Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report October 2023

Contents

1 Document Information

Title: Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Status: Completed

Document availability: The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report can be found on the Council's website. Copies can be downloaded from the website.

Please note: This document may be available in alternative formats on request.

1 Document Information

Non-technical Summary

This is the non-technical summary for the draft sustainability scoping report for the next Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

An explanation of some of the terms used in the document can be found in the 'Glossary'.

Why do we do sustainability appraisal?

When drawing up new planning documents the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future are some of the most important things to consider. To be sure that the plan does not cause economic, environmental and social problems, at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government's view of what constitutes sustainable development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF uses the United Nations definition of sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

How will the appraisal be done?

The first stage of producing the new Local Plan is a scoping stage, which this report relates to. This is necessary to propose and agree the way that the plan is to be drawn up including the methodology for the SA process and to collect together the necessary information to produce the plan. The scoping stage covers:

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
A1: Identifying relevant plans and programmes • The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.
A2: Collecting baseline information • The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring
A4: Developing the SA framework • The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

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Following the scoping stage are stages B to E set out below:

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA framework
B2: Developing plan options
B3: Predicting the effects of the plan and alternatives
B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan and alternatives
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan
Stage C: Preparing the SA Report
C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the SA Report
D1: Public participation on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal report
D2: Appraising significant changes
D3: Making decisions and providing information
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment
E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring
E2: Responding to adverse effects

Stages B to E will be carried out as part of drawing up and finalising the new Local Plan. More information on stages B to E can be found in '2 'Sustainability Appraisal Methodology'. More information on when stages B to E will be carried out can be found in '8 'Next Steps'.

A1 - Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Plans, programmes and strategies that were considered to be relevant were reviewed. A full list of these is provided in Appendix 1: 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. The appendix splits these into international, national, regional, sub-regional, county and local level documents. The key aims, objectives, and targets/ indicators for each plan, programme and strategy are identified alongside how they will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and what baseline topic they relate to.

The key aims, messages and objectives from the relevant plans, programmes and strategies are summarised below:

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Procedural	• The Local Plan and its proposals are required to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal (including an Environmental Impact Assessment) • The Local Plan must undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) • The Local Plan and its proposals must be assessed for their impact on protected characteristics through an Equality Impact Assessment • Evidence used to shape the Local Plan must be made publicly available • Consultation will be undertaken throughout the plan making process and recorded in a Statement of Consultation document
Overarching	• The Local Plan must promote all strands of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) in a holistic way • Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system • Consider the economic, environmental and social ambitions of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (now known as the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-regional Partnership)

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
	• Incorporate where possible the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's and Huntingdonshire District Council's corporate aims and objectives • Development needs to be well designed and where people want to live and work
Climate change: Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling	• The Local Plan must include policies on climate change • The UK Government has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050, the District Council has set a target of reaching net zero carbon by 2040 • Plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change • Promote opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation including community led generation • Improve the energy performance of buildings to reduce energy consumption and reduce costs to residents • Support retrofitting of older and less energy efficient housing stock and non-residential buildings • Minimise the damage of flooding to people and property • Incorporate flood resilient and resistant design into new builds where there is a risk of flooding from any source • Ensure there is sufficient water capacity to service growth • Promote the development of water efficient homes and non-residential buildings • Integrate the 'waste hierarchy' of reduce waste and increase the amount which is re-used and recycled to meet national and local targets • Promote opportunities to create a circular economy by maximising the reuse of materials, particularly in construction • Ensure sustainable waste management practices are in place

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Environmental: Landscape Land, Soils and Agriculture Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space Pollution	• Protect and enhance the various landscapes and their key characteristics • Maintain and enhance landscape and townscape character • Promote landscape protection, management and planning • Conserve and where possible enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land • Support sustainable agricultural practices • Conserve and restore peatland • Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land • Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites • Policies and proposals must seek a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain • Conserve existing tree cover and support additional tree planting • Support access to the countryside and the public rights of way network • Protect and enhance green infrastructure • Ensure that all residents have access to open and green space • Improve the quality and quantity of open spaces and accessibility to these spaces • Minimise water pollution to increase the ecology quality of rivers and groundwater • Reduce the concentration of air pollutants and keep levels of pollutants below maximum levels
Socio-economic:	• Identify land that will meet the housing needs of the district

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Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Housing Population and Health Income and Deprivation Employment and Business Travel and Transport Digital Infrastructure and Communications Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Community Services and Facilities Education	• Provide a variety of housing types, mix and tenures across the district • Tackle affordability issues • Provide homes that meet people's needs or are capable of being adapted in the future to accommodate changing needs • Ensure the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met • Provide care homes, accommodation and health facilities to meet the needs of the elderly or those with specific medical needs in accessible locations • Support self and custom build housing • Promote high quality design for housing products that reflect local character and are integrated into the surrounding community • Improve health and well-being • Enhance quality and quantity of indoors and outdoors sports facilities • Tackle inequalities to raise quality of life • Promote social inclusion and integration • Promote Huntingdonshire's contribution to the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy • Support existing businesses • Enhance employment opportunities for all • Support small and medium sized businesses to grow and thrive within the district • Ensure adequate public transport infrastructure to access services, facilities and employment destinations via more sustainable modes of transport

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives
Heritage	• Reduce the dependency on private car usage • Improve public transport in rural areas • Support strategic highway and transport projects • Ensure communities are digitally connected • Support digital connectivity particularly in more rural parts of the district • Support Huntingdonshire's high streets and retail centres • Support the tourism and leisure sector • Ensure there is good access to facilities such as community, sports, health and leisure facilities • Support the provision of additional community services and facilities • Ensure that everyone has access to education and training • Maintain townscape character • Protect heritage assets and the historic environment and their cultural and architectural significance • Promote the contribution the historic environment makes to the social, economic and cultural aspects of life • Recognise and protect archaeological heritage

A2 - Collecting baseline information

The baseline information has been split into three groupings: climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic. These groupings are used throughout this report. More detail on the baseline information can be found in '4 'A2: Collecting baseline information'.

The below image summarises the key baseline information found:

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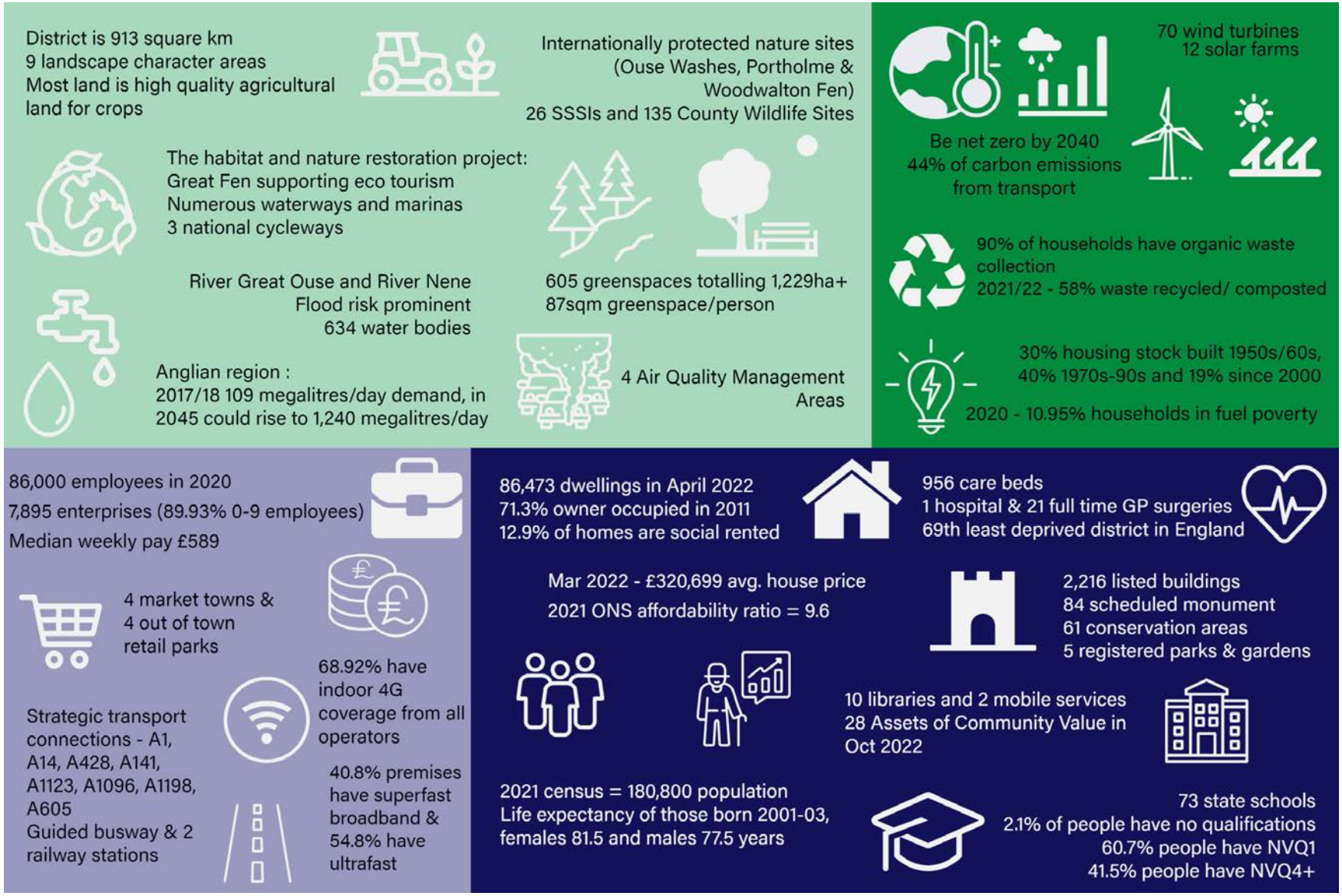

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A3 - Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Following the collection of baseline data, the following key sustainability issues and problems were identified, these have been set out below. Section '5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' also identifies how these issues and problems could shape the SA framework.

Sustainability issues and problems
Carbon Emissions and Targets: • Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties • Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival • CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors • CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district • Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire • Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: • Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use • The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes • Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term • Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution • The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities
Flooding and Water: • The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district • Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure • Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located • Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district • Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all • Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies
Waste and Recycling: • Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres • Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy • Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services • The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings

Sustainability issues and problems
Landscape: • Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices • Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district • The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character • The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding
Land, Soils and Agriculture: • A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land • Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils • There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land
Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment: • There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value • Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices. • Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state • Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats

Sustainability issues and problems
• Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change • Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon
Green Infrastructure and Open Space: • Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds • Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement • Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places • Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard
Pollution: • The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion • Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife • Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport • Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements
Housing: • Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations • Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population

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Sustainability issues and problems
• Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges • Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless • Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall
Population and Health: • The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options. • Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants. • Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers • GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations • Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas
Income and Deprivation: • Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation • Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population

Sustainability issues and problems
Employment and Businesses: • Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district • Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion • Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters • Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district • Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district • Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries • Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth
Travel and Transport: • Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel • A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys • The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys
Digital Infrastructure and Communications: • Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure • Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas

Sustainability issues and problems
• Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage • Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage
Retail and Town Centres: • Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district • Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability • Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods • Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail
Tourism and Leisure: • The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits • Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all • Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities • Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times
Community Services and Facilities: • Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather • Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district • Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities

Sustainability issues and problems
Education: • Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population • Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district • Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth
Heritage: • There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk • Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting • Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation • Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered • Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment

Non-technical Summary

A4 - Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

Following the review of relevant plans, programmes and strategies, the identification of baseline information and sustainability issues and problems, the following SA objectives were considered to be:

Climate emergency

- **SA1** - Contribute to achieving the district's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040
- **SA2** - Improve adaptability and resilience to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency
- **SA3** - Manage Huntingdonshire's water resources in a sustainable manner and reduce the risk all potential sources of flooding to people, properties and the environment

Environmental

- **SA4** - Make efficient use of land by maximising development on previously developed land where this is not of high biodiversity value and minimising that on the best and most versatile agricultural land
- **SA5** - Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible natural green space and enhance the strategic green and blue infrastructure network and links to it
- **SA6** - Promote conservation, enhancement, recovery and connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance
- **SA7** - Conserve and enhance the special qualities and integrity of our landscape and townscape character and the local distinctiveness of settlements
- **SA8** - Contribute to the minimisation and reduction of all forms of pollution

Socio-economic

- **SA9** - All people have access to high quality affordable homes that meet their needs across their lifetime
- **SA10** - Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of social and community services and facilities to promote social inclusion particularly amongst those most at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion
- **SA11**- Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of economic opportunities for all communities
- **SA12** - Reduce the need to travel by car and promote active travel and public transport infrastructure
- **SA13** - Strengthen, modernise and diversify the local economy and promote opportunities for growth of indigenous companies as well as encouraging sustainable inward investment
- **SA14** - Support the successful response of town, local and village retail centres to changing shopping and social trends
- **SA15** - Promote high quality design and placemaking that enables attractive, safe and resilient communities
- **SA16** - Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting(s)

A series of decision aiding questions have been drawn up for each objective. The decision aiding questions have been specifically worded so that the appraisal can be applied to the three different types of policy that will be part of the new Local Plan. This means that there is at least one decision aiding question for strategic, site specific and development management policies for each objective.

