



Why we believe the Huntingdonshire Authority should incorporate Tempsford

A new administrative area for Huntingdonshire

As part of our Option E proposal, Huntingdonshire District Council suggested a boundary change to incorporate the significant growth at Tempsford within the Huntingdonshire unitary authority.

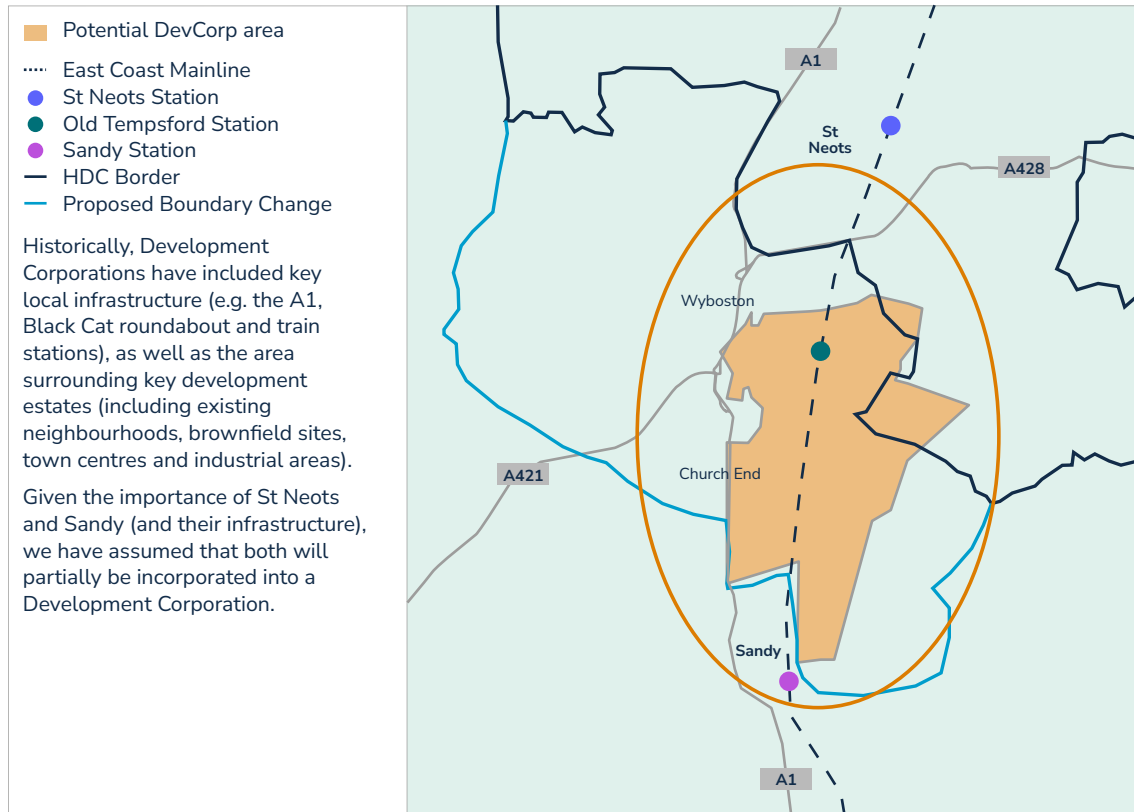
The below map highlights this boundary change, as well as the potential new CPCA boundary and the development corporation area (using research into previous DevCorp precedent). The alignment of Tempsford to Huntingdonshire allows for **accelerated delivery of growth** building on the council's **strong track record of delivery**, a **respect for community** patterns and behaviours recognising the area's connection to St Neots and the **ability to focus on national priorities**, including the development of East-West Rail and significant house-building targets.



Figure 1 – Map of the new CPCA area with the addition of Tempsford and the DevCorp.

Option E is not reliant on this extended area, but it would be of benefit to the new authority in the longer-term and would have a positive impact on its overall sustainability.

Figure 2 – The potential DevCorp area, in more detail.



The below map highlights the significant developments that would be subsumed by the Huntingdonshire unitary authority, if the suggested boundary was added to the geography. These developments not only include Tempsford, but additional housing developments in Little Barford, Dennybrook and a development led by Urban & Civic. It also includes the new logistics/life science manufacturing and technology campus at Wyboston. As is highlighted, these developments will bring significant growth to the region and the council's strong track record of delivery will help to accelerate this. We have also included a governance diagram highlighting the simplified delivery route of Tempsford, if a boundary review were to take place. If the Tempsford development remains in its current administrative boundary, it would be managed by four local authorities which could significantly stagnate growth by creating additional layers of bureaucracy.

