

Mixed use development

A mix of uses will be acceptable where each use accords with the specific requirements detailed above.

Relationship of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area

Sustainable development proposals will not undermine the primacy of St Neots within the SPA or adversely affect the relationship between the settlements of the SPA whether this is through its scale or other impacts.

Reasoning

The St Neots SPA has a range of facilities and employment second only to the Huntingdon SPA and is a sustainable location for promoting additional growth. St Neots already has the largest population of any market town in Cambridgeshire and a major growth area to the east is proposed adding to the Loves Farm development. The policy aims to encourage sustainable growth and support new investment within the St Neots SPA. Additional shops and related town centre uses in the town centre are encouraged to ensure that it is attractive to the growing population.

Further development is also encouraged within the *built-up area* where there are vacant plots or opportunities to redevelop land. In addition to individual homes, provision is made for residential institutions and supported housing, which may include care homes for the elderly, disabled or vulnerable. Restaurants, hotels and leisure uses are encouraged. Additional office space within the town centre will help to ensure that services within the town centre are well used. Town centre uses will therefore be located in the town centre unless a sequential approach and impact assessment prove a different location is justified.

Proposals for shops, offices, leisure and tourist accommodation facilities of a small scale outside of the town centre must be directly related to the local area. For example, a local corner shop may be expected to serve residential areas.

Non-residential institutions, which may include medical centres, day nurseries and schools, may be located on suitable sites in appropriate locations anywhere within the built up area. Such sites will need to be large enough to cater for the use and associated car parking and well located on the transport network.

Is this proposed approach sufficiently flexible to facilitate development on unidentified sites within the spatial planning area?

Will this approach help to maintain and promote St Neots as a focal point for service provision and the town centre as a primary destination for retail development?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

7 Falling within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

St Ives Spatial Planning Area

The St Ives Spatial Planning Area incorporates the town of St Ives and parts of the parishes of Hemingford Grey, Fenstanton, Houghton and Wyton, Wyton-on-the-Hill and Holywell-cum-Needingworth where they relate closely to St Ives. The area is smaller in scale than the Huntingdon and St Neots SPAs and retains the character of a small market town. St Ives has an attractive *town centre* which retains a strong local character and supports a number of prominent independent retailers. Business and industrial estates are established towards the eastern side of the town. The Busway provides direct services to Cambridge with a park and ride facility from the east of the town.

St Ives is constrained by significant flood risk from the River Great Ouse. Many of the town's iconic buildings relate to the river such as the Mill and the town bridge. Much of its green fringe is also inextricably linked to the river such as the Hemingford Meadows which contribute to a strong visual gateway into town.

Purpose of Draft Policy 3

The purpose of this policy is to set out the councils criteria for planning for a range of uses in the St Ives Spatial Planning Area.

Draft Policy 3

Scale of development in the St Ives Spatial Planning Area

The St Ives Spatial Planning Area comprises St Ives and the contiguous elements to the town which fall within the parish boundaries of Fenstanton, Hemingford Grey, Houghton and Wyton and Holywell cum Needingworth. St Ives is the primary settlement within this SPA and is the focal point for services and facilities.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Plan in order to promote sustainable growth within the St Ives SPA. In addition to these other sustainable development proposals located within the St Ives SPA will be acceptable where they are in accordance with other policies of this Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme, including a residential institution⁽⁸⁾ and supported housing, will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Ives.

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Ives. An appropriate location for office development will be determined by applying the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Town centre uses

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the defined *town centre*⁽⁹⁾ of St Ives. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available within the town centre the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will be followed for other sites. Where the proposal includes more than 600m² of net retail floorspace an impact assessment will need to be provided.

8 Falling within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

9 The town centre will be identified on the Local Plan proposals map. The starting point for the area to designate is shown in the Maps appendix of the 'Managing Development' document

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme including 600m² or less of net floorspace will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Ives where the scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the locality.

Other uses

A sustainable non-residential institution⁽¹⁰⁾ or tourism facility or attraction will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of St Ives.

Mixed use development

A mix of uses will be acceptable where each use accords with the specific requirements detailed above.

Relationship of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area

Sustainable development proposals will not undermine the primacy of St Ives within the SPA or adversely affect the relationship between areas of the SPA whether this is through its scale or other impacts.

Reasoning

The St Ives SPA has a smaller range of facilities and employment than the Huntingdon and St Neots SPAs but is still a sustainable location for promoting additional growth. A smaller number of land allocations are planned together with a growth area, St Ives West, which links with recent development in the area known as Green Acres and Slepe Meadow. The policy aims to encourage sustainable economic growth and support new investment within the St Ives SPA. Some new investment in retailing is expected within the town centre in order to ensure that it remains as an attractive centre for daily needs as well as specialist interests.

Further development is also encouraged within the *built-up area* where there are vacant plots or opportunities to redevelop land. In addition to individual homes, provision is made for residential institutions and supported housing, which may include care homes for the elderly, disabled or vulnerable. Restaurants, hotels and leisure uses are encouraged. Additional office space within the town centre will help to ensure that services within the town centre are well used. Town centre uses will therefore be located in the town centre unless a sequential approach and impact assessment prove a different location is justified.

Proposals for shops, offices, leisure and tourist accommodation facilities of a small scale outside of the town centre must be directly related to the local area. For example, a local corner shop may be expected to serve residential areas.

Non-residential institutions, which may include medical centres, day nurseries and schools, may be located on suitable sites in appropriate locations anywhere within the built up area. Such sites will need to be large enough to cater for the use and associated car parking and well located on the transport network.

Is this proposed approach sufficiently flexible to facilitate development on unidentified sites within the St Ives spatial planning area?

Will this approach help to maintain and promote St Ives as a focal point for service provision and the town centre as a primary destination for retail development?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

10 Falling within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

Ramsey Spatial Planning Area

The Ramsey Spatial Planning Area includes Ramsey, Bury and part of RAF Upwood, but excludes the villages of Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside, Ramsey St Marys and Upwood. Although relatively small the town serves as a focal point for a significant rural community, providing town centre and related facilities, medical services, secondary education and leisure facilities.

Ramsey's historic core is centred around the Abbey to the east of the town centre. The traditional shopping area is focused on Great Whyte. In 2009 a superstore opened to the north of the town centre as part of the Ramsey Gateway project.

Bury lies to the south and is a small settlement with strong links to the former RAF Upwood airfield, which lies to the south-western of the village. Originally two distinct settlements Ramsey and Bury have now merged as a consequence of residential development to the south west of Ramsey. The junction of Upwood Road and the B1040 defines the point at which Ramsey and Bury merge. The urban area extends south west to include areas of housing formerly associated with RAF Upwood. The High Lode industrial area defines the northern edge of the town.

The elevated landscape to the south and west and the lower lying Fenland landscape to the north and east combine with the lack of significant vegetation to allow extensive views around the spatial planning area.

Purpose of Draft Policy 4

The purpose of this policy is to set out the councils criteria for planning for a range of uses in the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area.

Draft Policy 4

Scale of development in the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area

Ramsey Spatial Planning Area comprises Ramsey, Bury and the contiguous elements to the town which fall within the parish boundary of Upwood. Ramsey is the primary settlement within this SPA and is the focal point for services and facilities.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Plan in order to promote sustainable growth within the Ramsey SPA. In addition to these other sustainable development proposals located within the Ramsey SPA will be acceptable where they are in accordance with other policies of this Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme, including a residential institution⁽¹¹⁾ and supported housing, will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of Ramsey or Bury.

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of Ramsey or Bury. An appropriate location for office development will be determined by applying the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Town Centre uses

11 Falling within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the defined *town centre*⁽¹²⁾ of Ramsey. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable site is available within the town centre the sequential approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework will be followed for other sites. Where the proposal includes more than 600m² of net retail floorspace an impact assessment will need to be provided.