The full sustainability appraisal framework, including all the decision aiding questions, can be found in 6 'A4: Developing the SA framework'.

A5 - Consulting on the scope of the sustainability appraisal

The council is required to consult on the scope of the SA with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, often referred to as the SA Bodies. Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into a table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report. This table can be found in Appendix 2: 'Comments from Environmental Bodies'.

The draft scoping report was made available for anyone to make comments between 1 February and 15 March 2023. This was so that the scoping report is as robust as possible and to promote participation in production of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Comments received can be viewed on our consultation portal, a summary of these comments and the changes made to the report can be found in Appendix 3: 'Comments from Public Engagement'.

Stage A will be completed with the publication of this final scoping report.

More information can be found in '7 'A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA'.

Next steps

The methodology contained in this scoping report will be used to complete the sustainability appraisal process as part of the production of the new Local Plan:

- Stages 'B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects' and 'C: Preparing the sustainability appraisal report' will be produced as part of drawing up the draft Local Plan.
- Stage 'D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report' will be started with consultation on the draft Local Plan and will continue through the publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and through the examination process.
- Stage 'E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment' will start with preparation of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and continue through the examination process and will then continue after the adoption of the Local Plan with the Annual Monitoring Report.

More information can be found in '8 'Next Steps'.

1 Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 When drawing up new planning documents the effects they will have on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future are some of the most important things to consider. To be sure that the plan does not cause economic, environmental and social problems, at the heart of the plan production process there is a system of assessment known as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

1.2 SA is a systematic process for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve sustainable development. It is an opportunity to consider ways by which the plan can contribute to improvements in economic, environmental and social conditions, as well as a means of identifying and mitigating any potential adverse effects that the plan might otherwise have.

1.3 The commitment to the achievement of sustainable development is set out at an international and national level.

1.4 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government's view of what constitutes sustainable development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF uses the United Nations definition of sustainable development as *'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. The NPPF also refers to the United Nation's 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development which address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection by 2030. Members of the United Nations (including the United Kingdom) have agreed to pursue these goals. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

1.5 For plan-making this means that:

a. all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;

b. strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

   i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or

   ii. 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.

1.6 Legal requirements for new planning documents require an assessment of the plan's impact on the environment to be undertaken. This process is known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and is required under the SEA Directive. In 2004, the European SEA Directive was transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, (commonly referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations).

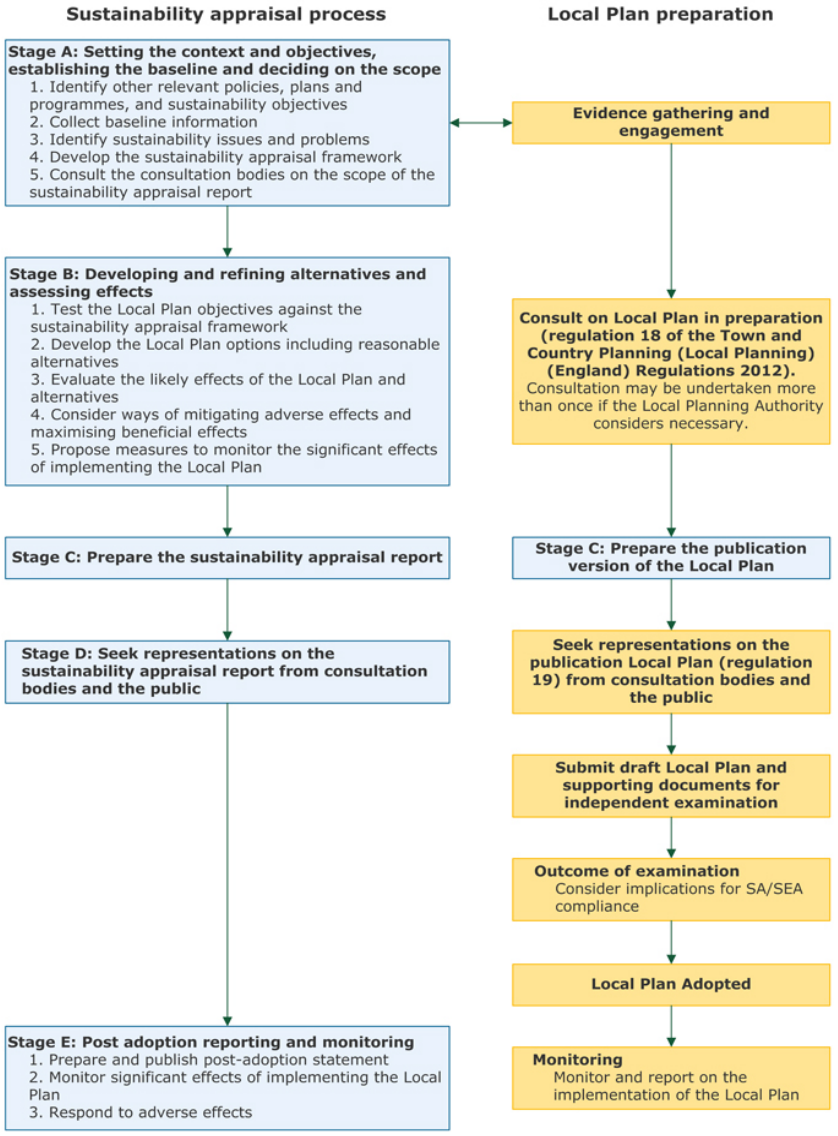
1.7 Furthermore, section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires a local planning authority to carry out an SA of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so '*with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development*'. Sustainability appraisals incorporate the requirements of the 2004 Environmental Assessment Regulations, meaning the SA and SEA are carried out together as part of the preparation of planning documents and are collectively known as the SA process.

1.8 The methodology for the SA process takes into account the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on Plan Making and Sustainability Appraisals and incorporates requirements set out in the 2005 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'. The SA process consists of five stages (A-E), each of the stages are undertaken in tandem with the development of a local plan, as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

1.9 The first stage of producing the plan is a scoping stage, which this report relates to. This is necessary to propose and agree the way that the plan is to be drawn up including the methodology for the SA process and to collect together the necessary information to produce the plan. A thorough understanding of the context of existing plans and policies and of the current baseline situation is needed in order to be able to predict the effects the plan may have, and to identify key issues that will need to be addressed.

1.10 This draft scoping report for the updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan sets out how we intend to draw up the plan, focusing on the SA appraisal stages involved as well as the baseline information and plan context. This scoping report incorporates both the requirements of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Therefore, where reference is made to "SA process" within this document it refers to the combined process of SA and SEA.

Figure 1.1 Flowchart of the SA process alongside Local Plan production



1 Introduction

The new Local Plan

1.11 The Local Plan will set out the planning policy for Huntingdonshire. It will include the strategy for spatial development of Huntingdonshire, the Council's policies for managing development in the district, and sites for achieving the development requirements. Initial engagement will focus on issues facing the district and identifying potential development sites. These will be refined through a series of options exploring the sustainability of potential policies and packages of development sites. Each phase of engagement will be accompanied by appropriate SA materials to explore the sustainability of the options being considered and a draft final SA will support the pre-submission version of the updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

1.12 The updated Huntingdonshire Local Plan and hence updated SA is necessary due to many changes to the context in which the Local Plan sits. These are explained in greater detail in section 3 'A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies' but are summarised here:

- UK's formal withdrawal from the European Union
- Planning and Leveling Up White Papers and Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill
- Increasing emphasis on the impacts of climate change and reducing carbon emissions
- Revised NPPF (and proposed further revisions to come) and new National Model Design Guide and Design Code
- New use classes
- Oxford-Cambridge Arc
- National and sub-regional transport infrastructure projects
- Updates and reviews to neighbouring local authorities' local plans
- Coronavirus pandemic

How the SA will influence the Local Plan

1.13 The Council' considers that SA is an integral part of the plan production process and is a core element of good planning. It is necessary to ensure that development occurring within the district takes the most sustainable form possible in economic, environmental and social terms. The Council has approached the SA in accordance with national guidance and undertaken the process in-house as part of the production of the Local Plan so that the SA and plan production are fully integrated.

Other appraisals and assessments

1.14 There are a range of appraisals and assessments associated with the production of the Local Plan. Where it is considered appropriate these other appraisals and assessments will be combined with the sustainability appraisal or completed at the same time.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.15 Probably the most important other assessment will be the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), sometimes known as Appropriate Assessment. The HRA looks at the impact that the Local Plan is likely to have on European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites). HRA is a two stage process that starts with a screening stage. If significant impacts on European sites cannot be ruled out by the screening stage a more detailed Appropriate Assessment will be required. The Appropriate Assessment will look at ways that significant effects can be avoided or mitigated against. HRA is required to be a separate process to sustainability appraisal.

Equality Impact Assessment

1.16 The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people and how they are affected by policies and practices. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is the method by which the Council can assess the impact of a new strategy, policy or decision.

1.17 The assessment focuses primarily on identifying circumstances where an adverse impact may occur; an adverse impact is is defined as occurring when a strategy, policy or decision has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group or groups. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion and belief
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Health Impact Assessment

1.18 HIA is a process used to evaluate the significance of the potential health effects of a proposed plan. It helps to inform choices about actions to prevent ill-health, promote good health and reduce health inequalities. When applied in the planning system, an HIA puts people at the heart of the process and seeks to address the barriers and opportunities for creating healthy places. The HIA can help identify a set of evidence-based practical recommendations to promote and protect the health of local communities. Guidance from Public Health England indicates that a health impact assessment may be combined with an SA or completed as a standalone document.

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

2.1 The purpose of this chapter is to formulate a methodology for the SA and to complete the necessary steps to enable the Council to draw up the Local Plan and undertake the SA. The Council proposes a methodology for the SA process that is based on the tasks and stages set out in the government's 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

2.2 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations sets out the information that must be provided within the SA:

1. an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
2. the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
3. the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
4. any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
5. the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
6. the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as:
   a. biodiversity,
   b. population,
   c. human health,
   d. fauna,
   e. flora,
   f. soil,
   g. water,
   h. air,
   i. climatic factors,
   j. material assets,
   k. cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage,
   l. landscape, and
   m. the interrelationship between the above factors;
7. the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
8. an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
9. a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;
10. a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

2.3 The issues (a-m) identified are reflected in the topics used throughout this scoping report. To ensure all of these issues are addressed, Table 1 shows which topic addresses each of the Schedule 2 issues. The significant effects on these need to be assessed in terms of short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects.