Figure 3 – New developments incorporated under Boundary Review.

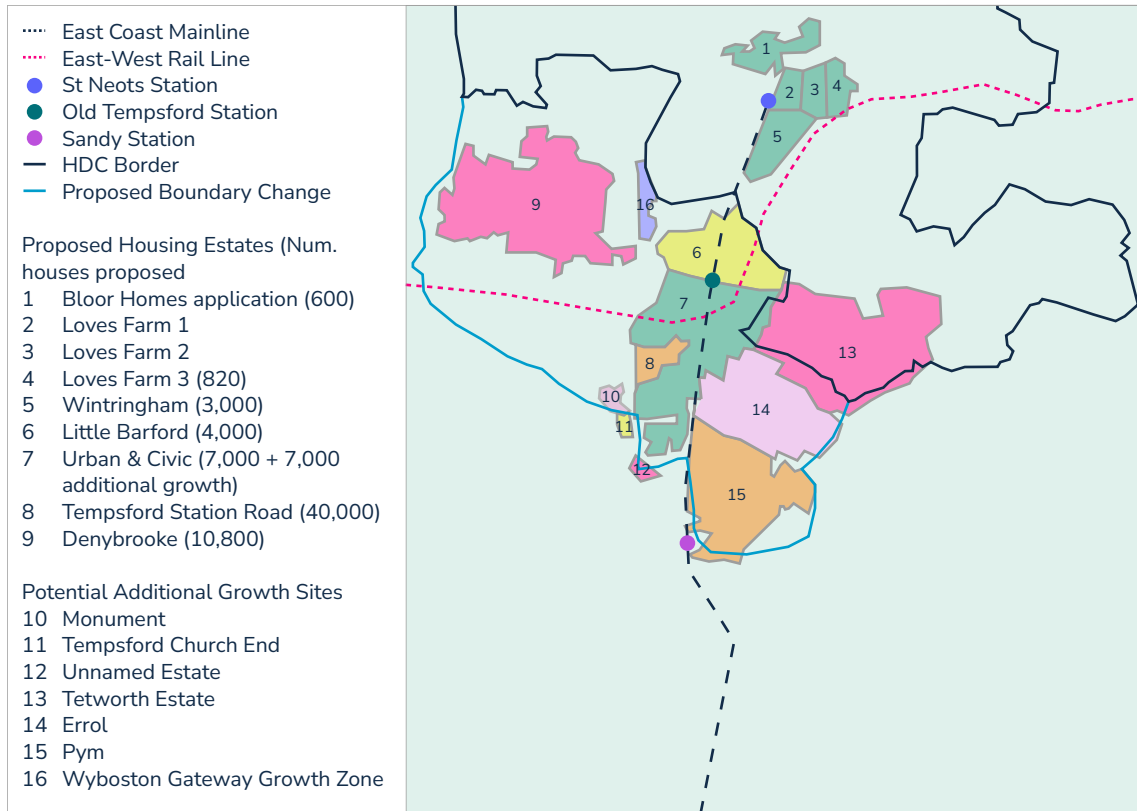
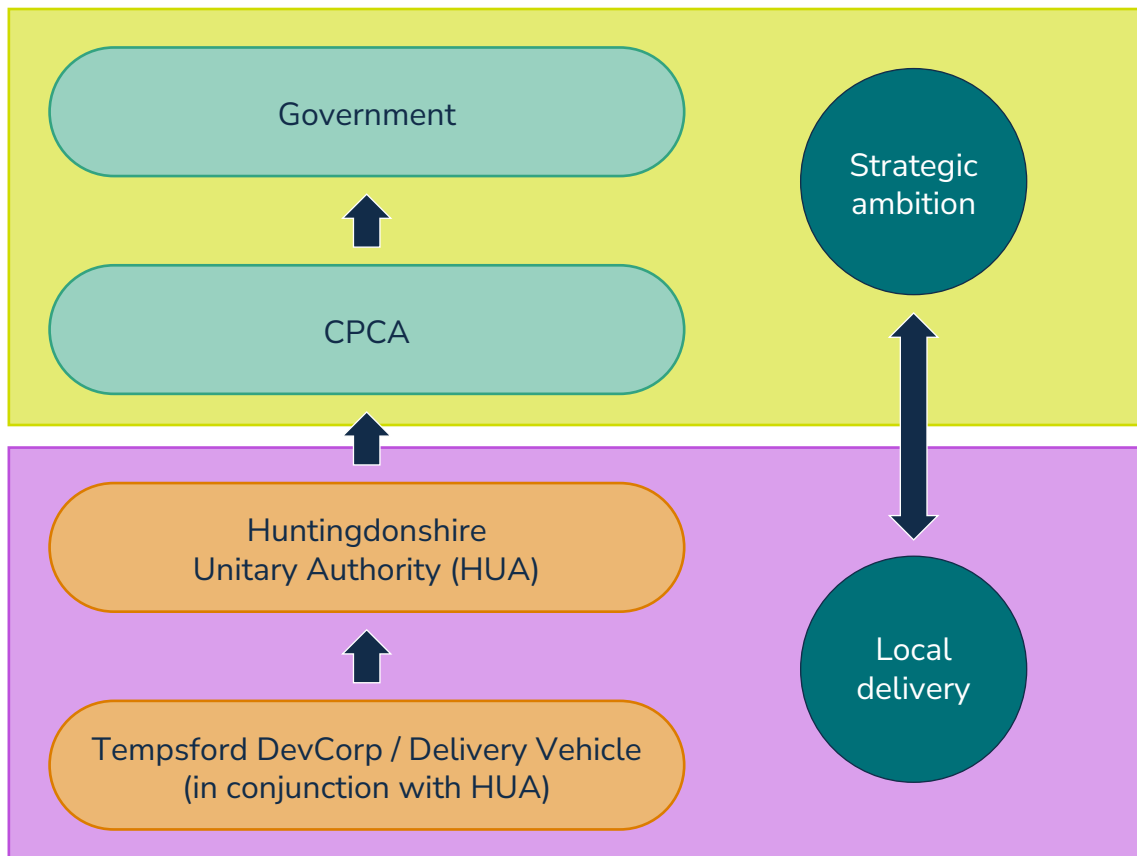