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme including 600m² or less of net floorspace will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of Ramsey and Bury where the scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the locality.

Other Uses

A sustainable non-residential institution⁽¹³⁾ or tourism facility or attraction will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of Ramsey and Bury.

Mixed Use development

A mix of uses will be acceptable where each use accords with the specific requirements detailed above.

Relationship of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area

Sustainable development proposals will not undermine the primacy of Ramsey within the SPA or adversely affect the relationship between the settlements of the SPA whether this is through its scale or other impacts.

Reasoning

The Ramsey Spatial Planning Area has limited sustainability and as such the focus of planning policy is on ensuring that the area is allowed to improve and redevelop over time, making the best use of existing buildings and other resources. Land allocations planned for new development reflect existing opportunities within the area. A range of uses are encouraged within Ramsey town centre so that it can continue to be able to offer a range of retail and commercial businesses.

Further development is also encouraged within the *built-up area* where there are vacant plots or opportunities to redevelop land. In addition to individual homes, provision is made for residential institutions and supported housing, which may include care homes for the elderly, disabled or vulnerable. Major new investment in retailing is expected within the town centre and to the west of the existing town centre. Restaurants, hotels and leisure uses are encouraged. Additional office space within the town centre will help to ensure that services within the town centre are well used. Town centre uses will therefore be located in the town centre unless a sequential approach and impact assessment prove a different location is justified.

Proposals for shops, offices, leisure and tourist accommodation facilities of a small scale outside of the town centre must be directly related to the local area. For example, a local corner shop may be expected to serve residential areas.

Non-residential institutions, which may include medical centres, day nurseries and schools, may be located on suitable sites in appropriate locations anywhere within the built up area. Such sites will need to be large enough to cater for the use and associated car parking and well located on the transport network.

Is this proposed approach sufficiently flexible to facilitate development on unidentified sites within the Ramsey spatial planning area?

12 The town centre will be identified on the Local Plan proposals map. The starting point for the area to designate is shown in the Maps appendix of the 'Managing Development' document

13 Falling within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

Ramsey Spatial Planning Area

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Will this approach help to maintain and promote Ramsey as a focal point for service provision and the town centre as a primary destination for retail development?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

Key Service Centres

Huntingdonshire has seven larger villages which provide focal points for local service provision across the district and are considered to be free-standing Key Service Centres (KSC). These villages are Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley. Each has a range of shops and services that can meet daily needs, a primary school, a doctor's surgery, community facilities, local employment opportunities and public transport services.

Buckden

Buckden is located approximately 8kms south-west of Huntingdon, and 3kms east of Grafham Water. The historic core of the village is centred around Buckden Towers (formerly Buckden Palace) and extends to the west of the church where the village edge is now defined by the A1. The former Great North Road (now the High Street) is lined by many Georgian brick buildings which combine to create a distinctive centre to the settlement of high architectural quality and possessing a strong sense of place.

Fenstanton

Fenstanton is situated some 3kms south of St Ives immediately north of the A14. It provides a primary school and range of services. Historically the village was associated with Hilton to the south, but the links between these are now limited to an overbridge and a pedestrian underpass due to the A14. Public transport has been reduced since the opening of the Busway.

Kimbolton

Kimbolton is located 12kms north-west of St Neots and 3kms west of Grafham Water. The village lies in the valley of the River Kym and comprises two distinct parts. Its historic core is focused on High Street and East Street. High Street is lined by highly distinctive historic buildings leading towards the gateway of Kimbolton School to the south eastern end and St Andrews Church to the western end. The newer part of the village lies to the north of the River Kym which provides a green corridor running through the village. The extensive parkland associated with Kimbolton Castle surrounds the village to the east and south.

Sawtry

Sawtry is located immediately west of the A1, midway between Huntingdon and Peterborough. Sawtry benefits from a secondary school as well as primary school provision and a leisure centre as well as a range of shops and services. Large post war housing estates dominate the southern and western parts of the village in particular although some parts, such as Chapel End, retain a distinctive rural character. To the east of the village the planted road embankments and noise barriers along Bill Hall Way and the A1 screen the majority of views towards the village. Sawtry also benefits from a significant area of employment use development located on the eastern side of the A1 which provides local employment opportunities.

Somersham

Somersham is located on the edge of the Huntingdonshire Fens approximately 6kms north east of St Ives. The historic core of the village is centred around the High Street and Church Street. South of the village the site of the Bishop's Palace is a scheduled ancient monument. Somersham has both state and private primary education and a range of shops, services and community facilities including extensive sports facilities. Over the last 50 years the village has more than doubled in size with development mainly to the north of the historic core.

Warboys

Warboys is located approximately 11kms north east of Huntingdon and 6kms south of Ramsey. The focal points of the Baptist Church, Clock Tower and Weir provide distinctive local landmarks. It has a library, primary school, and a good range of shops. Warboys industrial estate is located on the former airfield to the south west of the village.

Yaxley

Yaxley is situated on the north western edge of the Huntingdonshire Fens approximately 6kms south of Peterborough. The historic core of the village lies along its southern edge, with historic buildings along Main Street and Church Street, including St Peter's Church, the spire of which provides a notable landmark within the village and wider landscape. Yaxley has expanded considerably through post-war residential and industrial development, with housing estates dominating land to the north and north east of the historic core. It has a supermarket, a range of other shops, a library and good public transport services to Peterborough.

Purpose of Draft Policy 1

The purpose of this policy is to set out the councils criteria for planning for a range of uses in the Key Service Centres of Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley.

Draft Policy 5

Scale of development in Key Service Centres

Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley are defined as Key Service Centres.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Local Plan in order to maintain and promote sustainable growth within the Key Service Centres. In addition to these, sustainable development proposals located within a Key Service Centre will be acceptable where they are in accordance with other policies of this Local Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme, including a residential institution⁽¹⁴⁾ and supported housing, will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of the Key Service Centre.

A *rural exceptions scheme*, including supported housing, which is appropriately located within or adjacent to the *built-up area* of the Key Service Centre will be acceptable where it accords with draft policy MD 9 'Rural exceptions housing' in the Managing Development document

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of the Key Service Centre, excluding a proposed office development in excess of 600m².

Town Centre uses

A sustainable retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation scheme including 600m² or less of net floorspace will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of the Key Service Centre where the scale and type of development proposed is directly related to the role and function of the locality.

Other Uses

A sustainable non-residential institution⁽¹⁵⁾ or tourism facility or attraction will be acceptable where it is appropriately located within the *built-up area* of the Key Service Centre.

Mixed Use development

A mix of uses will be acceptable where each use accords with the specific requirements detailed above.

14 Falling within Class C2 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

15 Falling within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order (1987) as amended

Reasoning

The draft policy recognises the status of Key Service Centres as having a greater range of services than Small Settlements. Some land allocations for further housing in these areas recognise that there are opportunities for further sustainable development which will help ensure that the services in these areas have a continuing market.

Proposals for development of retail, office, leisure or tourism accommodation may be appropriate within Key Service Centres where they are small in size and appropriately located. A maximum of 600m² of net floorspace reflects the level set for development outside of the town centres of the market towns in other draft policies. In many cases in predominantly residential areas only a much smaller shop or office will be directly related to the role and function of that area. Particular attention is required to ensure that such proposals do not adversely affect the town centres of the market towns.

Rural exceptions can be applied to Key Service Centres, despite in some cases being relatively large, as they are considered to be focal points in the rural areas. Affordable housing developments on the edge of these areas could provide for much needed additional housing for people with local connections. Local communities which identify and prioritise projects that could enhance the sustainability of their settlements could address the delivery of these through 'Enabled Exceptions' Draft Policy DM 19.