Table 1 Scoping report topics and the Schedule 2 issues they address

Issues listed in Schedule 2	Scoping report topic
a. biodiversity	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment • Green Infrastructure and Open Space
b. population	• Housing • Population and Health • Income and Deprivation • Employment and Businesses • Retail and Town Centres • Education
c. human health	• Population and Health • Income and Deprivation • Green Infrastructure and Open Space
d. fauna	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
e. flora	• Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
f. soil	• Land, Soils and Agriculture
g. water	• Flooding and Water
h. air	• Pollution
i. climatic factors	• Climate Emissions and Targets • Flooding and Water
j. material assets	• Housing • Travel and Transport
	• Digital Infrastructure and Communications • Community Services and Facilities • Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency • Waste and Recycling
k. cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	• Heritage
l. landscape	• Landscape
m. the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in (a) to (l)	• Many of these topics overlap, where they do so this has been reflected in the baseline commentary for the topic(s).

2.4 Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations sets out the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the issues referred to in Schedule 2 (a-m):

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,
- the cumulative nature of the effects,
- the transboundary nature of the effects,
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,
  - intensive land-use,
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status

2.5 In Tables 2 and 3, each SA stage and its tasks are set out with the aspects that fulfil the requirements of the SEA Regulations identified in brackets after the stage or task title.

2.6 The stages and tasks covered by this scoping report are set out below (Stage A) in Table 2. Tasks A1 to A4 are not intended to be completed in a purely linear process as they will inform each other. The iterative nature of the SA process is summarised in the Figure 2.1 from the government's 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

2.7 Stages B to E in the SA/SEA process, set out below in Table 3, will be carried out as part of the plan production process. Stage E will lead to indicators that will be reported on in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) as part of the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Local Plan. More information on when stages B to E will be carried out can be found in 'Next Steps' part of this report.

2.8 Tasks B2, B3, B4 and B5 are not intended to be completed in a purely linear process as they will inform each other. Stage E will help considerations of whether or not to review the plan and will feed into future sustainability appraisal processes for future plans. This is also reflected in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 SA tasks process flow chart

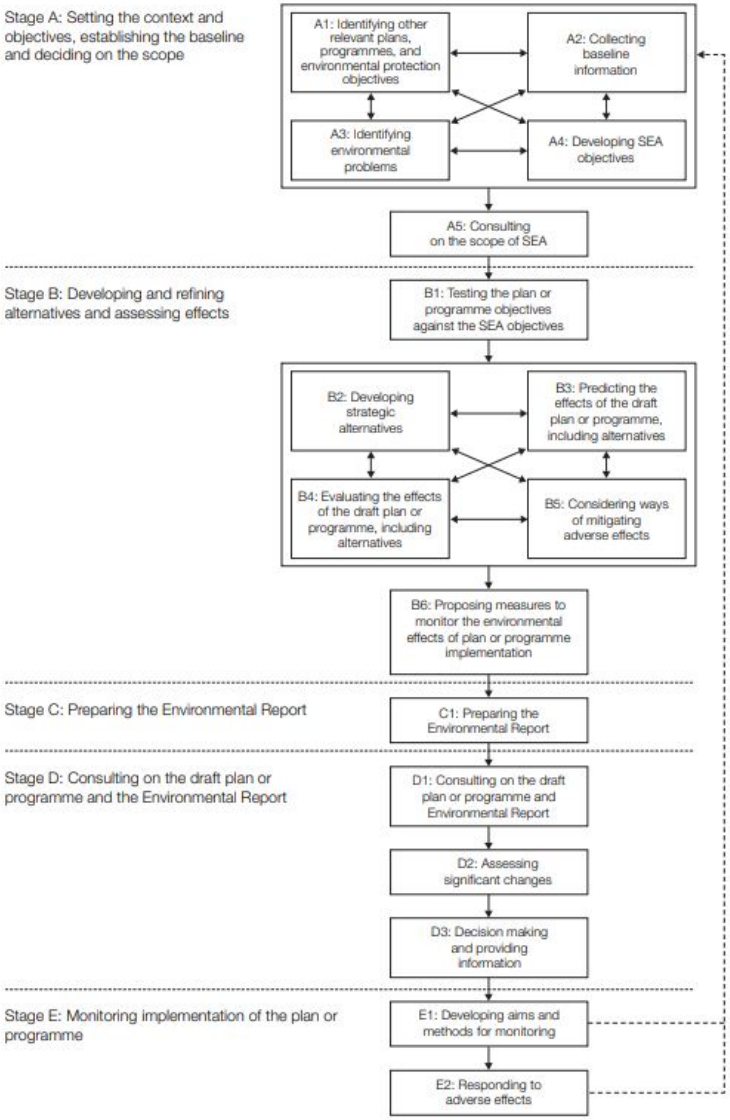


Table 2 Stage A tasks in the SA/SEA process

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
A1: Identifying relevant plans and programmes' (Schedule 2, (1) and (5)) • The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.
A2: Collecting baseline information' (Schedule 2, (2) and (3)) • The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' (Schedule 2, (4) and Schedule 1, (1)) • The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring
A4: Developing the SA framework' (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA' (Part 3(5)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

2 Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

Table 3 Stages B to E in the SA/ SEA process

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SA framework (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to identify potential synergies or inconsistencies between the objectives of the plan and the SA objectives.
B2: Developing plan options (Part 3(12) and Schedule 2, (8)) • The purpose of this task is to develop and refine options.
B3: Predicting the effects of the plan and alternatives (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to predict the significant environmental effects of the plan and alternatives.
B4: Evaluating the effects of the plan and alternatives (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to evaluate the predicted effects of the plan and alternatives in order to assist in the refinement of the plan.
B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects (Schedule 2, (7)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that adverse effects are identified and potential mitigation measures are considered.
B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the plan (Schedule 2, (9)) • The purpose of this task is to detail the means by which the environmental performance of the plan can be assessed.
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
C1: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report (Part 3(12) and Schedule 2, (6) to (10)) • The purpose of this task is to present the predicted effects of the plan, including alternatives, in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision makers.
Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal Report
D1: Public participation on the draft plan and the Sustainability Appraisal report (Part 3(13)) • The purpose of this task is to give the public and Consultation Bodies an opportunity to express their opinions on the findings of the Environmental Report and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the plan. To gather more information through the opinions and concerns of the public.
D2: Appraising significant changes (Schedule 2, (6)) • The purpose of this task is to ensure that the environmental implications of any significant changes to the draft plan are assessed and taken into account.
D3: Making decisions and providing information (Part 4(16)) • The purpose of this task is to provide information on how the Sustainability Appraisal Report and consultees' opinions were taken into account in deciding the final format of the plan to be adopted.
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan on the environment
E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring (Part 4(17)) • The purpose of this task is to track the environmental effects of the plan to show whether they are as predicted; to help identify any adverse effects.
E2: Responding to adverse effects (Part 4(17)) • The purpose of this task is to prepare for appropriate responses where adverse effects are identified.

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E
• **A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives** • A2: Collecting baseline information • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • A4: Developing the SA framework • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA				

3.1 The purpose of this task is to establish how the plan is affected by outside factors, to suggest ideas for how any constraints can be addressed, and to help identify environmental protection objectives.

3.2 For the production of the Local Plan to be effective, a wide range of plans, programmes and strategies need to be taken into account. Such plans, programmes and strategies contain objectives and specific policy requirements that need to be considered. Identifying and reviewing these documents is an important element of the SA process, as it can help to shape the objectives against which emerging policies should be appraised, as well as pointing to particular issues and problems that should be tackled.

3.3 This review used the previously produced scoping report for the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 as a starting point but expanded to look at plans, programmes and strategies that could affect the new Local Plan. The assessment of relevant plans, programmes and strategies were also informed by best practice work of other local authorities and advice from council officers.

Changing contexts

3.4 Since the adoption of the Local Plan to 2036, the UK formally left the EU, however many of the European legislation and obligations had already or are now transposed into UK law.

3.5 There are significant changes happening at a national level. Firstly, in August 2020, the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the Planning for the Future White Paper with proposals for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. 44,000 responses were received during the consultation on the White Paper. As of October 2022, the Government are yet to publish their response but have committed to doing so before introducing any Planning Bill to Parliament.

3.6 In February 2022, the now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG) published the Levelling Up White Paper. It sets out 12 new missions to level up by 2030 across four broad areas: boosting productivity and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging; spreading opportunities and improving public services, especially in those areas where they are weakest; restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost; and, empowering local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill followed the White Paper in May 2022 and as of October 2022, is in the committee stages of the House of Commons.

3.7 On a global scale, climate change and its impacts are high on the agenda, as demonstrated at COP26 and the signing of new agreements for nations to cut down dramatically their carbon emissions and create a more resilient future. The Government has committed to being net zero emissions by 2050. Therefore, there is an increasing emphasis on climate change and the issues this gives rise to.

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

3.8 Planning and the built environment plays a significant part in contributing to a net zero carbon future as it currently accounts for around 25% of the UK's total carbon footprint [(1)] and as at December 2021 heating and powering homes accounts for some 40% of the UK's total energy use [(2)]. This has been recognised by the Committee on Climate Change which has stated that achieving the UK's net zero target will require the full decarbonisation of buildings by 2050. To assist in this goal, the Future Building Standards are expected to start from 2025 and will produce highly efficient new non-domestic buildings which use low-carbon heat and have the best fabric standards possible. By building future buildings to this standard, the Government anticipates that no further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to enable these buildings to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise. In the interim, uplifts to Part L (Conservation of fuel and power) and F (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations and the introduction of Part O(Overheating) and Part S (Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles) were introduced in June 2022. These uplifts will see a 30% cut on emissions from new homes, as well as a 27% cut on new buildings including offices and shops. However, 80% of buildings by 2050 have already been built, therefore, there is still a need for retrofitting existing buildings as well as constructing buildings to higher energy efficiency standards. The resilience of development is also important to enable adaption to changing climate and extreme climatic conditions such as flooding and overheating.

3.9 A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in July 2021. The revisions increased the focus on design quality with the language used firmer on protecting and enhancing the environment and promoting a sustainable pattern of development. Guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions has been updated to reflect changes to permitted development rights creating new homes from non-residential properties, with additional emphasis on restricting the use of Article 4 Directions to the 'smallest possible geographical area.'

3.10 There is also increased emphasis on supporting design that is locally specific. This ties in with the introduction of the Government's National Model Design Guide and Design Code. The National Model Design Code forms part of the government's planning practice guidance and expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area. This is intended to drive up design quality and to contribute to the Government's ambition of planning for 'beautiful places'. There is also a growing emphasis on use of digital tools and digital forms of communicating information including interactive mapping and interactive tools to help people to more readily engage with the planning process.

3.11 Substantial amendments to the use classes came into force on 1 September 2020 under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. These introduced Class E which encompasses commercial, business and services. There is also a new F1 and F2 class which applies to learning and non-residential institutions and local community use respectively.