Figure 4 – Governance Route if Tempstford was incorporated into Huntingdonshire.

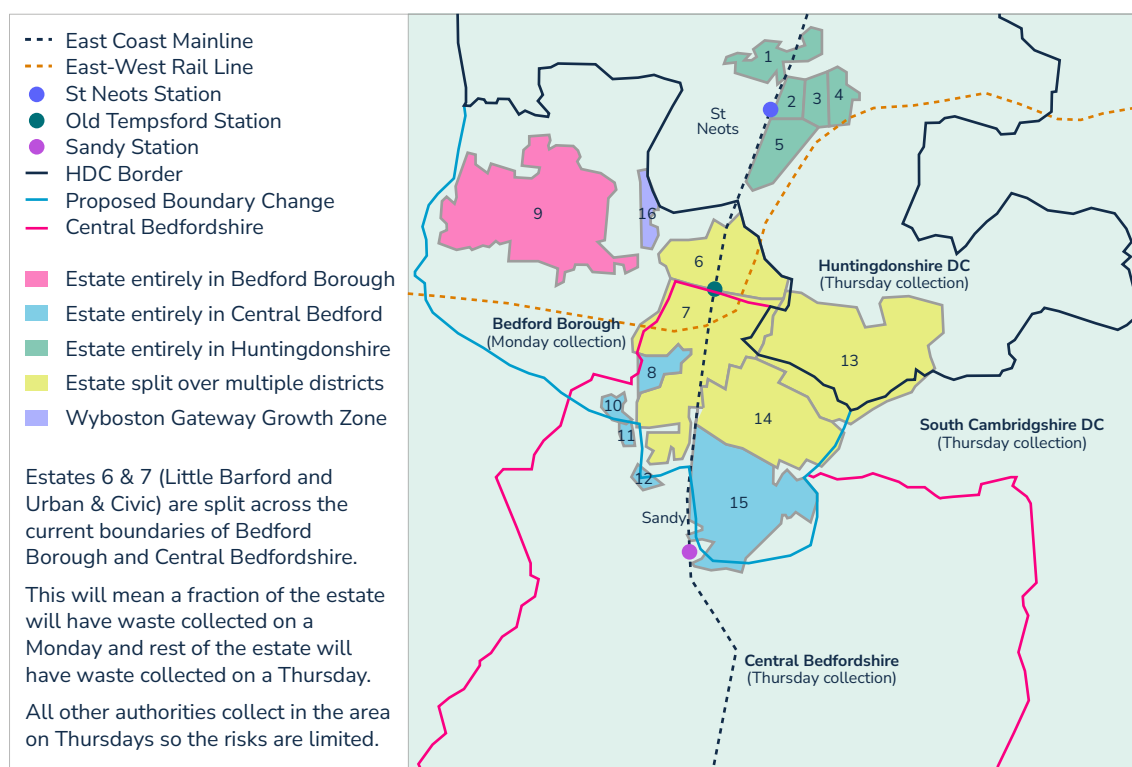


Service delivery implications

If Tempsford were not incorporated into the new Huntingdonshire unitary authority, the area would be subsumed underneath multiple local authority areas, including South Cambridgeshire (which will be in a different unitary authority in all options), Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire. There are several implications that this may have on the area in terms of service delivery, as well as creating confusion for residents, visitors and businesses.

The below map demonstrates the complex nature of waste collection in the geographic area. The black line shows the current boundary of Huntingdonshire, the red line is Bedford Borough, and the blue line is the proposed boundary change. The estates in Little Barford and the Urban & Civic Estate would see split collection days, as Bedford Borough collect their bins on a Monday whereas all other authorities in the area collect on a Thursday, leading to potential confusion in collection days and resident dissatisfaction. If subsumed underneath Huntingdonshire, this service delivery would be streamlined. Similar experiences would be likely in important areas such as Education (and school placement planning/catchment areas); which would create confusion and would not appear to be logical nor practical; and which would undermine the core facets of successful place-making such as community cohesion and stewardship.

Figure 5 – Map of administrative boundaries in Tempsford and waste collection impacts.



This confusion would also impact on people financially and would be demonstrated through fees and charges. The estates would also be affected by the difference in fees and charges across the administrative boundaries. In particular, one half of Little Barford/Urban & Civic would be paying for a garden waste bin, whereas the other half wouldn't. There is a risk that discrepancies amongst estates can lead to resident dissatisfaction, with a lack of streamlined services affecting trust in the council and local governance.

Table 1 – Bin and council tax charges across the administrative areas in Tempsford.

| Local authority | Bin fee | Council tax |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------|
| Huntingdonshire DC | £57.50 | £2,400 |
| South Cambridgeshire DC | £0 | £2,415 |
| Central Bedfordshire | £55.00 | £2,351 |
| Bedford Borough | £0 | £2,394 |