Do you think this flexible approach to the scale of sustainable development is an appropriate way of responding to individual local circumstances?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

Small Settlements

Huntingdonshire contains a large number of villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings in the countryside. The villages are diverse in terms of size and the range of services available. Some have a primary school, limited shopping facilities and weekday bus services while others have few or no services at all. However, other than those defined as Key Service Centres none offer a sufficient range of services and facilities to sustain daily living without the need to access services and facilities elsewhere. These places are defined for planning purposes as Small Settlements. Places with a scattered development form comprising no *built-up area* or containing less than 30 homes are considered to form part of the countryside.

Purpose of Draft Policy 6

The purpose of this policy is to identify the small settlements across Huntingdonshire where sustainable development proposals within the built-up area will be assessed on their merits.

Draft Policy 6

Scale of development in Small Settlements

The following places are defined as Small Settlements:

Abbotsley, Abbots Ripton, Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Alwalton, Bluntisham, Brington, Broughton, Buckworth, Bythorn, Catworth, Chesterton, Colne, Conington, Covington, Diddington, Earith, Easton, Ellington, Elton, Farcet, Folksworth, Glatton, Grafham, Great Gidding, Great Gransden, Great Paxton, Great Raveley, Great Staughton, Great Stukeley, Hail Weston, Hamerton, Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Hilton, Holme, Holywell, Houghton and Wyton, Keyston, Kings Ripton, Leighton Bromswold, Little Stukeley, Molesworth, Needingworth, Offord Cluny, Offord D'Arcy, Oldhurst, Old Weston, Perry, Pidley, Pondersbridge (part)⁽¹⁶⁾, Ramsey Forty Foot, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey Mereside, Ramsey St Mary's, Southoe, Spaldwick, Stibbington, Stilton, Stonely, Stow Longa, Tilbrook, Upton, Upwood, Wansford (part)⁽¹⁷⁾, Waresley, Water Newton, Winwick, Wistow, Woodhurst, Woodwalton, Wyton-on-the-Hill, and Yelling.

A sustainable development proposal which is located within the *built-up area* of a Small Settlement will be assessed on individual merit taking into account whether it is in accordance with other policies of this Local Plan.

Reasoning

Small Settlements are much less sustainable than the Spatial Planning Areas and Key Service Centres due to the need to travel to access services and facilities elsewhere. However, given the variation in size and location between the various settlements, it is recognised that some are more sustainable than others and could sustainably accommodate development. Wyton-on-the-Hill is located close to St Ives and Huntingdon and is identified as a potential location for sustainable growth which could enable it to become more sustainable and attain the status of a Key Service Centre.

Many of the villages retain their historic form and have particular heritage features. Development pressure can easily undermine the sensitive character of these settlements if it is not sympathetic to its local context and the size of the settlement. The policy does not set out a size limit for development as the scale of development will be limited to that which fits with the settlements character and is within the built-up area. Local communities which identify and prioritise projects that could enhance the sustainability of their settlements could address the delivery of these through 'Enabled Exceptions' Draft Policy DM 19.

16 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring authority of Fenland

17 The greater part of this settlement lies within the neighbouring authority of Peterborough

Do you think this flexible approach to the scale of development is an appropriate way of responding to individual local circumstances?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

The Countryside

Huntingdonshire is characterised by large areas of countryside. There are areas of very productive farmland as well as green infrastructure and the Great Fen. The overall policy approach for Huntingdonshire is that a very restricted range of sustainable development will be considered in the countryside in order to protect its rural character, its role as part of the district's green infrastructure and the importance of protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land.

The character of the countryside varies from low-lying fens to undulating claylands, upland areas and the main river valleys. The fens were wetlands until they were drained to allow agriculture on rich peaty soils. The Great Fen will restore a more traditional landscape in part of the fenland area. The highest land lies across the western and southern parts of the district. The main river valley is that of the River Great Ouse which forms a broad valley with shallow sides and a wide floodplain.

Homes in the countryside were historically built predominantly for farmers. Some places with a scattered form of development are also now considered to be located within the countryside. There are generally no services available in the countryside and it is not sustainable as a focus for residential growth.

Purpose of Draft Policy 7

The purpose of this policy is to set out the limited circumstances where sustainable development in the countryside will be considered.

Draft Policy 7

Scale of development in the countryside

Development in the countryside will be carefully restricted to conserve its character, protect the natural environment, safeguard the long term potential of the best and most versatile agricultural land and deter non-essential journeys by car.

A series of specific sites are allocated in this Plan in order to promote sustainable growth in Huntingdonshire. In addition to these other sustainable development proposals will be acceptable where they are appropriately located in accordance with other policies of this Local Plan and the following criteria.

Homes

A sustainable housing scheme will be required to demonstrate that the proposed accommodation is essential to the proper functioning of a rural enterprise and that the enterprise is economically viable. A new housing scheme will only be acceptable where it is to meet the accommodation needs of a full-time worker and no suitable alternative accommodation exists (or could be made available) in the immediate vicinity or nearest settlement. Where the enterprise has been established for less than three years a temporary dwelling may be permitted to allow time for a business to prove its viability.

Where a new dwelling is permitted it will be subject to a *planning condition* ensuring that occupation is limited to a person solely, mainly working or last working in a qualifying occupation or the continuing residence of the surviving partner of a qualifying person and any resident dependants⁽¹⁸⁾.

A proposal for extension, alteration or replacement of an existing dwelling will be acceptable where it does not significantly increase the height or massing compared with the original building and does not significantly increase the impact on the surrounding countryside.

18 Children under the age of 18

A proposal for the erection, alteration, replacement or extension of an outbuilding ancillary to an existing dwelling will be acceptable where it is well related to the dwelling and of a scale consistent with it.

A proposal to remove agricultural occupancy conditions will only be considered to be acceptable where evidence is presented demonstrating that the dwelling is not needed for the enterprise to which it relates and has been appropriately marketed at a value reflecting the restrictive occupancy condition to meet the needs of qualifying workers from other enterprises.

Reuse of existing buildings

A sustainable proposal to reuse an existing building for business, residential or tourism uses will be acceptable where the proposal does not include substantial extension or alteration and where the building is:

- a. of permanent and substantial construction, structurally capable of being converted; or
- b. of historic or architectural value which the scheme will preserve; and
- c. for proposals for residential use, including holiday homes, it is demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of the building being used for non-residential employment purposes

For a proposal for tourism use which includes accommodation appropriate *planning conditions* will be used to prevent permanent residential use of the accommodation.

Employment development

A sustainable employment scheme, excluding a proposed office development in excess of 600m², will be acceptable subject to environmental and travel considerations where it is:

- a. within a defined Established Employment Area; or
- b. for land or buildings in use or last used for employment purposes; or
- c. for the expansion of an established business within its existing site.

Operational development

A sustainable proposal for essential operational development for agriculture, horticulture or forestry, an equine-related activity, allocated mineral extraction or a waste management facility, *infrastructure* provision, national defence or *renewable and low carbon energy* generation will be acceptable where it is in accordance with other policies of this Plan or policies of the Cambridgeshire Waste and Minerals Development Plan produced by Cambridgeshire County Council.

A sustainable proposal to provide facilities associated with strategic *green infrastructure* or outdoor leisure or recreation will be acceptable where a countryside location is justified.

A sustainable proposal for essential operational development at Conington Airfield, Littlehey Prison, Wood Green Animal Shelter and Huntingdon Racecourse will be acceptable where they are in scale with existing development.

Touring caravan or camp sites

A sustainable proposal for a touring caravan or camp site will be acceptable where it is in a location which is well-related to an existing settlement and safe physical access from the public highway network can be achieved, and adequate water and sewerage services is or can be provided.

Reasoning

New homes in the countryside will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable certain full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work. However, it is often more sustainable and convenient for such workers to live in a nearby town or village or in a suitable existing dwelling, therefore avoiding new, unsustainable and potentially intrusive development in the countryside.