3.12 In February 2021, a Spatial Framework for the Ox Cam Arc area was published setting out the rationale and timelines to deliver the Spatial Framework. This was proposed as a long-term strategic plan to help coordinate the infrastructure, environment and new developments in the area. A consultation on creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc was launched in July 2021 alongside a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the data used within it has been placed into an interactive map. No government response has been published as of October 2022 and there is uncertainty over the future of any government led spatial framework for the Arc due to its lack of acknowledgement in the Levelling Up White Paper and Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

1 New report confirms that net zero is achievable for the built environment sector by 2050, but only with urgent government action - UKGBC - UK Green Building Council
2 New homes to produce nearly a third less carbon - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies 3

3.13 At a local and sub-regional level, several neighbouring local authorities have commenced an update to their Local Plans. Under the Duty to Cooperate, Huntingdonshire are working with neighbouring authorities to understand the cross boundary effects and strategic issues and opportunities that may arise. The Council is also working with neighbouring authorities and pubic bodies including National Highways on strategic transport infrastructure projects such as the upgrading the A428 and East West Rail which are regarded as playing a significant part of the growth agenda of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

3.14 The coronavirus pandemic had significant short term impacts on the economy, people's working and travel patterns, demand levels for publicly accessible open space and social and community relationships. The long terms impacts are still uncertain and locally informed evidence will be needed to ascertain what form and scale he long term changes take in Huntingdonshire.

3.15 The policy context has therefore been comprehensively reviewed to take these changes into account, and to remove from the list those policies that are outdated or less central to the development of the new Local Plan.

Relevant plans, programmes and strategies

3.16 Relevant plans, programmes and strategies were reviewed at an international, national, regional and sub-regional/county/local level. A detailed review of these documents can be found in Appendix 1: 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. The appendix is split into international, national, regional, sub-regional, county and local level tables. The key aims, objectives, and targets/ indicators for each plan, programme and strategy are identified alongside how they will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and what baseline topic they relate to.

3.17 In Appendix 1 there is a list of relevant EU Directives and the UK legislation that transposes their requirements. As these EU Directives have been transposed into UK law, they have not been added to the list of plans, programmes and strategies to save duplication. Instead, the UK legislation have been included with an explanation of their key aims, objectives and targets/ indicators and implications for the Local Plan within Table 4 and Appendix 1.

3.18 A summary of the findings of the detailed review are shown in Table 4, these have been split into climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic groupings consistent with those used later in the baseline research. Table 4 also identifies the plans, programmes and strategies that are procedural (requirements that the Local Plan and its supporting evidence must do) and those that are overarching (cross over all groupings).

3.19 The plans, programmes and strategies with an asterisk (*) are documents which were produced to support the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the most recent versions of these documents at the time this scoping report was prepared.

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Table 4 Key aims, messages and objectives from the review of relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Procedural	• The Local Plan and its proposals are required to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal (including an Environmental Impact Assessment) • The Local Plan must undergo a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) • The Local Plan and its proposals must be assessed for their impact on protected characteristics through an Equality Impact Assessment • Evidence used to shape the Local Plan must be made publicly available • Consultation will be undertaken throughout the plan making process and recorded in a Statement of Consultation document	• Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) • Localism Act 2011 • Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended) • Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) • The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) • Human Rights Act 1998 • Equality Act 2010 • Environmental Information Regulations 2004 • Aarhus Convention 1998 • Freedom of Information Act 2000 • Community Transition Strategy 2021-2023 (2021)
Overarching	• The Local Plan must promote all strands of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social) in a holistic way • Sustainability is an underlying principle of the planning system • Consider the economic, environmental and social ambitions of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc • Incorporate where possible the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's and Huntingdonshire District Council's corporate aims and objectives • Development needs to be well designed and where people want to live and work	• National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) • National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) • United Nations: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) • Planning for the Future White Paper (2020) • Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill and Policy Paper (2022) • Planning for sustainable growth in the Ox-Cam Arc: spatial framework (2021), Local Natural Capital Plan and Ox-Cam Integrated Water Management Framework • Huntingdonshire Council Corporate Plan and monitoring reports • Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (May 2019) and Annual Monitoring Reports • Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Updated Costs 2019/20 • Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Infrastructure Schedule (June 2017) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Addendum (December 2017)* • Manual for Streets (2007) • National Model Design Guide and Design Code (2021) • Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) & Compatibility Statement (2021) • Made Neighbourhood Plans within Huntingdonshire • The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies 3

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
		• Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal (2017) • Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (2022)
Climate change: Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling	• The Local Plan must include policies on climate change • The UK Government has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050, the District Council has set a target of reaching net zero carbon by 2040 • Plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change • Promote opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation including community led generation • Improve the energy performance of buildings to reduce energy consumption and reduce costs to residents • Support retrofitting of older and less energy efficient housing stock and non-residential buildings • Integrate the 'waste hierarchy' of reduce waste and increase the amount which is re-used and recycled to meet national and local targets • Promote opportunities to create a circular economy by maximising the reuse of materials, particularly in construction • Ensure sustainable waste management practices are in place	• United Nations Climate Change Conference: Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) • United Nations: Paris Agreement (2015) • UKCP18 Climate Projections (2018) • Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) • Planning and Energy Act 2008 • Planning Act 2008 (as amended) • Building Regulations 2010 (as amended) • The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 • Future Buildings Standard - Government consultation response (2020) • British Energy Security Strategy (2022) • Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021) • Heat and buildings strategy (2021) • Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (2020) • Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021) • The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future (2017) • Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (2021) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021) • Cambridgeshire Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2020 • Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework – Final Report: Finance, Delivery and Engagement (2012) • Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan (2020) • Huntingdonshire Environment Principles (2021) • Huntingdonshire's Climate Strategy and Action Plan • Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014) • Flood and Water Management Act 2010 • The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 • Water Act 2014 • East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans (2014)

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
		• Anglian River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (2015) • Anglian Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2020-2045 • Anglian Water's Long Term Water Recycling Plan (WRLTP) • Cambridge Water Resource Management Plan 2020-2045 • Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (forthcoming in May 2023) • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plans • Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017) • Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027 (2022) • Surface Water Planning Guidance (2021) • Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Cambridgeshire 2021-2027 (2022) • Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy (2017) • Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy (2017) • Future Fens Integrated Adaptation manifesto (Nov 2021) and Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report (2020) • Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and appendices A-G (2017)* • Stage 2: Detailed Water Cycle Study Update (2014)* • National Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy for England (2021) • Surface Water Management Plan for Cambridgeshire (2014) • The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (2017) • Water resources strategy Regional action plan for the Anglian Region (2009) • Emerging Water Resources East Regional Plan (January 2022) • Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 • Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended) • National Planning Policy for Waste (2014) • Waste Management Plan for England 2021 (2021) • Huntingdonshire's Litter Minimisation Strategy 2021-2025 and action plan (2020)
Environmental: Landscape Land, Soils and Agriculture	• Protect and enhance the various landscapes and their key characteristics • Maintain and enhance landscape and townscape character • Promote landscape protection, management and planning	• Environment Act 2021 • A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) • Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) • Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) • Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991) • Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014)

A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies 3

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space Pollution	• Conserve ad where possible enhance the best and most versatile agricultural land • Support sustainable agricultural practices • Conserve and restore peatland • Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land • Protect and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora, including international, national and local designated sites • Policies and proposals must seek a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain • Conserve existing tree cover and support additional tree planting • Support access to the countryside and the public rights of way network • Protect and enhance green infrastructure • Ensure that all residents have access to open and green space • Improve the quality and quantity of open spaces and accessibility to these spaces • Minimise the damage of flooding to people and property • Incorporate flood resilient and resistant design into new builds where there is a risk of flooding from any source • Ensure there is sufficient water capacity to service growth • Promote the development of water efficient homes and non-residential buildings • Minimise water pollution to increase the ecology quality of rivers and groundwater • Reduce the concentration of air pollutants and keep levels of pollutants below maximum levels	• European Landscape Convention • Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2020-2030) and 10 year Action Plan • Great Fen Master Plan 2010 and Fens for the Future Strategic Plan (2012) • England Peat Action Plan (2021) • Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) • The UK Biodiversity Action Plan and UK Biodiversity Action Plan • The Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) (2021) • Mapping natural capital and opportunities for habitat creation in Cambridgeshire (2019) • Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050' • Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan (2020) • The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 • Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2016) • Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) • The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 • Clean Air Strategy 2019 • Air Quality Annual Status Report for the year 2021 • Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in UK (2017) • Joint Air Quality Action Plan for the Cambridgeshire Growth Area (2009) • Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2016 • The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 • Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2020) • Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (2016)* • Natural England Green Infrastructure standards (2023) • Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2020-2030 & 10 year action plan (2020) • PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 (2019) • Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (2009) • Sports England Strategic outcomes planning and leisure delivery guidance (2021)

3 A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
Socio-economic: Housing Population and Health Income and Deprivation Employment and Business Travel and Transport Digital Infrastructure and Communications Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Community Services and Facilities Education Heritage	• Identify land that will meet the housing needs of the district • Provide a variety of housing types, mix and tenures across the district • Tackle affordability issues • Provide homes that meet people's needs or are capable of being adapted in the future to accommodate changing needs • Ensure the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met • Provide care homes, accommodation and health facilities to meet the needs of the elderly or those with specific medical needs in accessible locations • Support self and custom build housing • Promote high quality design for housing products that reflect local character and are integrated into the surrounding community • Improve health and well-being • Enhance quality and quantity of indoors and outdoors sports facilities • Tackle inequalities to raise quality of life • Promote social inclusion • Promote Huntingdonshire's contribution to the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy • Support existing businesses • Enhance employment opportunities for all • Support small and medium sized businesses to grow and thrive within the district • Ensure adequate public transport infrastructure to access services, facilities and employment destinations via more sustainable modes of transport • Reduce the dependency on private car usage • Improve public transport in rural areas • Support strategic highway and transport projects • Ensure communities are digitally connected	• Planning Act 2008 (as amended) • Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 • Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 • Housing and Planning Act 2016 • Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) • Levelling-Up White Paper and Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill (2022) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Housing Strategy (2018) • Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020-2025 (2020) • Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk: Housing Needs of Specific Groups (2021) • Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and data sets • Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2024 (2020) • Children and Families Act 2014 • Childcare Act 2016 • Education Act 1996 • Education and Inspections Act 2006 • Education and Skills Act 2008 • Planning for Schools Development: Statement (2011) • Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 • Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth (2021) • Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (2016)* • The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon future (2017) • Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (2018) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Economic Recovery Strategy (2021) • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy (2019) • Huntingdonshire's Place Strategy • Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 and Invest in Huntingdonshire webpage • Huntingdonshire Market Town's Economic Prospectuses for Growth and emerging Masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey • St Neots Future High Streets Fund • Huntingdonshire Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (2017)*

A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies 3

Grouping	Key aims, messages and objectives that will shape the Huntingdonshire Local Plan	Plans, Programmes and Strategies
	• Support digital connectivity particularly in more rural parts of the district • Support Huntingdonshire's high streets and retail centres • Support the tourism and leisure sector • Ensure there is good access to facilities such as community, sports, health and leisure facilities • Support the provision of additional community services and facilities • Ensure that everyone has access to education and training • Maintain townscape character • Protect heritage assets and the historic environment and their cultural and architectural significance • Promote the contribution the historic environment makes to the social, economic and cultural aspects of life • Recognise and protect archaeological heritage	• Employment Land Study and appendices 1-6 (2014)* • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025 (2021) • The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport Plan (2020) • Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021) • Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy (2019) • Future of Transport: Rural Strategy – call for evidence responses (2021) • A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road improvement scheme DCO • A47 North Tuddenham to Easton improvement scheme DCO • Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report and Development Scenario Comparative Assessment (May 2017), and Development Scenario Addendum (Dec 2017)* • Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy (2023) and Active Travel Strategy (2023) • Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule • Huntingdonshire Conservation Area Character Statements and Assessments and Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record • Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) • European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) (Granada Convention) • Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) • The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) • The Heritage Statement (2017) • Valletta Convention (European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage) 1992

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E
• A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives • **A2: Collecting baseline information** • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • A4: Developing the SA framework • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA				

4.1 The purpose of this task is to provide an evidence base for environmental impacts, prediction of what will happen without the plan as well as what effects it could have, monitoring and to help in the development of SA objectives.