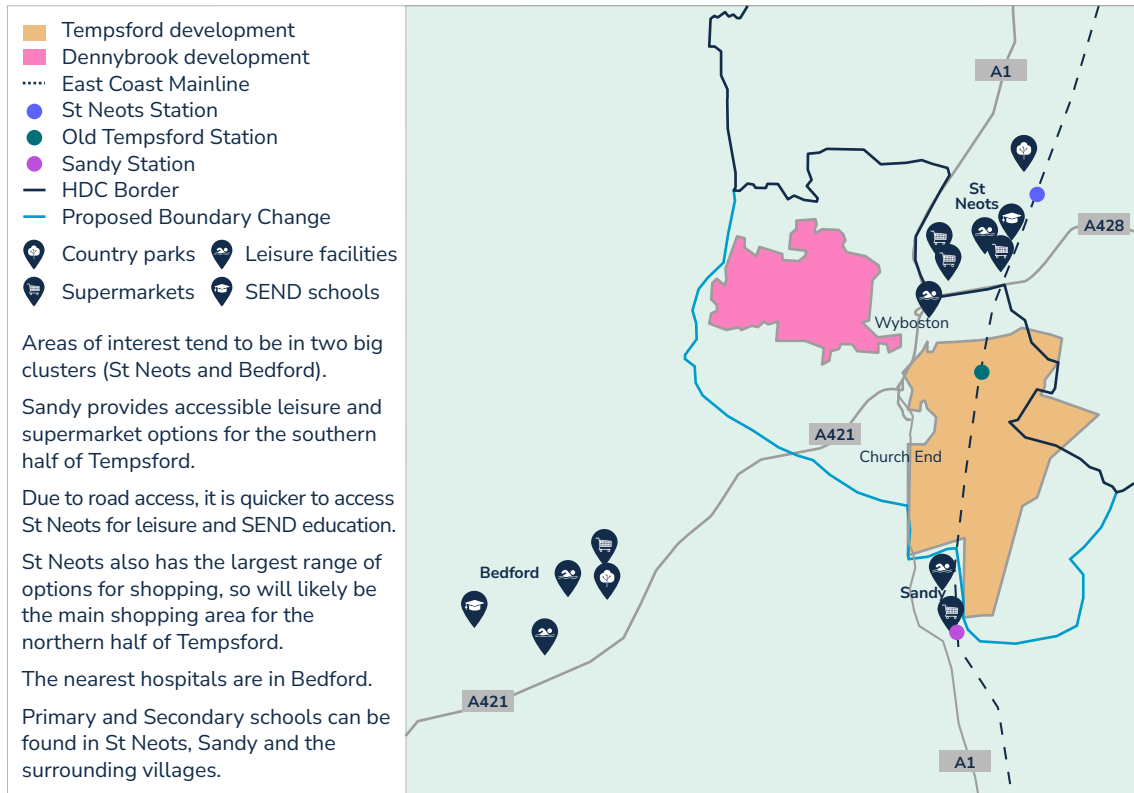
In terms of delivering the change, **incorporating Tempsford into the Huntingdonshire unitary authority would have minimal impact due to the low population of the current area (approx. 7,000)**. It would be more efficient to carry out this change whilst the population is low, rather than waiting until significant development has occurred, as **the shift will impact less residents and changes to service delivery can be managed through a more targeted communications strategy**.

Existing evidence of connections to Huntingdonshire

The proximity of Tempsford to St Neots highlights the dependency that the new development will have on the town for key services, including retail, leisure, parks, health services, and work.

The below map highlights that road access is better between St Neots and Tempsford, which is the likely area for residents to access leisure and SEND education options, as well as increased retail options. The nearest hospitals are in Bedford however given the ICB reforms which would see Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in a new '[Central East ICB](#)', cross-boundary collaboration in health provision is unavoidable.