Despite this there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work. Whether it is essential will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any individuals involved.

Applications for new dwellings in the countryside will be scrutinised thoroughly to prevent abuse of the concession made for such dwellings. It will be necessary to establish whether intentions to engage in farming, forestry or any other rural based enterprise are genuine and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. The requirements of the enterprise will also need to be established to see whether the intended enterprise justifies one or more of the people engaged in it living nearby.

New permanent dwellings in the countryside should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well established agricultural units where:

- there is a clearly established existing functional need;
- the need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in the enterprise and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- the enterprise concerned has been established for at least 3 years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so;
- the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling or other accommodation either on site or in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker concerned; and
- other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

The functional need is where it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. Such a need might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night to care for animals or deal with emergencies. If the functional need is genuine, it will then be necessary to consider the number of workers needed to meet it, for which the scale and nature of the enterprise will be relevant.

A financial requirement analysis is necessary to ensure that the enterprise is economically viable and to provide evidence of the size of dwelling which the unit can sustain. Dwellings should be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. It is the requirement of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier, that are relevant in determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate to a particular holding. Local planning authorities may consider making planning permission subject to conditions removing some of the permitted development rights for development in the curtilage of a permitted dwelling. This would prevent proposed extensions, which could result in a dwelling whose size exceeded what could be justified by the functional requirement.

If a new dwelling is essential to support a new enterprise, for the first three years it should be provided through the use of a caravan, a structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. Temporary accommodation should satisfy the following criteria:

- clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned, such as investment in new farm buildings;
- a functional need;
- clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
- no other existing dwelling or other existing accommodation could be used;
- other normal planning requirements e.g. siting, access etc

Under conventional methods of forestry management, which can involve the use of a peripatetic workforce, new dwellings for forestry may not be justified, except perhaps to service intensive nursery production of trees.

Where the need to provide accommodation has been accepted it will be necessary to ensure that the dwelling is kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists. For this purpose planning permission will be made subject to appropriate occupancy conditions.

Occupancy conditions can be imposed not only on the new dwelling, but also on any existing dwellings on the unit, which are under the control of the applicant and are needed in connection with the enterprise. This is intended to protect the countryside against the risk of pressure for new homes.

Changes in the scale and character of farming and forestry may affect the longer-term requirement for dwellings for which permission has been granted subject to an occupancy condition. It is undesirable to keep such dwellings vacant in the long-term, neither is it desirable for their present occupants to be obliged to remain in employment simply by virtue of planning conditions restricting occupancy, which have outlived their usefulness. Therefore applications for the removal of occupancy conditions should be based on an assessment completed within the last year of the demand for dwellings for rural workers in the area, bearing in mind that it is the need for a dwelling for someone solely, mainly or last working in a rural enterprise in an area as a whole, and not just on the particular holding, that is relevant.

Does this approach achieve an appropriate balance between protecting the countryside and facilitating appropriate forms of new rural enterprise in order to ensure a sustainable future for the countryside?

Strategic Green Space

One of the key issues that the Local Plan will seek to address is the balance between providing land for new sustainable development across Huntingdonshire, and the need to protect the environments, landscapes and natural settings that characterise the towns and villages.

Purpose of Draft Policy 8

The purpose of this policy is to identify and designate areas of strategic green space around and between settlements and other important environmental areas that should be protected from future development.

Draft Policy 8

Strategic Green Space

Areas of strategic green space, as shown on the Strategic Green Space Areas map are designated in order to protect land from inappropriate forms of development around and between key growth locations and to safeguard other identified environmental areas in the following locations:

- To the west of Yaxley
- Around Farcet
- Around the Great Fen
- Around Grafham Water
- To the west of the Stukeleys
- Between Huntingdon and St Ives
- Along the Ouse Valley
- To the south of Godmanchester
- To the north and east of St Neots

Development within these areas will be limited to uses that are appropriate within the countryside. The council will seek to identify enhancement projects for these areas and the identified related green corridors by working with appropriate partners.

Reasoning

The Local Plan looks to identify areas across Huntingdonshire where new sustainable residential, employment and other development may be able to be accommodated. These types of development, and other uses that support them, will ensure that the council is able to plan positively for growth, particularly in economic and social terms.

However, it is equally important to plan positively to protect the environment, including important nature conservation areas such as the Great Fen and Paxton Pits, and to ensure that new development does not extend inappropriately into the open green space and countryside which lies between settlements, and erode the landscape character and natural features that provide an attractive setting for the district's settlements. The council will be developing a policy that defines the landscape and visual setting of the Paxton Pits area. It is envisaged that this policy will be similar in scope to 'The Great Fen' Draft Policy GI 1 policy.

These areas have considerable value for Huntingdonshire. Much of the district's rural environment is used for agriculture and related businesses, and this is a distinctive and characteristic feature of the Huntingdonshire landscape. Other areas are covered by nature conservation or landscape designations, or have direct relationships with the landscape of the River Great Ouse and other water courses, or are in use to varying degrees for a variety of tourism, informal leisure or rural pursuits. Some of these areas are publicly accessible, whilst it is appropriate for other areas to remain private.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages local planning authorities to identify areas of strategic green space in Local Plans. Such areas will have the effect of helping to balance new sustainable development with its impact on the landscape and environment. When taken together, the identification of areas for new sustainable development along with strategic green space, provides an appropriate way of accommodating growth whilst securing important landscapes of varying qualities for future generations.

The areas have been identified both in the context of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011), which identifies important areas of green space and other green infrastructure cross the whole of the county, and the council's own environmental capacity work.

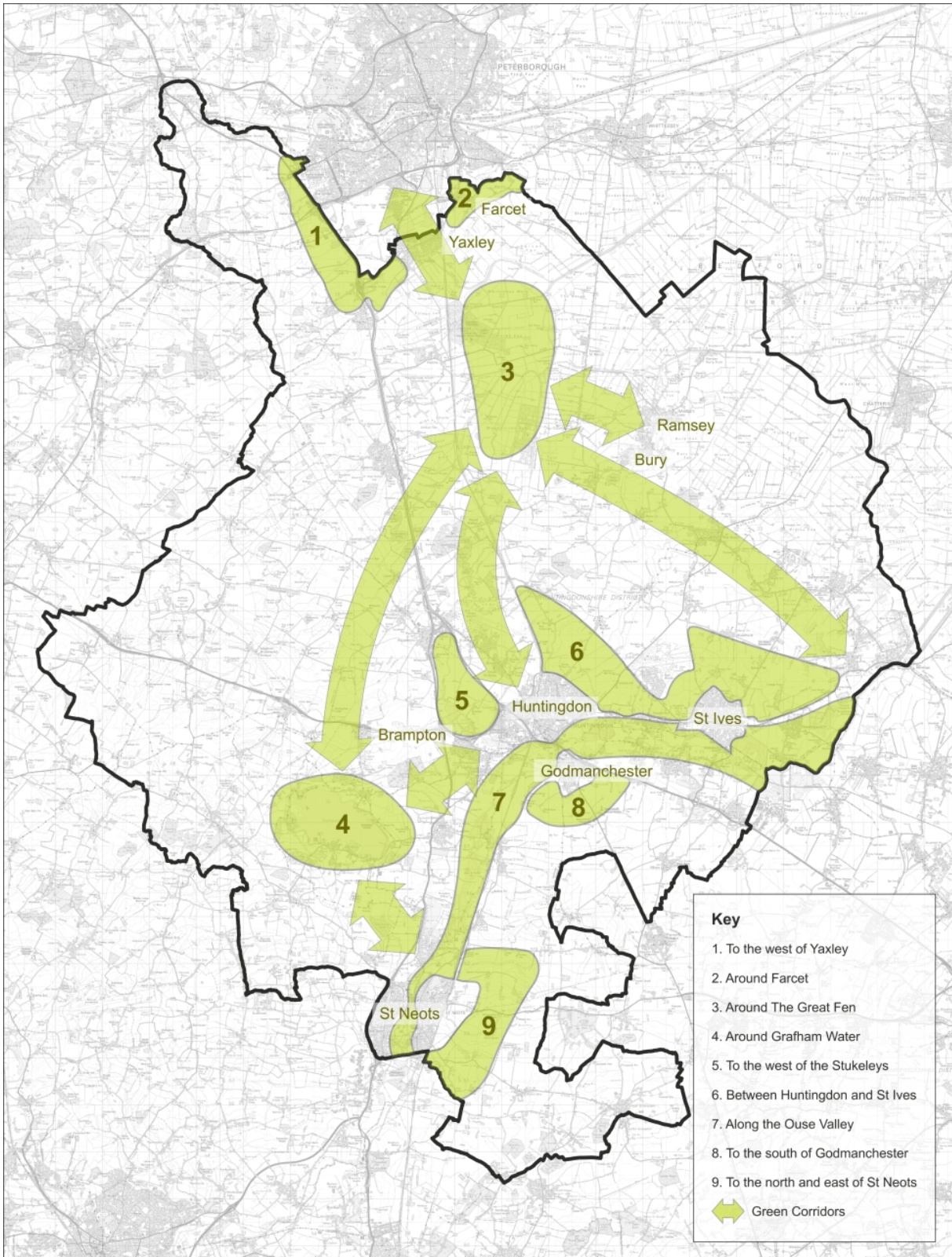
A series of green corridors are also identified which link the strategic green space areas. The council has a good track record of facilitating green infrastructure projects, with examples including Paxton Pits and The Great Fen. The council will seek to work with a range of partners, including local communities, on project to enhance the identified areas for the future benefit of the wider community.