4.2 Baseline information provides the starting point for predicting and monitoring effects of plans as well as what is likely to happen without the plan and helps to identify problems and potential solutions for dealing with them. Sufficient information about the current and likely states of the plan area is required to allow the plan's effect to be accurately predicted. Collection of baseline data also enables the identification of key sustainability issues affecting the district which are useful in developing SA objectives.

4.3 The following section sets out baseline information in topics which correspond with the SEA topics identified as set out in Table 1. These topics have been grouped into climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic characteristics.

Data Limitations

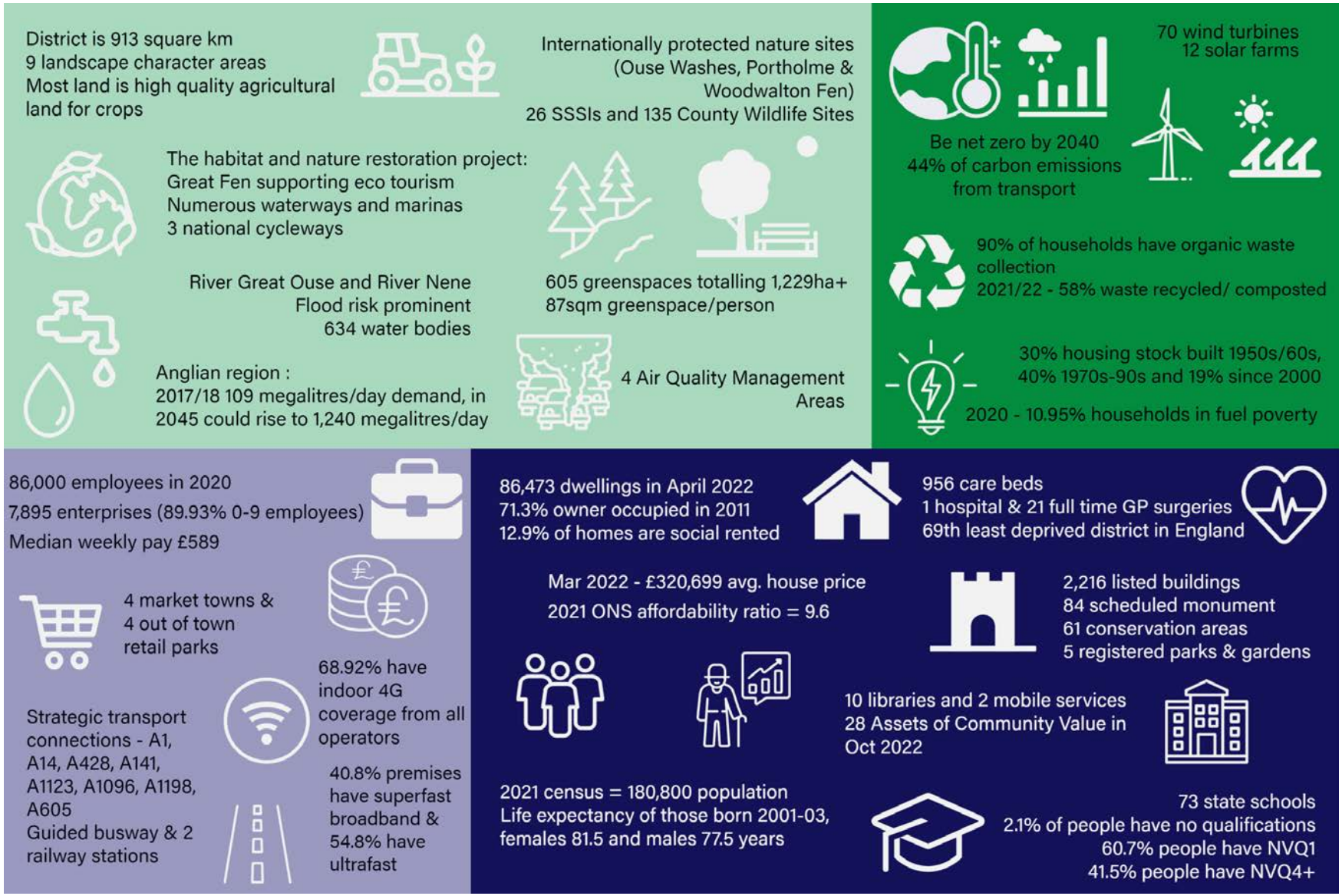
4.4 Much of the data presented is either collected by external bodies or collected in partnership between them and the District Council. Therefore the Council has limited control over the temporal and spatial scope of the data collected and whether data collection methods may change in the future. These factors may limit the ability to make reliable comparisons.

4.5 There are some gaps in the data collected as not all information is available at the local level for recent time periods. This will be added to as the plan production process and as future Annual Monitoring Reports are published. A significant new source of data that will become available is the 2021 Census. Other sources will become available during the plan production process and so in the future, it may be necessary to alter the SA framework depending on the baseline information available at the time.

Key information

4.6 A summary of the key information found during the collecting of baseline information are provided below:

A2: Collecting baseline information 4



4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Climate Emergency

Carbon Emissions and Targets

4.7 Greenhouse gas emissions are the largest single driver of climate change. The European Commission states that carbon dioxide (CO_2) produced by human activities is the largest contributor to global warming. By 2020, its concentration in the atmosphere had risen to 48% above its pre-industrial level before 1750. Other greenhouse gases are emitted by human activity in smaller quantities. Methane is a more powerful greenhouse gas than CO_2 but has a shorter atmospheric lifetime. Nitrous oxide, like CO_2, is a long-lived greenhouse gas that accumulates in the atmosphere over decades to centuries. The main anthropogenic causes for increases in emissions are burning coal, gas and oil, deforestation, increasing livestock farming, increased use of nitrogen based fertilisers and emissions of flurinated gases. Natural causes, such as changes in solar radiation or volcanic activity are estimated to have contributed less than plus or minus 0.1°C to total warming between 1890 and 2010.

4.8 2011-2020 was the warmest decade recorded, with global average temperature reaching 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2019. Anthropogenic global warming is presently increasing at a rate of 0.2°C per decade. The primary aim of the Paris Agreement on climate change is to keep the increase in the global temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. An increase of 2°C compared to the temperature in pre-industrial times is associated with serious negative impacts to the natural environment and human health and wellbeing, including a much higher risk that dangerous and possibly catastrophic changes in the global environment will occur.

4.9 The UK government has committed to the target of being net zero carbon by the year 2050 compared to the 1990 baseline. The UK government has also made the commitment to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels as part of its sixth carbon budget.

4.10 Strong and sustained reductions in emissions of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change. Some benefits such as improved air quality would be seen in the short term, however, the IPCC Working Group I report, Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis notes that it would take 20-30 years to see global temperatures stabilise. The report finds that unless there are immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting warming to close to 1.5°C or even 2°C will be beyond reach, making the targets of the Paris Agreement unachievable.

4.11 In December 2021, Huntingdonshire District Council adopted the aspiration of a net carbon zero Huntingdonshire by 2040, complemented by a series of environmental principles based on those agreed by authorities across the OxCam Arc. Our environmental principles are:

- to target net-zero carbon at a district level by 2040
- to protect, enhance and restore existing nature areas (green spaces) and create new ones (where it is viable to do so)
- to pursue the ambitions of 'A Green Future: Our 25-year Plan to Improve the Environment' and that new development should be designed with a view to minimising and mitigating the effects of climate change
- to ensure existing and new communities see real benefits in their well-being from living in Huntingdonshire
- to use natural resources wisely.

4.12 The Meteorological Office has prepared climate projections and visualisations based on 12km square grids across the UK, searchable by postcode. A postcode was selected to represent the central point of Huntingdonshire (see Table 5). The data is published in collaboration with the BBC and can be found at Climate projections and visualisations by postcode. This projects changes in temperatures and rainfall by summer and winter dependent on global warming being restrained to an increase of 2°C or being 4°C. [3]

3 The modelled projections in this data do not represent a specific time period. Instead, they show what conditions could be like in these two different levels of global warming.

Table 5 Predicted impacts of climate change in Huntingdonshire

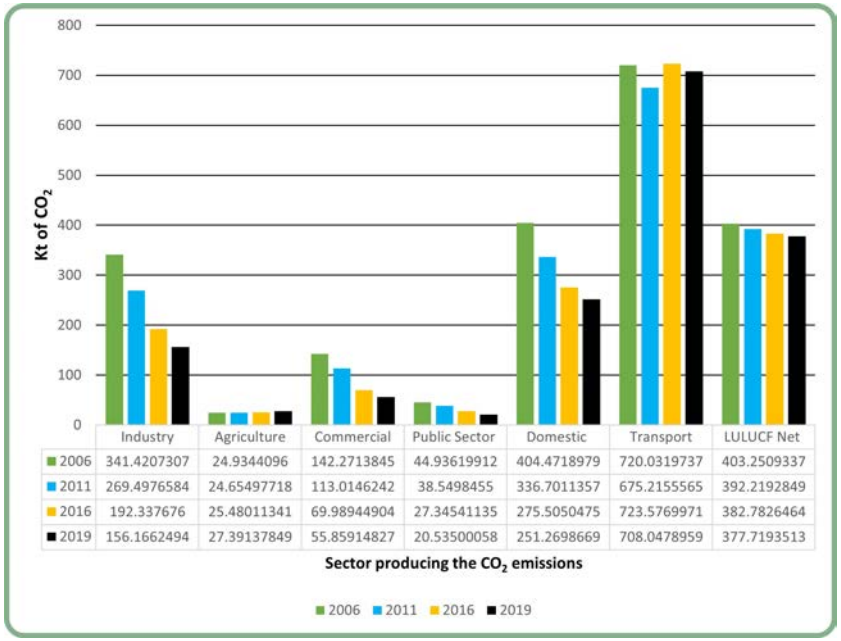
Area of change	Season	Current (1991-2019)	2°C global warming	4°C global warming
Hottest day	Summer	37.2°C	38.9°C	43°C
	Winter	18.5°C	19°C	20.2°C
Days reaching above 25°C per month	Summer	5	10	19
Rainy days	Summer	8	8	8
	Winter	9	9	9
Wettest day	Summer	61 mm of rain	56 mm of rain	60 mm of rain
	Winter	28 mm of rain	38 mm of rain	40 mm of rain

4.13 The Met Office climate projections for the UK indicate significant temperature rises in the decades ahead for both winter and summer, with the greatest increases in the already warmer southern parts of the UK. Extreme weather could become more frequent and intense. Although the number of rainy days is predicted to remain the same the amount of rainfall on the wettest winter days may increase by 41% if global warming reaches 4°C.

4.14 The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)annual statistics on territorial carbon dioxide emissions by local authority show CO_2 emissions annually since 2005 by sector although the figures exclude aviation, shipping and military transport for which there is no obvious basis for allocation to local areas. The UK total CO_2 emissions have declined from 537,128 Kt in 2005 to 344,511 Kt in 2019, a fall of nearly a third.

Transport makes up the single largest generator of this at 36% of all UK CO_2 emissions in 2019. Huntingdonshire's share of these emissions has declined from 2,100 Kt in 2005 to 1,597 Kt in 2019. Transport comprises a particularly high proportion of the district's CO_2 emissions at 44% of the 2019 total reflecting the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast mainline railways running through the district. Figure 4.1 below shows the levels and changing patterns of CO_2 emissions at selected years between 2005 and 2019 [4]. BEIS also publish data reflecting emissions which are within the scope of influence of local authorities which excludes very large industrial sites, railways, motorways and land use. When these figures are considered, the emissions from transport in 2019 fell from 708 Kt to 544 Kt reflecting the high volume of long distance road and rail transport which traverses Huntingdonshire.