Figure 6 – Map of nearest key services to Tempsford.



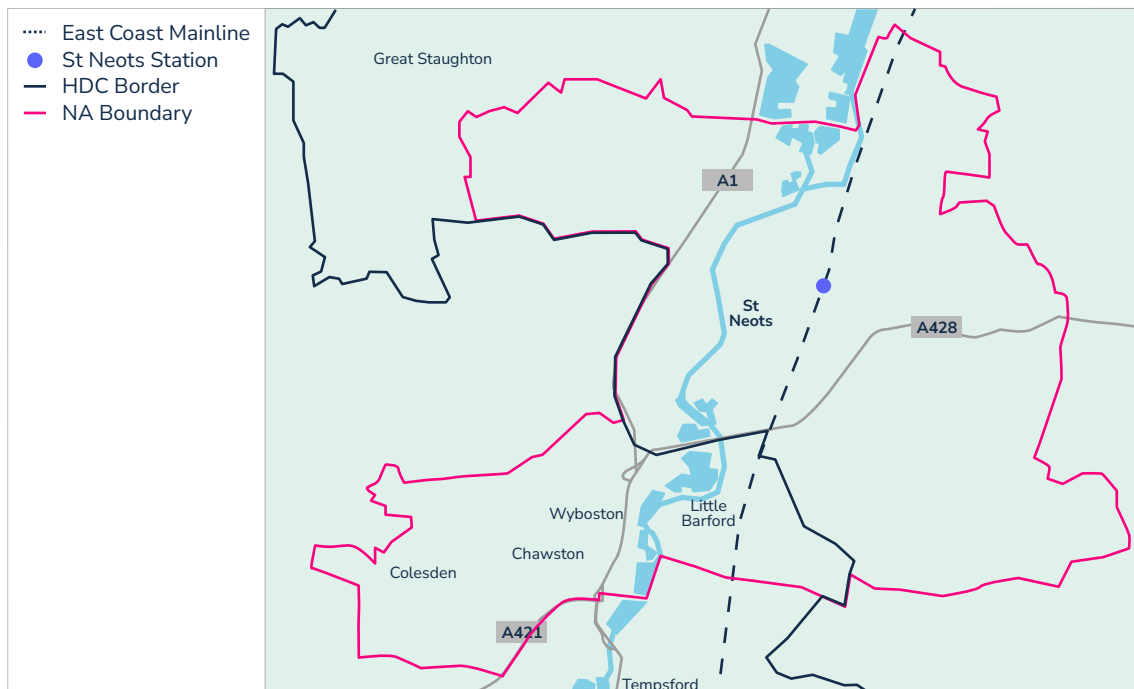
Having a hard border before a significant housing development can also lead to complications surrounding emergency service provision. There have been several instances of hard borders leading to delays in response times to serious incidents, due to confusion around who should be responding to an incident. The risk of this will be increased by the influx of people as an effect of the growth, with public response capacity already significantly stretched. The impact of this will be particularly felt by the ambulance and fire service, with potential confusions around whether services should be responding from Cambridgeshire or Bedford, given that certain estates could sit across four unitary authorities post LGR. If this area were therefore to be managed underneath one unitary area, rather than four different boundaries, emergency service provision can be provided more efficiently due to lack of confusion around first responders. Our proposals remove or significantly reduce this risk.