Reference should also be had to 'Local green spaces' draft policy DM 18 and 'Green infrastructure' draft policy DM 26 in the Draft development management policies document and to 'The Great Fen' draft policy GI 1 in the Potential development sites: Key Service Centres and Small Settlements document.

Do you think that the suggested potential areas of strategic green space identified are sufficient to protect the countryside, important nature conservation areas, and open areas around and between settlements?

Do you have any further suggestions for areas that should be protected as strategic green space?

Strategic Green Space Areas



Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

The Government, in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (March 2012), requires local authorities to have a strategy to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the identification of land for sites. In Huntingdonshire, Gypsy and Traveller sites have usually been located in rural areas or adjacent to built-up areas.

The 2011 Cambridge Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment and other evidence⁽¹⁹⁾ has been considered in the preparation of a draft target of approximately 2.5 permanent residential pitches per year or 64 additional pitches by 2036. There may also be a need to consider whether a transit site or an emergency stopping place may be required either within Huntingdonshire or whether this need can be met by provision in an adjoining authority area. Additional Travelling Showpeople plots may also be required either within Huntingdonshire or in an adjoining authority area to provide for families running shows in this locality.

Information on the five-year supply of specific deliverable sites will be included in the Annual Monitoring Report.

It is anticipated that the need for new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be met primarily through the creation of additional small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances. Should monitoring indicate that there are insufficient sites to meet the requirements for new pitches and allocations appear to be required this may result in a partial review of this Local Plan. The criteria to guide Local Plan allocations should they prove necessary are the same as those within 'Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople' draft policy DM 12 of the Managing Development document.

Is this approach to planning for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople appropriate?

Do you agree with the draft target for permanent residential pitches?

Do you consider that there is a need for a transit site or Travelling Showpeople plots in Huntingdonshire?

If you would like to submit specific sites for consideration as allocations for Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showpeople plots in the Local Plan please do so by completing the form for the Potential development sites documents that are part of this consultation.

19 Available on the council's [website](#)

Definition of the Built-up Area

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

Definition of the Built-up Area

The built-up area is a concept which is at the heart of all of the draft scale of development policies. The draft policy below seeks to define clearly what is and what is not considered to be part of the built-up area.

Purpose of Draft Policy 9

The purpose of this policy is to provide a definition of the 'built-up area' of settlements in Huntingdonshire, for use as the starting point in considering whether proposals for sustainable development are appropriate.

Draft Policy 9

The Built-up area

A sustainable development proposal will be acceptable where it is located within the *built-up area* of a settlement that is part of a Spatial Planning Area or is defined as a Key Service Centre or Small Settlement. Specific land allocations made elsewhere in the Local Plan and specific arrangements for particular types of sustainable development in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan may be located outside of a built-up area of a settlement.

The *built-up area* is defined for each settlement as the main group of existing non-agricultural buildings of a permanent nature and their immediate surroundings. The *built-up area* therefore does not include:

- a. individual buildings and groups of dispersed or intermittent buildings that are clearly detached from the continuous *built-up area* of the settlement;
- b. gardens, paddocks and other undeveloped land in the *curtilage* of buildings on the edge of the settlement where they provide a transition between the surrounding countryside and the *built-up area* of the settlement;
- c. agricultural buildings and associated land on the edge of the settlement; or
- d. outdoor sports and recreation facilities and other formal *open spaces* on the edge of the settlement.

The built-up area of a settlement may include land within another parish. In such cases the built-up area will be considered as a single entity rather than separate areas.

Once specific land allocations made elsewhere in the Local Plan have been developed they will form part of the *built-up area* subject to the above definition.

Reasoning

This policy elaborates on the definition of the *built-up area* established by the Core Strategy 2009. The distinction between settlements and areas of open countryside has been established by defining what constitutes the *built-up area* of settlements within the Spatial Planning Areas, Key Service Centres and Small Settlements. This criteria based approach is considered to be the most appropriate as it resolves specific problems encountered with the delineated boundaries of the previous Local Plan. Importantly it resolves the perception that any form of development on any land within a drawn boundary would be acceptable and the pressure for every piece of land within the boundary to be developed and thus damaging the loose knit character of many settlements in Huntingdonshire by creating harder, more regular edges to settlements.

At the edge of many settlements properties can be found with extensive gardens or associated land. Where development is proposed such a site will be considered on its merits but, whilst in residential use, and even with some level of domestication, the undeveloped nature of gardens can often mean that they relate as much or even more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the settlement and therefore provide a transition between the built-up area and the surrounding countryside. Buildings are likely to be considered to be clearly detached from the built-up area where there is an agricultural or other rural land use between the site and

Definition of the Built-up Area

Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 | Draft Strategic Options and Policies

the main body of the settlement. Application of the criteria should result in development which is more appropriate to individual settlement form and character and more responsive to circumstances at the time of the application rather than when the plan is produced.

Is the draft policy sufficiently clear about what is considered to be part of the built-up area and what is considered to be part of the countryside?

Do you think this flexible approach to defining the built-up area on a case-by-case basis is an appropriate way of responding to individual prevailing circumstances?

Sustainability Appraisal

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal is an important step and ongoing process in drawing up the Local Plan. The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to help select the best option for the plan in terms of economic, environmental and social objectives. This analyses the relative sustainability of each option and takes the form of responses to a series of questions relating to environmental, social and economic issues. This appraisal is presented in draft form and will be finalised for the next stage of consultation on the draft Local Plan.

Do you agree with the draft sustainability appraisal?

Are there issues or factors that you think should be taken into account when completing the sustainability appraisal process?