Figure 4.1 Carbon dioxide emissions by category

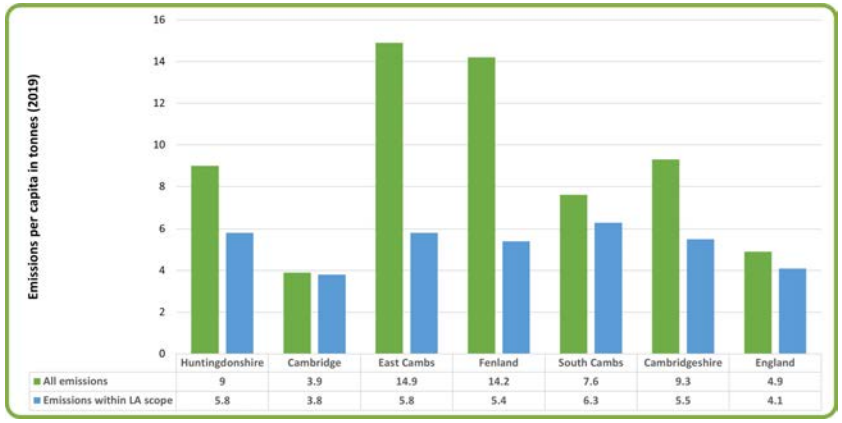


4 LULUCF stands for land use, land use change and forestry and is measured as net emissions as some elements of this sector absorb more CO_2 than they emit.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.15 Figure 4.2 below shows the per capita CO_2 emissions in 2019 for each local authority within Cambridgeshire and for England as a whole to set Huntingdonshire's levels into perspective. This contains both the total territorial emissions data and that for emissions which are within the scope of the local authority. It shows the significant differences that arise from removing transport and land use, land use change and forestry. When all emissions are taken into account Huntingdonshire's outputs per capita are slightly below the average for Cambridgeshire, however they are some 80% higher than the per capita average for England. When only emissions which fall within the scope of local authorities are taken into account the picture is significantly different. Huntingdonshire's emissions are reduced to 64% of the former figure and East Cambridgeshire and Fenland similarly see significant decreases. Comparing to the average per capita for England also changes with Huntingdonshire sitting some 40% above the average, in part reflecting its semi-rural nature.

Figure 4.2 Comparative per capita carbon dioxide emissions, 2019



4.16 The Climate Change Commission's report 'Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget' (2020) stated in their key recommendations that:

'More than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level. Many of these decisions depend on having supporting infrastructure and systems in place. Local authorities have powers or influence over roughly a third of emissions in their local areas.'

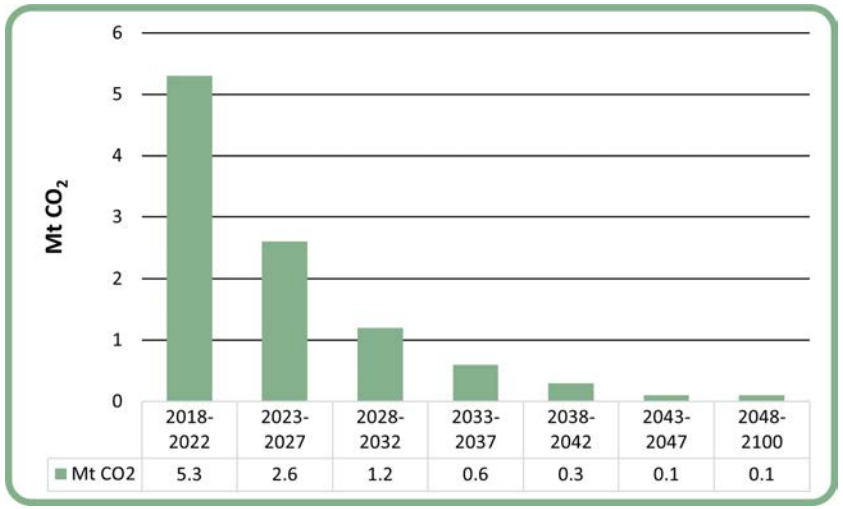
4.17 Key elements which can be influenced at the local authority level include: using planning powers to shape future buildings and local transport infrastructure, enforcement of building regulations to ensure policies setting out more ambitious targets are delivered in new buildings when built, managing risks such as flooding, and protecting the natural environment, wildlife and heritage.

4.18 The Tyndall Centre of the University of Manchester has prepared reports setting climate commitments for all local authorities in England which quantify the implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement for each authority's area. The report for Huntingdonshire was prepared in October 2021. It presents climate change targets for the district derived from commitments enshrined in the Paris Agreement setting out the district's contribution to achieving national targets based on translating the global temperature target of 'well below 2°C' and pursuing 1.5°C as a preferable maximum increase over pre-industrial global temperatures. The Tyndall Report gives the following key recommendations for Huntingdonshire:

1. To stay within a maximum cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 7.6 million tonnes (Mt CO_2) for the period of 2020 to 2100. At 2017 CO_2 emission levels, Huntingdonshire would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.
2. To initiate an immediate programme of CO_2 mitigation to deliver cuts in emissions averaging a minimum of -14.1% per year to deliver a Paris aligned carbon budget. These annual reductions in emissions require national and local action, and could be part of a wider collaboration with other local authorities.
3. To reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2040. This provides an indicative CO_2 reduction pathway that stays within the recommended maximum carbon budget of 7.6 Mt CO_2. At 2040 just 5% of the budget remains.

4.19 The carbon budgets set out in the report apply only to CO_2 emissions from the energy system. The report notes that although all greenhouse gas emissions such as methane affect the rate of climate change long term warming is mainly driven by CO_2 emissions; this approach ensures consistency with the global carbon budgets in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on 1.5°C. Figure 4.3 below sets out the carbon budget ascribed to Huntingdonshire by the Tyndall Centre with data including 2018 and 2019 in addition to the budget set out in 1 above giving a total of 10.2 Mt CO_2. This shows the maximum cumulative CO_2 amount consistent with the district's fair contribution to the Paris Agreement and meeting the budget must not rely on carbon offsets.

Figure 4.3 Recommended Carbon Budget 2018 to 2100



Key sustainability issues and problems

- Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties
- Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival
- CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors
- CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district
- Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire
- Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Emission levels are likely to continue to fall due to enhanced national policy and technological improvements but the Local Plan offers opportunities to accelerate reductions locally
- New or renovated buildings may be less resilient to the impacts of climate change

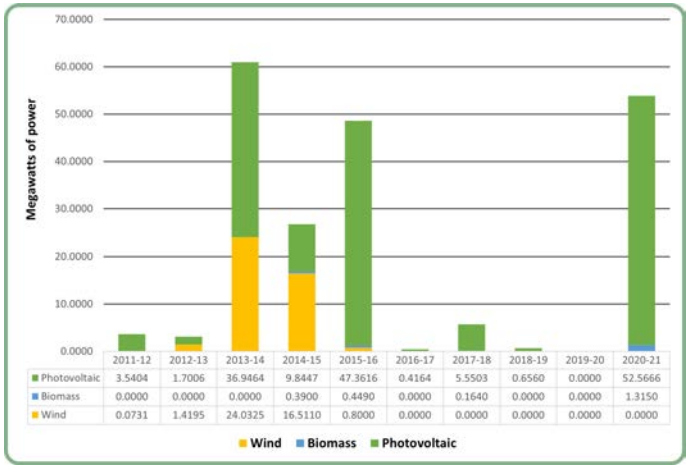
4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

4.20 In order to reach global climate and sustainable energy goals a dramatic acceleration is needed in the transition to clean, sustainable energy. Renewable energy also provides energy security to essential infrastructure. Data from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for 2020 details electricity consumption levels for Huntingdonshire of 324.3 GWh for all domestic use and 486.6 GWH for non-domestic use. Equivalent BEIS data for gas consumption in 2020 details gas consumption levels at 877.5 GWh for all domestic use and 235.1 GWh for non-domestic use.

4.21 Renewable energy within Huntingdonshire is provided through wind power, photovoltaic panels (solar power) and a small amount of biomass power generation. Figure 4.4 shows the proportion of each power source installed from 2011/12 to 2020/21. This illustrates the shift from installation of wind turbines in the early part of the decade to the dominance of photovoltaic panels as the main source of renewable energy generation within the district. The capacity figures of installations show the high discrepancy between renewable capacity and current levels of energy demand.

Figure 4.4 New renewable energy installations by type 2011 to 2021



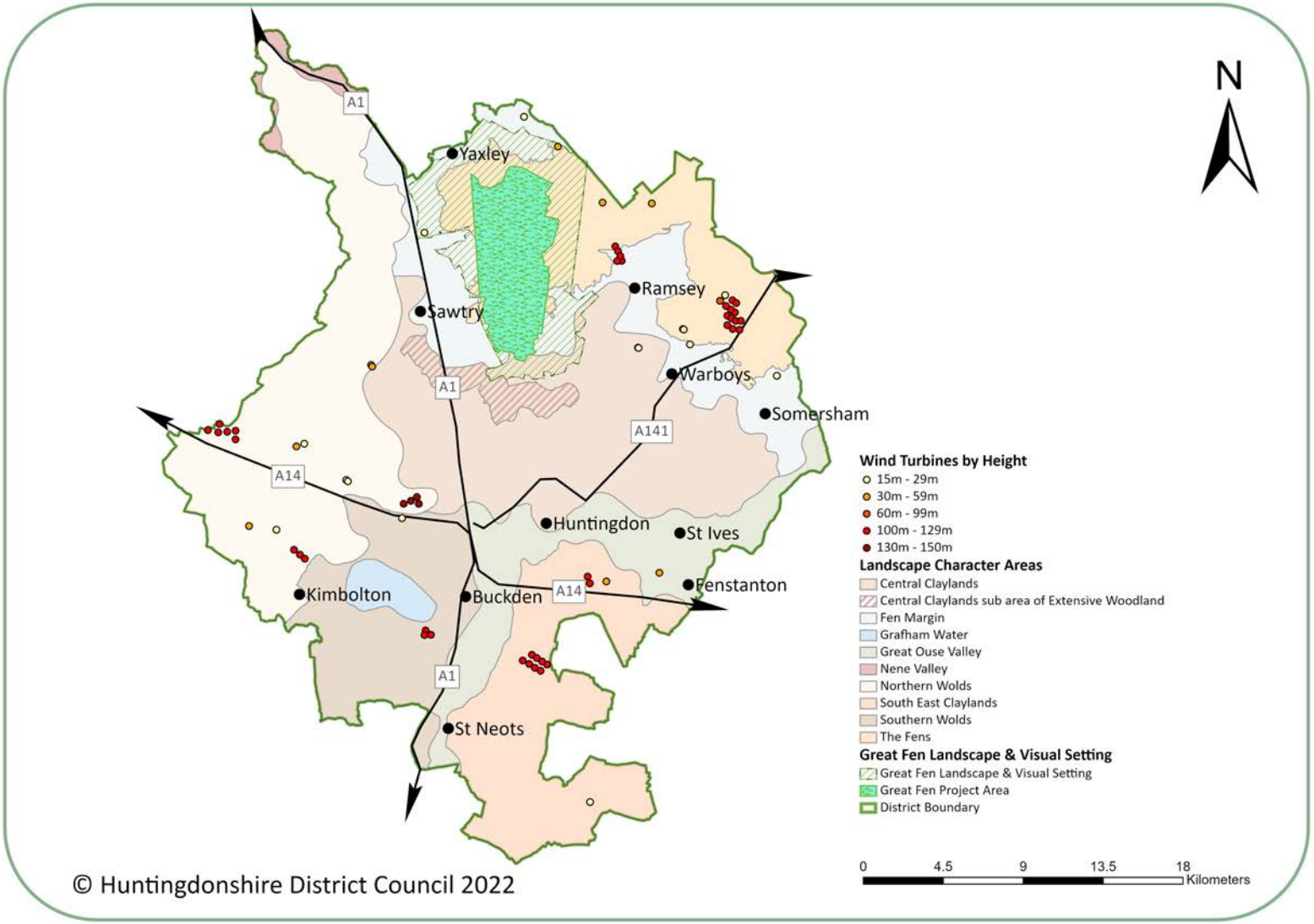
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Photovoltaic	3.5404	1.7006	36.9464	9.8447	47.3616	0.4164	5.5503	0.6560	0.0000	52.5666
Biomass	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.3900	0.4490	0.0000	0.1640	0.0000	0.0000	1.3150
Wind	0.0731	1.4195	24.0325	16.5110	0.8000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

4.22 Since 2011/12 to March 2021 photovoltaic panels requiring planning permission or prior notification have been installed that are capable of generating 158.583 MW of power. The largest solar farm in the district as at March 2022 is situated at Little Staughton Airfield/ Top Farm covering 149 ha and capable of generating 40 MW of power. Two solar farms at Abbotsley and Abbots Ripton are each capable of generating 25 MW of power. Nine smaller solar farms can collectively generate 53 MW of power one of which was granted permission in December 2021 for an extension to provide an additional 20 MW of power. The remaining 52 schemes installed in this time requiring planning permission or prior notification are all small scale installations, many on the roofs of existing buildings, and collectively providing just over 3 MW of power.