East-West Rail already acknowledge the need to deliver legacy enhancements to active travel and highways connections between the new Tempsford station and St Neots; this is recognition of the role of St Neots as the largest town in Cambridgeshire and its close proximity. It follows therefore that new Tempsford residents would look to use these connections as they look to St Neots in the first instance, until Tempsford has sufficient critical mass to support its own services and social infrastructure.

This connection is exemplified by the [St Neots Neighbourhood Plan](#) which is already taking a multi-parish approach that goes beyond the borders of Huntingdonshire into Bedford. For example, Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden parish councils are all included in the neighbourhood plan, with conversations on-going as to the inclusion of Little Barford. The below map highlights the Neighbourhood Area identified by the St Neots Plan (red line) mapped onto the HDC border (black line). There is therefore sound evidence to highlight the connection between the development area and St Neots. Underneath the new boundary identified in Option E, this area would all be incorporated underneath one unitary authority, thus streamlining delivery by managing the area under one line of decision-making.

MHCLG via Homes England are also undertaking their own due diligence and spatial options work in connection with the New Towns programme; and it is our view that this work is likely to only reaffirm some of the connections and reasoning identified. This work will also look at other factors such as infrastructure, water, and ecology, all of which will need to be considered in detail, and the linkages truly understood if Tempsford is to be successful. We believe these studies will further reinforce the connections between the significant growth proposals, the area, and St Neots.

Figure 7 – [St Neots Multi-Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area](#).



Connection to wider government policies

The ability to streamline delivery of Tempsford underneath a Huntingdonshire unitary authority will **help to further national government aims** and ensure that delivery is not only met, but to a high standard. For example, the acceleration of Tempsford will help to realise and maximise the potential benefit arising through East-West Rail and the creation of the additional station.

The provision of significant new homes will contribute to addressing the national housing shortage, and within streamlined arrangements, there would be a collective drive to unlock the New Towns programme; as well as maximising the strategic location and connectivity for employment opportunities and new sectoral growth.

The development of East-West Rail will contribute to the development of the Ox-Cam Growth Corridor more largely, an objective that Huntingdonshire is keen to see met. The acceleration of Tempsford will contribute towards sustainable growth and the development of major industries across the corridor by bringing in a population that is well-connected.

Huntingdonshire has a strong track record of delivery which will lend itself well to the delivery of Tempsford. For example, Huntingdonshire met 110% of their required target for house-building last year, as demonstrated by the council's [housing strategy](#). This exceptional delivery will help to deliver the UK government's wider target of 1.5 million homes over the next five years. We were also an exemplar of the creation of new communities, as demonstrated by both Alconbury Weald and Wintringham Park, where we have worked in close partnership with Urban & Civic, and Homes England over many years.

The growth that can be delivered by the Huntingdonshire unitary authority in Tempsford and the income generated in Wyboston through the new employment park can also be used to support Project FAIRFAX at RAF Wyton, furthering central government's defence aims. This is in line with the government's [Defence Industrial Strategy](#) which is focused on making defence an engine for growth. The incorporation of Tempsford will support the relationship between growth and defence, allowing one aspect to strengthen the other.