Draft Sustainability Appraisal of the growth options

Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
Will it enable the use of land that has previously been developed in preference to land that has not been developed?	+			The medium and high economic growth options make maximum use of the two largest previously developed sites.
	Alconbury and Wyton airfields are primarily previously developed land (pdl); St Neots involves greenfield land in an identified sustainable urban extension; sites in the key service centres are a mixture of pdl and greenfield.	A higher amount of growth is accommodated within Alconbury and Wyton airfields which are both pdl. St Neots involves greenfield land in an identified sustainable urban extension; sites in the key service centres are a mixture of pdl and greenfield.	A higher amount of growth is accommodated within Alconbury and Wyton airfields which are both pdl. St Neots involves greenfield land; sites in the key service centres are a mixture of pdl and greenfield. Additional greenfield land south of Brampton is required.	
Will it promote development in locations where higher densities are appropriate?	+	++	+	The medium economic growth option promotes most growth in locations where higher densities are appropriate.
	Given the lower total levels of growth in this option there is less scope for promoting higher density developments.	Increasing the total level of development concentrated within larger sites enhances the opportunity to promote higher densities.	Increasing the total level of development concentrated within larger sites enhances the opportunity to promote higher densities. Delivery may depend on windfall sites which will not all be appropriate for higher densities.	

Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
Will it promote development in locations that are grade 3 agricultural land or lower (including urban and non-agricultural) in preference to higher grades?	+	+	++	There is little difference between the options. The high economic growth option has a lower proportion of growth on higher value agricultural land but the same absolute amount of land-take.
	Use of land at Alconbury airfield and part of Wyton airfield minimises the proportion of growth using agricultural land. Land east of St Neots is grade 2.	Increased use of land at Alconbury airfield and use of part of Wyton airfield minimises the proportion of growth using agricultural land. Land east of St Neots is grade 2.	Increased use of land at Alconbury and Wyton airfields minimises the proportion of growth using agricultural land. Land east of St Neots is grade 2.	
Will it direct development away from waterways that are sensitive to changes in water quality?	++	++	+	Brampton and Ramsey are the most sensitive locations to variations in water quality outputs.
	Growth in discharge can be managed without detrimentally impacting on water quality objectives.	Growth in discharge can be managed without detrimentally impacting on water quality objectives.	The majority of growth can be accommodated without detrimentally impacting on water quality objectives. Brampton has insufficient capacity for water treatment within conventional technologies to maintain water quality at this scale.	
Will it direct development towards locations where water treatment capacity exists or can be added to effectively?	++	++	+	Water treatment capacity is limited in many places but growth is generally manageable within conventional technologies. Alconbury airfield would require a site specific solution reflecting the potential scale of growth.
	The aspiration at Alconbury airfield is to manage waste water treatment on site. Growth in discharge at St Neots and Huntingdon is manageable within conventional technologies. Predicted growth at key service centres is manageable.	The aspiration at Alconbury airfield is to manage waste water treatment on site. Growth in discharge at St Neots and Huntingdon is manageable within conventional technologies. Predicted growth at key service centres is manageable. Capacity at St Ives is limited but manageable within conventional technologies.	The aspiration at Alconbury airfield is to manage waste water treatment on site. Growth in discharge at St Neots and Huntingdon is manageable within conventional technologies. Predicted growth at key service centres is manageable. Capacity at St Ives to accommodate higher levels of growth at Wyton airfield would need to be explored further.	

Sustainability Appraisal

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Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
Will it minimise risk to people and property from flooding, now and in the future?	+	+	+	All options are equal; as they have been shaped to avoid locations at high flood risk for instance around Ramsey where the surrounding Fen landscape is maintained through pumping.
	No distinction between options; all direct growth away from land at greatest flood risk.	No distinction between options; all direct growth away from land at greatest flood risk.	No distinction between options; all direct growth away from land at greatest flood risk.	
Will it direct development to areas which are either well served by open space and publicly accessible green space or have the capacity to providing more open space and accessible green space?	+	+	++	The high economic growth option would require more open space but use of large sites would provide greatest opportunities for providing substantial new areas of publicly accessible open space.
	Alconbury has potential for good linkages to the Great Fen. Restricted growth at Wyton airfield only allows limited potential for providing additional open space.	A higher proportion of growth at Alconbury airfield offers increased potential for providing substantial open space. Alconbury has potential for good linkages to the Great Fen. Restricted growth at Wyton airfield only allows limited potential for providing additional open space.	Concentration of maximum proportions of development in a few large developments gives greatest potential to provide additional open space.	
Will it protect, restore, create or enhance habitats?	+	+	+	The higher the number of sites the greater the potential for creating or enhancing habitats but the greater the level of potential negative impacts too.
	No distinction between options; more development sites offer more potential to create and enhance habitats but less sites offer potential for least negative impacts.	No distinction between options; more development sites offer more potential to create and enhance habitats but less sites offer potential for least negative impacts.	No distinction between options; more development sites offer more potential to create and enhance habitats but less sites offer potential for least negative impacts.	
Will it promote development of a type and scale which recognises and responds to the valued	++	++	+	Any development will impact on the surrounding landscape; the detailed design
	The least growth would have least potential impact on landscape. All sites	Inclusion of additional growth at Alconbury airfield minimises the areas of landscape	Additional growth is primarily focused at Alconbury and Wyton airfields to minimise the	

Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
characteristics of landscape character types?	have been drawn to respect and respond to the surrounding landscape.	impact. All sites have been drawn to respect and respond to the surrounding landscape.	areas of landscape impact; north-western parts of Wyton airfield are sensitive in landscape terms. Growth extending south west of Brampton would need to be carefully contained.	is critical in the ability to recognise and respond to landscape character.
Will it promote development of a type and scale which recognises and responds to the valued characteristics of existing townscapes?	++	++	+	The low and medium economic growth options rely more on sites which can respond to the character of existing townscape; detailed design becomes more critical in the ability to do so. Large scale developments need to create their own townscape character.
	Development in towns and key service centres is of a scale to respond to surrounding townscapes. Large scale sites offer opportunities to create a variety of new townscapes.	Development in towns and key service centres is of a scale to respond to surrounding townscapes. Large scale sites offer opportunities to create a variety of new townscapes.	Development in towns and key service centres is of a scale to respond to existing townscapes. Increased growth at Alconbury and Wyton airfields offers greater opportunities to create a variety new of townscapes. This option provides the greatest opportunity to improve the built form at Wyton-on-the-Hill.	
Will it promote development which preserves and enhances the district's heritage?	+	+	+	Restricted spread of development would minimise potential impacts on heritage assets. Higher growth offers greater potential for archaeological investigation.
	Difficult to distinguish between options; higher growth levels pose greater potential risks to heritage but also offer greater potential for archaeological investigation.	Difficult to distinguish between options; higher growth levels pose greater potential risks to heritage but also offer greater potential for archaeological investigation.	Difficult to distinguish between options; higher growth levels pose greater potential risks to heritage but also offer greater potential for archaeological investigation.	
Will it lead to development that can take advantage of or enable	+	++	+++	The high economic growth option is probably best as it offers most
	Limited growth would restrict opportunities for decentralised low	More development at Alconbury airfield would increase the potential for use of	More growth opportunities involving large sites would maximise the potential	

Sustainability Appraisal

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Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
opportunities for decentralised low carbon energy sources or networks?	carbon energy sources.	decentralised low carbon energy sources.	for use of decentralised low carbon energy sources.	growth in three concentrated locations.
Will it promote the location of significant areas of growth where the need to travel is minimised due to the mix of employment and housing?	+	++	+++	The enterprise zone has a stated target of 8000 jobs; provision of a substantial number of houses on Alconbury airfield would offer greatest opportunities for people to live and work in close proximity.
Will it recognise and tackle the causes of air pollution, particularly from traffic?	+	+	++	Any development has potential to increase air pollution. The high economic growth option offers the greatest opportunities to reduce the need to travel to employment by facilitating co-location of homes and jobs.
	Co-locating housing and employment offers opportunities to reduce the need to travel and hence pollution outputs. Limited growth at Wyton airfield may contribute to pollution from traffic congestion around St Ives without being sufficient to boost public transport viability.	Co-locating housing and employment offers opportunities to reduce the need to travel and hence pollution outputs. Limited growth at Wyton airfield may contribute to pollution from traffic congestion around St Ives without being sufficient to boost public transport viability.	Increased levels of growth at Alconbury airfield improve opportunities to reduce the need to travel and hence pollution outputs and improve the potential viability of public transport. Inclusion of employment growth at Wyton airfield may reduce the need to travel and assist public transport viability.	
Will it promote the retention of the quiet rural	+	++	+	Any development has potential to be detrimental to
	Focusing growth in towns and key service centres will	Focusing growth in towns and key service centres will help to	Maximising housing growth at Alconbury airfield offers potential	

Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
character of the district?	help to retain the rural character of the district. Restricting housing growth at Alconbury airfield may result in higher in-commuting to the enterprise zone giving localised disturbance.	retain the rural character of the district. Additional growth at Alconbury airfield may offer potential to minimise in-commuting to the enterprise zone.	to minimise in-commuting to the enterprise zone. Incorporation of higher levels of growth at Wyton airfield and south of Brampton would detrimentally impact on the rural nature of adjoining areas.	the quiet rural character of the district. The low economic growth option appears to offer a reasonable balance between offering opportunities to minimise the need for commuting without significant detrimental impact on rural areas.
Will it direct development away from areas of search for waste purposes designated in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste LDF?	++	++	+	There are limited areas of search for waste in the district; development is not precluded and may be accommodated within growth proposals.
	Alconbury airfield is designated as an area of search for waste but this could be accommodated within proposed mixed use growth. No other elements of this option are affected.	Alconbury airfield is designated as an area of search for waste but this could be accommodated within proposed mixed use growth. No other elements of this option are affected.	Alconbury airfield is designated as an area of search for waste; this could be accommodated within proposed mixed use growth but this may be more challenging at higher growth levels. Land south of Brampton is also designated as an area of search for waste and for minerals (borrow pits).	
Will it lead to development which would improve the choice and availability of cultural or social facilities?	+	+	++	The higher the level of development concentrated into the fewest possible locations maximises the opportunity to improve viable cultural or social facilities.
	Growth at St Neots, Alconbury and Wyton airfields offers scope for improvements to facilities.	Increased growth at Alconbury airfield should make provision of additional facilities there more viable.	Increased growth should make provision of additional facilities more viable. Higher growth at Wyton airfield offers more opportunities to improve facilities at Wyton-on-the-Hill.	

Sustainability Appraisal

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Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
Will it promote a growth in the provision of housing to meet needs (including for affordable and traveller accommodation)?	+	++	+++	The greater the level of new housing supply the higher the opportunities are to meet needs and provide diversity and choice in housing supply.
	Limiting growth is likely to increase pressure on affordable housing in particular and overall levels are unlikely to meet anticipated needs.	Increased housing growth, particularly within large scale sites, would provide greater opportunities to meet needs.	Maximum provision of new housing would best provide opportunities to meet all housing needs and provide diversity and choice in new supply.	
Will it help reduce poverty and social exclusion for areas most affected?	+	+	++	Poverty and social exclusion are most concentrated in parts of St Neots and Huntingdon; rural areas are also affected but involve lower and more dispersed numbers.
	Most affected areas include north Huntingdon and parts of St Neots, nearby growth may assist in both instances. Growth at Wyton airfield may help with social exclusion issues at Wyton-on-the-Hill.	Most affected areas include north Huntingdon and parts of St Neots, nearby growth may assist in both instances. Growth at Wyton airfield may help with social exclusion issues at Wyton-on-the-Hill.	Increased growth at Alconbury airfield offers greater opportunities to help address issues in northern parts of Huntingdon. Higher growth at Wyton airfield provides greatest opportunities to address social exclusion issues at Wyton-on-the-Hill.	
Will it promote a reduction in levels of crime or the fear of crime?	+	+	+	Lower growth levels and smaller individual developments are likely to give rise to lower crime or fear of crime levels. However, low growth may give rise to more people in housing and employment need.
	Difficult to distinguish between options; lower growth levels may lead to lower crime levels as there are less people and properties but may increase crime where more people are less able to access appropriate housing and employment.	Difficult to distinguish between options; lower growth levels may lead to lower crime levels as there are less people and properties but may increase crime where more people are less able to access appropriate housing and employment.	Difficult to distinguish between options; lower growth levels may lead to lower crime levels as there are less people and properties but may increase crime where more people are less able to access appropriate housing and employment.	
Will it facilitate access to basic services?	+	++	++	All options have been selected to ensure access to basic services as any option that did not achieve this would be unsustainable.
	All growth is directed to locations either with basic services or the ability to incorporate them within the	All growth is directed to locations either with basic services or the ability to incorporate them within the development.	All growth is directed to locations either with basic services or the ability to incorporate them within the development. Increased	

Sustainability Appraisal

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Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
	development. Lower growth at Alconbury airfield will limit the range of viable services that can be provided. Growth at Wyton airfield offers opportunities to facilitate access to basic services for Wyton-on-the-Hill.	Increased growth at Alconbury airfield will boost provision of viable services there which are complementary to those already in Huntingdon. Growth at Wyton airfield offers opportunities to facilitate access to basic services for Wyton-on-the-Hill.	growth at Alconbury airfield will maximise the range of viable services there but increases the risk of these having a detrimental impact on existing service provision in Huntingdon. Increased growth at Wyton airfield offers greater opportunities to facilitate service provision for Wyton-on-the-Hill.	Higher growth levels offer greater opportunities for provision of viable services.
Will it match areas of population growth to employment growth in a manner which facilitates easy access to jobs?	+	+++	++	The medium economic growth option is likely to lead to the best balance between providing new homes near new jobs without giving rise to levels of development that may encourage significant increases in out-commuting.
	All options endeavour to co-locate growth of homes and jobs but this option has lowest population growth in close proximity to the enterprise zone.	Increased growth in close proximity to the enterprise zone provides better opportunities for easy access to jobs.	Population growth at Alconbury airfield would exceed the number of jobs in the enterprise zone. Higher growth at Wyton airfield would incorporate new employment but may lead to additional out-commuting.	
Will it enhance Huntingdonshire as a business location and encourage inward investment?	+	+	++	Higher levels of growth offer more diverse opportunities for inward investment and promotion of Huntingdonshire as a vibrant, growing economy.
	The enterprise zone is an established fact so does not vary between the options. Housing growth should provide a balance of new jobs and homes. Diversity of potential locations offers a choice of sites for potential investment.	The enterprise zone is an established fact so does not vary between the options. Housing growth should provide a balance of new jobs and homes. Diversity of potential locations offers a choice of sites for potential investment.	The enterprise zone is an established fact so does not vary between the options. Additional employment opportunities at Wyton airfield offers a greater choice of sites for potential investment.	
Will it help improve the availability of	+	++	++	Higher growth levels would facilitate