Solar panels near Grafham Water

4.23 Map 4.1 shows the distribution of wind turbines throughout Huntingdonshire including the height to the blade tip. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 has prevented further erection of wind turbines within the area of the Great Fen and its visual and landscape setting to protect this valuable nature conservation site. Guidance has been provided locally since 2006 on landscape sensitivity when planning wind turbine proposals and for the consideration of the cumulative impact of schemes.

Map 4.1 Wind Turbine Locations



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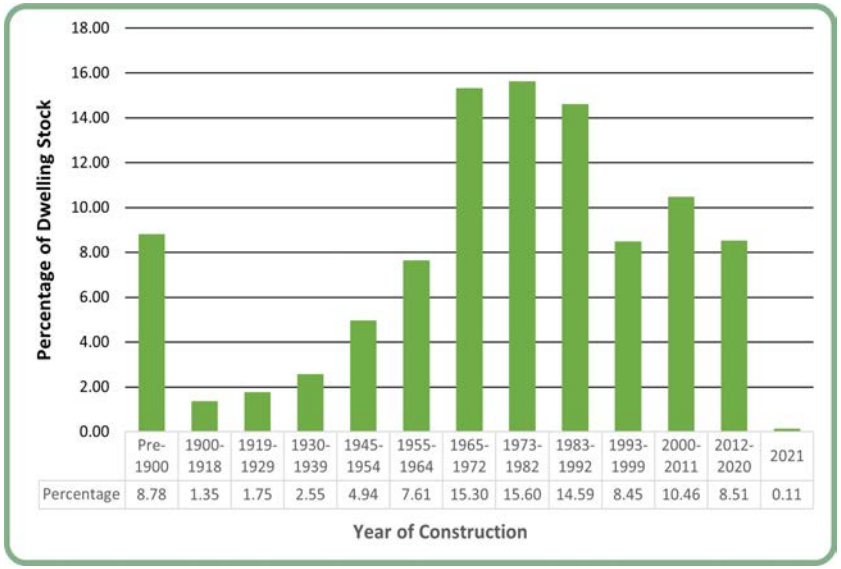
4.24 Biomass is a very limited source of renewable power within Huntingdonshire. Only 11 schemes have been granted planning permission from 2011/12 to 2021/22 collectively capable of providing around 4 MW of power. Biomass power installations have primarily been at educational, agricultural and industrial sites.

4.25 Improving energy efficiency is also important both in reducing the climate impacts of fossil fuel based power and heating systems and in reducing fuel poverty. The Local Plan will have a key role to play in promoting energy efficiency standards within new buildings. However, the construction age and energy performance of the current housing stock presents the greater challenge in effective retrofitting to bring these homes closer to net zero standards. Figure 4.5 below shows the percentages of Huntingdonshire's housing stock built across different time periods, followed by Figure 4.6 which shows the ratings of EPCs issued for homes in Huntingdonshire from 2011 to 2021.

4.26 Prior to the 1930s most properties were of solid wall construction; this represents around 12% of the district's housing stock including a substantial number of listed heritage properties which present particular challenges in retrofitting. Uninsulated cavity walls were introduced in the 1930s; and the building boom of the 1950s and 1960s predominantly constructed properties with cavity walls and saw the introduction of around 50mm of roof insulation as standard towards the end of the period. Around 30% of Huntingdonshire's homes were built in this period. Standards improved gradually through the remainder of the century with deeper loft insulation and double glazed windows common by the 1990s. This building phase represents nearly 40% of homes in the district. Many residents have already undertaken some upgrades to properties with double glazing and roof insulation improvements being common. However, substantial additional measures will be required to bring older homes as close as possible to net zero carbon standards. Homes built since 2000 typically included insulation in the cavity walls, double glazed windows, and deeper roof insulation.; however this accounts for only 19% of the district's homes and the vast majority will still need some level of retrofitting of energy efficiency measures to reach net zero carbon standards.

Figure 4.5 Age Distribution of Huntingdonshire's Housing Stock

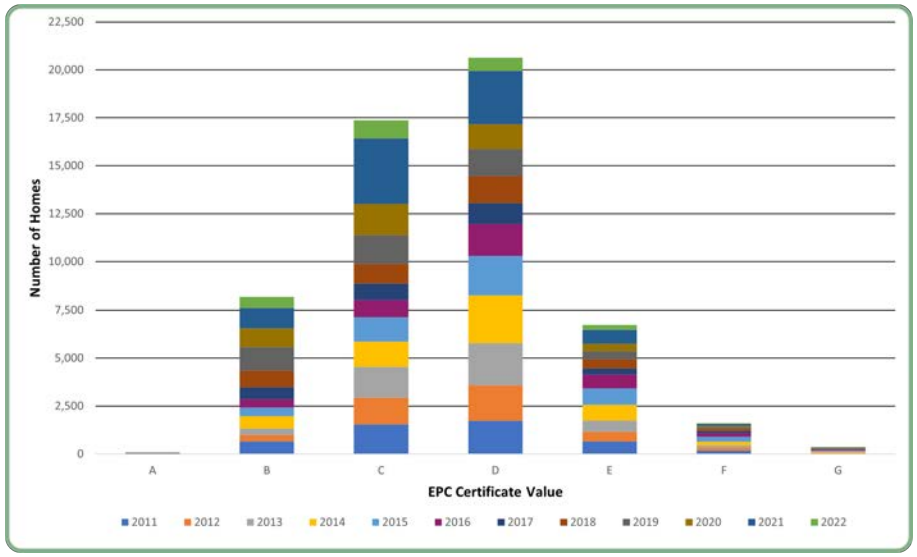


4.27 Energy efficiency of new buildings is fundamentally shaped by Building Control Regulations which changed on 15 June 2022 as part of the governments' efforts towards the transition to net zero. CO_2 emissions from new build homes must be around 30% lower than the previous standards and emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops which must be reduced by 27%. These are expected to be an interim measure to be followed in 2025 by introduction of the Future Homes and Buildings Standard which is intended to ensure that any new homes built after 2025 will not require further energy efficiency retrofit work to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

4.28 Since 2008 homes have required an Energy Performance Certificate when they are built or marketed for sale or rental, although listed buildings are exempt from the requirement. Each property is given a rating from 'A' which is the most energy efficient to 'G' which is the least energy efficient. Within these categories are more refined scores from 1-100 points based on the government's standard assessment procedure (SAP). A certificate

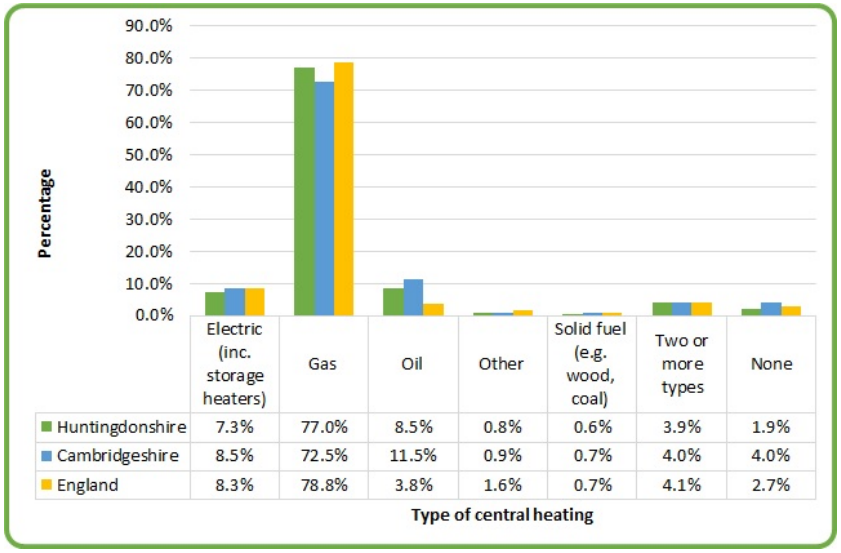
is valid for 10 years. DLUHC provide quarterly monitoring for all EPC certificates issued on homes; it should be noted that there may be some double counting of properties over the years if replacement certificates are issued. The EPC certificates issues across Huntingdonshire between 2011 and June 2022 are shown in Figure 4.6. Energy efficiency ratings typically vary by age of property too. The average for a home in England built before 1900 is 54, for a mid-20th century property it is 63 and for one built from 2012 onwards it is 83 which gives a 'B' EPC rating. A sample of new homes being built in Huntingdonshire in 2021/22 shows that EPC ratings of 'A' and 'B' are being achieved.

Figure 4.6 EPC for Huntingdonshire 2011 to June 2022



4.29 Energy efficiency is linked to fuel poverty which is both a social and climate related issue. Figure 4.7 below shows central heating by power source as recorded in the 2011 Census and reflects the dominance of gas powered central heating in Huntingdonshire along with the majority of England. Oil heating still has a significant role to play in heating homes in Huntingdonshire though at 8.5% and is particularly common in more remote locations which are not served by the mains gas grid.

Figure 4.7 Types of central heating across Huntingdonshire (ONS 2011 Census)



	Electric (inc. storage heaters)	Gas	Oil	Other	Solid fuel (e.g. wood, coal)	Two or more types	None
Huntingdonshire	7.3%	77.0%	8.5%	0.8%	0.6%	3.9%	1.9%
Cambridgeshire	8.5%	72.5%	11.5%	0.9%	0.7%	4.0%	4.0%
England	8.3%	78.8%	3.8%	1.6%	0.7%	4.1%	2.7%

4.30 Fuel poverty is an issue for communities across Huntingdonshire for a variety of reasons. Significant parts of the district, particularly in the more sparsely populated western and northern areas do not have access to mains gas supplies so households tend to be dependent on oil fired boilers or electric heating systems. Although prices vary significantly oil boilers are typically around 30% more expensive to run than mains gas ones. Households are considered to be in fuel poverty if their dwellings equates to an energy efficiency rating of band D to G and a disposable income after housing costs and energy needs of less than 60% below the national median.