This growth focus is also in line with one of the government's five missions: to kickstart economic growth. This in turn will also help to bolster the other four, with the growth along the Ox-Cam corridor and the delivery of the life sciences park at Wyboston supporting the government's clean energy objectives. Alignment of service delivery underneath one local authority

will ensure more effective provision of public services by the police and NHS, allowing for greater response in terms of health and safety. One clear governance pathway for delivery will also mean that residents of the new development receive the same opportunities collectively, with one clear catchment area for school provision and Adults education services with the area sitting underneath one Strategic Authority. This not only ensures that opportunities for residents are aligned, but also that Huntingdonshire's strong focus on prevention in the health and social care space, as demonstrated by our leisure [offerings](#) and community health and wealth building [fund](#), can be extended across to the new area to ensure quality outcomes for all.

We regularly engage with civil servants across Government; they recognise that Huntingdonshire operates differently, with a 'can do' mindset; and we have consistently stated that we stand ready and willing to deliver for Government.

Option E provides the strategic opportunity to capitalise on these other national ambitions.

Capacity to deliver

Huntingdonshire has a strong track record of delivering growth, as demonstrated by our recent [Economic Growth Strategy](#), our collaboration to date on **Project FAIRFAX** and RAF Wyton (particularly our [House of Commons event](#)) and the significant development the area has seen in recent years, including [Alconbury Weald](#) and [Wintringham Park](#). Alconbury Weald, in particular, has been used as a case study for the New Towns agenda.

Another area in which Huntingdonshire has excelled is the delivery of affordable housing, as highlighted by our [Housing Strategy](#). Our current affordable housing target for sites of 11 or more homes sits at 40%. In line with this target, our delivery of affordable housing has shown a steady increase, with 1,423 affordable homes delivered since [2022](#). The council has also successfully delivered regeneration, with an economic strategy that prioritises improvements to market towns and positions Huntingdonshire as a key strategic location, open to investment and [growth](#). Our [Invest in Huntingdonshire website](#) showcases our commitment to supporting growth, encouraging businesses to thrive and supporting our council in turn. If Tempsford were to be incorporated into the area, this attitude, energy and resource could accelerate delivery with positive outcomes, ensuring that development is sustainable and suited to resident needs.

Huntingdonshire is therefore well placed to **deliver the growth expected in Tempsford and to support any development corporation** whilst ensuring that community patterns are strengthened by connecting the new area to St Neots, acknowledging its existing dependencies. The increase in resources and capacity through the addition of Tempsford will mean that this **delivery is only accelerated**.

The new boundary not only incorporates development at Tempsford but also, wider developments in Wyboston which are already connected to [St Neots through the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan](#). For example, the [potential logistics, life sciences manufacturing and technology park](#) being developed by Prologis in the area will help to boost council resources and capacity to deliver growth, whilst ensuring that the area is well connected to St Neots for key services. This also includes developments in [Little Barford \(4,000 homes\)](#) which would also rely on a connection and alignment to St Neots. This development can also be strengthened by Huntingdonshire's resource and capacity and the resource generated by the park can be used to support growth in Tempsford and the region.

Financial impacts

Given the small size of the current population of Tempsford, the council anticipates that there will be no significant financial impact on service delivery. Whilst the development will grow significantly, the council will have time to accommodate the increase in service delivery and budget in line with the housing and population growth. This will also be supported by the increase in Council Tax through the growth as well as business rates income, particularly through the new life science and technology campus in Wyboston.

Governance route for implementation

As a council, we are mindful of the process that needs to be followed to enact any boundary changes. We have outlined below what we believe the correct governance route to be for implementing this. Following legal advice from Trowers & Hamlin, we acknowledge that the LGBCE take a more limited role in the LGR process, acting as a statutory consultee during the consultation. However, this note has presented the Secretary of State with the benefits of incorporating Tempsford into Huntingdonshire and we hope he acknowledges the arguments set out.