Sustainability Appraisal

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Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
training and education opportunities?	Primary education facilities are expected to be provided within major growth sites. Secondary education requires substantial housing growth and a secondary school would be required at Alconbury airfield.	Primary education facilities are expected to be provided within major growth sites. Increased housing numbers at Alconbury airfield will facilitate provision of a viable secondary school.	Primary education facilities are expected to be provided within major growth sites. Higher growth levels may cause issues with secondary school catchments. Increased housing numbers at Alconbury airfield will facilitate provision of a viable secondary school and potentially additional tertiary education facilities.	provision of a viable extra secondary school and increase opportunities for tertiary and employment based education and training.
Will it reduce the need to travel?	+	++	+	All options are relatively sustainable and seek to reduce the need to travel.
	All options seek to reduce the need to travel by promoting homes, jobs and services in close proximity.	All options seek to reduce the need to travel by promoting homes, jobs and services in close proximity. Higher housing numbers at Alconbury airfield provide the opportunity to reduce people's need to travel to work there.	All options seek to reduce the need to travel by promoting homes, jobs and services in close proximity. The population at Alconbury airfield is likely to exceed job opportunities there and may increase the need to travel.	
Will it match areas of growth to those with better or improving transport infrastructure?	+	+	+	Growth both makes demands on transport infrastructure and can help to provide it. More certainty over the A14 proposals should be available by the next stage of Local Plan preparation.
	Difficult to distinguish between options. Revised A14 proposals should assist delivery of growth in the Huntingdon SPA. Growth at Alconbury and Wyton airfields both offer opportunities for extensions to The Busway. Growth at St Neots is dependent on A428 improvements.	Difficult to distinguish between options. Revised A14 proposals should assist delivery of growth in the Huntingdon SPA. Growth at Alconbury and Wyton airfields both offer opportunities for extensions to The Busway. Growth at St Neots is dependent on A428 improvements.	Difficult to distinguish between options. Revised A14 proposals should assist delivery of growth in the Huntingdon SPA. Growth at Alconbury and Wyton airfields both offer opportunities for extensions to The Busway. Growth at St Neots is dependent on A428 improvements.	

Sustainability Appraisal Questions	Impact			Commentary
	Low Economic Growth	Medium Economic Growth	High Economic Growth	
<p>Summary: It would seem at this stage that the low economic growth option is marginally less sustainable than the medium economic growth option as although it achieves well in terms of environmental aspects it contributes less to social and economic sustainability. The medium economic growth option achieves more positively with regard to social and economic issues without giving rise to significant environmental concerns. The high economic growth option achieves well in respect of social and economic issues but has a higher risk of giving rise to environmental concerns which may require mitigation to make this level of development sustainable.</p>				

Glossary

Affordable housing

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private *registered providers* (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private *registered providers* of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing.

Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Aged or veteran tree

A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally.

Air Quality Management Areas

Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines. Information regarding the air quality management areas in Huntingdonshire can be found on the council's [website](#).

Amenity

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Document produced each year to report on progress in producing the *Local Development Framework* and implementing its policies.

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a *heritage asset* if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. *Heritage assets* with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Best and most versatile agricultural land

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Birds and Habitats Directives

European Directives to conserve natural *habitats* and wild fauna and flora.

Brownfield

See *previously developed land* (PDL)

Built-up area

The built-up *area* is defined for each settlement as the main group of existing non-agricultural buildings of a permanent nature and their immediate surroundings. See draft policy 8 in the 'Introduction and Strategy' for the full definition.

Climate change adaptation

Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation

Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Community Infrastructure Levy

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area. Arrangements for the Community Infrastructure Levy for Huntingdonshire are set out in the Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

Community Right to Build Order

An Order made by the *local planning authority* (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Conservation (for heritage policy)

The process of maintaining and managing change to a *heritage asset* in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its *significance*.

Conservation Area

A designated area of special architectural and/or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is a recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect not just individual buildings but the character of the area as a whole.

Curtilage

The area occupied by a property and land closely associated with that property. In terms of a house and garden, the garden normally forms the curtilage of the property, but fields and paddocks would be outside the curtilage.

Decentralised energy

Local *renewable and local low-carbon energy* usually but not always on a relatively small scale encompassing a diverse range of technologies.

Development plan

This includes adopted Local Plans, *neighbourhood plans* and the London Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)

Edge of centre

For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the *primary shopping area*. For all other *main town centre uses*, a location within 300 metres of a *town centre* boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the *town centre* but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Environmental Impact Assessment

A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

European site

This includes candidate *Special Areas of Conservation*, Sites of Community Importance, *Special Areas of Conservation* and *Special Protection Areas*, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Green infrastructure

A network of multi-functional *green space*, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Green spaces

Publicly accessible spaces, including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons and historic parks and gardens.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of *significance* meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets (world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or conservation areas) and assets identified by the *local planning authority* (including local listing).

Infrastructure

A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, education and health facilities.

International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity

All international sites (*Special Areas of Conservation*, *Special Protection Areas*, and *Ramsar sites*), national sites (*Sites of Special Scientific Interest*) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Landscape Character Assessment

An assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

Listed building curtilage

Listed building curtilage is a legal term describing an area around a building, the boundary of which is defined by matters including past and present ownership and functional association and interdependency. The *setting of a heritage asset* will include, but generally be more extensive than, its curtilage.

Local planning authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority and the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Major development

Development above a particular scale (10 or more homes for residential development) as defined in the General Development Procedure Order (2006) as amended.

Mineral Safeguarding Area

An area designated by Minerals Planning Authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Minor scale development

Development up to a particular scale (10 or more homes for residential development) as defined in the General Development Procedure Order (2006) as amended.

Mitigation measures

These are measures requested/ carried out in order to limit the damage by a particular development/ activity.

Neighbourhood Development Order

An Order made by a *local planning authority* (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Neighbourhood plans

A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Obtrusive light

Light *pollution* that includes the brightening of the night sky (sky glow), uncomfortably bright light (glare) and light spilled beyond the area being lit (light intrusion).

Older people

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open space

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual *amenity*.

Original building

A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

Out of centre

A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of town

A location *out of centre* that is outside the existing urban area.

Planning condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a *Local Development Order* or *Neighbourhood Development Order*.

Planning obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing field

The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

Pollution

Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general *amenity*. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

Previously developed land (PDL)

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the *curtilage* of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the *curtilage* should be developed) and any associated fixed surface *infrastructure*. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in *built-up areas* such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Primary shopping area

Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the *primary shopping frontage*).

Primary and secondary shopping frontage

Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Priority habitats and species

Species and *habitats* of principal importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Ramsar sites

Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Registered Providers

These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies.

Renewable and low carbon energy

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural exception schemes/ sites

Small sites used for *affordable housing* in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of *affordable housing* units without grant funding.

Setting of a heritage asset

The surroundings in which a *heritage asset* is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the *significance* of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that *significance* or may be neutral.

Significance (for heritage policy)

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be *archaeological*, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a *heritage asset's* physical presence, but also from its setting.

Special Areas of Conservation

Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas

Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A study intended to assess overall potential for housing development in an area, including the identification of specific housing sites with development potential over a 15 year time span.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

A study intended to review the existing housing market in an area, consider the nature of future need for market and *affordable housing* and to inform policy development.

Submission

Point at which a draft *development plan* is sent to the Secretary of State for examination.

Supplementary planning documents

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the *development plan*.

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)

Previously known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, these cover a range of approaches to surface water drainage management including source control measures such as rainwater recycling, infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns, filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed and basins and ponds to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding.

Sustainable transport modes

Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Town centre

Area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the *primary shopping area* and areas predominantly occupied by *main town centre uses* within or adjacent to the *primary shopping area*. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing *out of centre* developments, comprising or including *main town centre uses*, do not constitute town centres.

Transport assessment

A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

Transport statement

A simplified version of a *transport assessment* where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full *transport assessment* is not required.

Travel plan

A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

Use Classes Order

Planning regulations outlining a schedule of uses to which a given premises or building can be put. Some changes of use require planning permission.

Viability Assessment

An assessment of viability considering assumed costs that may be incurred and values and income that may be generated (e.g. from completed house sales), which determines the residual land value and compares that value to a viability benchmark agreed by the council or its nominated representative, namely Existing Use Value or Alternative Use Value plus a reasonable uplift.

Vitality and Viability

In terms of retailing, vitality is the capacity of a centre to grow or to develop its level of commercial activity. Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.

Windfall sites

Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

Zero carbon building

A building with net carbon emissions of zero over a typical year.