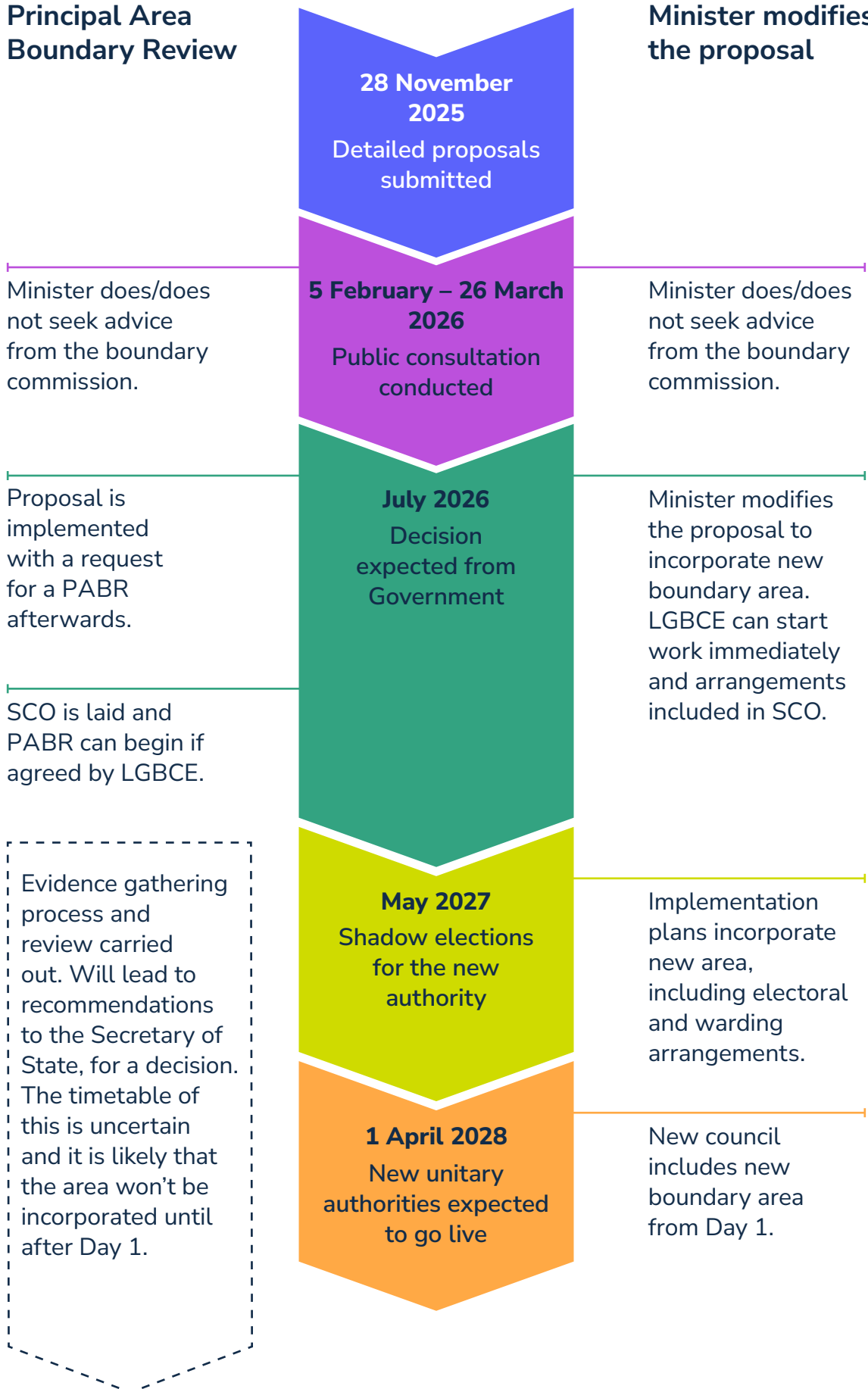
In our understanding, there are two routes to implementing a boundary change in LGR; a modified proposal by the Secretary of State; or a Principal Area Boundary Review, following the laying of the Structural Change Order.

We would request that the minister considers the first option, as this would mean the new area is incorporated from Day 1 and the new unitaries can be designed with this in mind. It is unclear how long a Principal Area Boundary Review may take and therefore, we believe that swiftness would help unlock the delivery of growth much quicker. A timeline for both processes is highlighted below.

We are also conscious that we will be asked to feed into the Structural Change Order following the decision made on LGR in the summer. We will provide extensive feedback when appropriate, however we would initially ask that the Structural Change Order is mindful of the need to deliver growth. We wish to be able to accelerate development in areas like Tempsford and for this to be recognised by the new shadow authorities as a priority. The Structural Change Order should not limit delivery so we would therefore ask that there is provision in the order for large scale, national developments to be pursued uninhibited.

Principal Area Boundary Review

Minister modifies the proposal



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