4.31 BEIS publish fuel poverty data annually at lower super output area level giving a very detailed picture of where communities are facing fuel poverty. The 2020 dataset is the most recent available and shows that within Huntingdonshire fuel poverty affect 10.95% of households overall. With the increase in fuel prices during 2022 and uncertainty over future prices and supply, it is anticipated that a greater proportion of households will

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

now be in fuel poverty or will be in the future. The 2020 data shows that the lowest levels of fuel poverty at 4.2% of households is experienced in parts of Stukeley Meadows in Huntingdon and north of St Ives and along the B1040; both of these areas comprise late 20th century homes with a high proportion of larger detached properties that have access to the mains gas grid. The mid-range of fuel poverty at between 11 and 14% is experienced in a diverse range of locations including Sawtry and the Giddings, Southoe, central Yaxley, Great Staughton, the Mallard Lane area of St Neots and Ramsey St Mary's. These areas typically contain a much wider range of house types including older properties and between 45 to 65% of homes tend to be off the gas grid. The highest levels of fuel poverty in Huntingdonshire at 21 and 22% are experienced in the Thongsley and Norfolk Road/ Nene Road areas of the Oxmoor estate in Huntingdon which have high concentrations of households living in relative poverty overall and out in rural parts of the district around Great Raveley and Woodwalton where mains gas grid access is typically less than half of all households and the age and nature of the housing stock is very varied.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use
- The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes
- Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term
- Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution
- The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Lack of local criteria establishing where and in what circumstances renewable energy infrastructure installations may be acceptable
- Reliance upon national standards for energy efficiency of building construction
- Lack of support for community heating schemes

Flooding and Water

4.32 Huntingdonshire has a number of water courses within its administrative area including the Rivers Great Ouse and Nene. In addition, there are several brooks and other water courses as well as numerous lakes, many made from old gravel workings and the Grafham Water reservoir. Some areas of Huntingdonshire located in the Fens area are below sea level. Flood zones within and around Huntingdonshire are shown in Map 4.2. A map showing all the rivers, brooks and water bodies within the district can be found on the Council's interactive Strategic Flood Risk Assessment map.

4.33 The district sits within the administrative area for Water Resources East, the Anglian River Basin district and the Anglian Water and part of Cambridge Water catchment areas. The district is located in the driest region in the country, most of the East of England receives less than 700mm of rain a year in comparison to the wettest regions in the country - the Lake District and the Scottish Mountains which receive 3000mm and 4000mm respectively. However, there is a much more even distribution of rainfall throughout the year than in other regions, in the winter (December to February) the region averages 30 days of rainfall whilst the summer (June to August) sees an average of 25 days[(5)].

4.34 Historically, the district has experienced a number of surface water / drainage related flood events; causes range from insufficient storm and combined drainage capacity to poor surface water management[(6)]. The majority of fluvial flood events are associated with the River Great Ouse and its tributaries, whilst in Ramsey fluvial flood risk results from High Lode which flows northwards through the town. This is reflected in flood risk mapping which sets out flood risk from rivers and seas. Tidal flood risk can cause a potential risk within the district, although the tidal limit of the River Great Ouse is at Brownshill, just upstream of Earith, the river as far upstream as St Ives can still be affected by the tide (Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020).

4.35 The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. The three months from October to December 2020 saw increased rainfall across the East equivalent to 154% of the Longtime Average Rainfall (LTA) for the region. The most significant river levels were recorded on the River Great Ouse, the Tove, Kym, Alconbury Brook and Bury Brook and the region saw the most significant flood event of such a scale since 1998. Across the whole of 2020 rainfall across the region was 115% of the LTA [(7)]

4.36 Water supply and management in Huntingdonshire is undertaken by Anglian Water (a water and sewerage undertaker,) and by Cambridge Water (a water undertaker). Water supply in the Anglian Water region comes from surface water supplies such as rivers and reservoirs or ground water sources such as wells, boreholes and springs. The majority of Huntingdonshire sits within the Ruthamford South Water Resource Zone (WRZ) which covers an area of 1,419km^2. Water resources are in general supplied "from surface water [82%], with a direct abstraction on the River Great Ouse going to Grafham Water reservoir. There is also a small groundwater contribution [18%] from the abstraction in the Woburn Sands aquifer."[(8)] Grafham Water also exports water to Affinity Water; 84.6 Ml/d (Megalitres a day) were exported in 2020.

5 Met Office - description of regional climates in the UK
6 Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017
7 Cambridgeshire County Council Winter Flooding 2020
8 Anglian Water WRZ Summaries 2019

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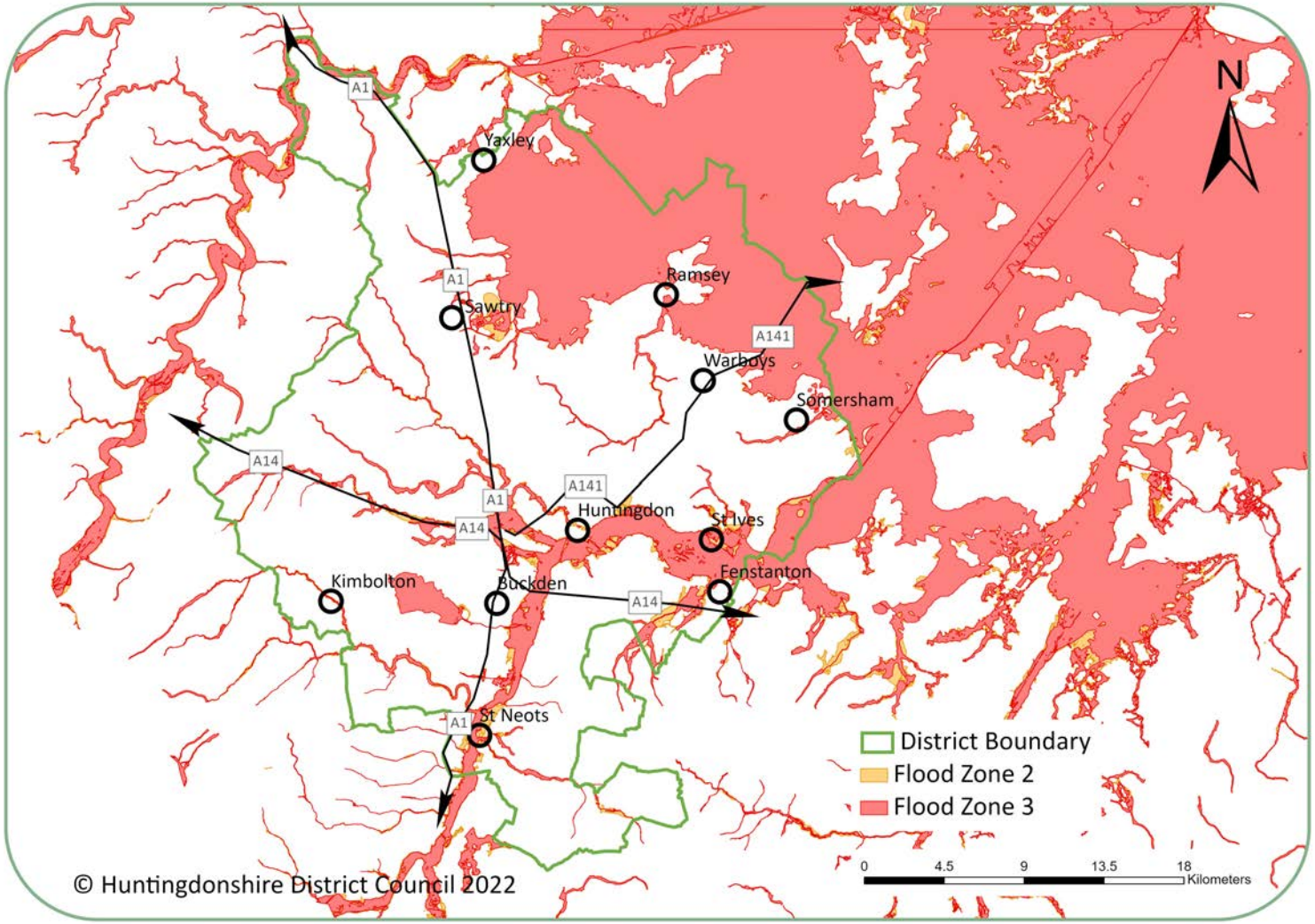
Map 4.2 Flood Zones



4.37 In the Anglian Water Region, total water demand is expected to increase from 109Ml/d (2017/18) to 1,240Ml/d by 2045 if no further action is taken to manage demand. In general it is assumed that the increase in water demand is a result of population growth as non household demand is expected to decrease from 275 Ml/d (2017/18) to 273Ml/d by 2045. In Ruthamford South water resource requirements as a result of population growth are expected to increase by 13% between 2017/18 and 2045. Notably climate change is expected to increase the vulnerability of the River Great Ouse, which feeds Clapham intake and Grafham Water[9].

4.38 Cambridge Water supplies water to the Eastern edge of Huntingdonshire covering the towns of St Ives and Ramsey and villages such as Bluntisham and Earith, Needingworth and Holywell. Cambridge Water is a Single Water Resource Zone, it typically supplies an average of 80 million litres of water a day (Ml/d), this can increase by up to 20 to 25% during periods of peak demand experienced during hot, dry summers[10].

4.39 Cambridge Water's supply comes from groundwater sources, 97% from chalk aquifers and the remaining 3% from greensand aquifers. Small bulk water supplies are provided to and from Anglian Water and Affinity Water. In the Cambridge Water Region overall household 'dry year' demand is expected to rise between 2017/18 to 2044/45 by around 8 Ml/d. A slow rise in demand is expected by non-household and other business customers over the same time period. 8 of the 28 sources of water supply assessed by Cambridge Water are expected to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change[11].

4.40 To protect drinking water supply from pollution, the Environment Agency defines a number of Source Protection Zones (SPZ), these zones include areas where the level of risk of contamination is high. This can be exacerbated by certain situations such as storing pollutants like petrol underground or from soakaways from septic tanks. Any development within a SPZ should demonstrate that it will not cause contamination to ensure that water is safe for human consumption. Source Protection Zones in Huntingdonshire run from the east of Huntingdon, south of St Ives to Fenstanton and are also located in Little Paxton and to the south and east of Waresley/ Great Gransden[12].

4.41 The Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan for Eastern England January 2022 identifies that the Environment Agency has classified the whole of Eastern England as being in 'in serious water stress'. Taking into account population growth and climate change and the need to restore and protect the environment, current predictions estimate that by 2050 there will be a water deficit of between 703 Ml/d and 2,267 Ml/d. Around 30 to 98% higher than the region's current water use. In addition, the Plan highlights that shifts in water consumption between water companies has occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which re-distributed population (from towns and cities to rural areas) and instigated more working from home (page 31). Anglian Water and Cambridge Water work together to develop strategic solutions, through Water Resources Management Plans current projects include:

- a proposed new reservoir expected to be located in Lincolnshire (The South Lincolnshire Reservoir)
- a proposed new reservoir in the Fens to the north of Chatteris approximately 6kms from Huntingdonshire
- a proposed new piece of infrastructure that would transfer water from the Anglian Water region to supply Affinity Water customers via potential sources such as the above reservoirs or a new source from the River Trent.
- additional work to increase smart metering combined with behaviour change, leakage reduction and additional water efficiency activity.

Source: Anglian Water

9 Anglian Water Water Resources Management Plan 2019, pages 27-28, 32
10 Cambridge Water Draft Drought Plan 2021, page 4
11 Cambridge Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2019, pages 14-17, 109
12 Environment Agency - Groundwater Source Protection Zones

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4.42 Water Resources East also notes the importance of local water resources to the farming community. Farming relies on local water resources that lie beneath, stored on their farm or flow past their farm. More than 60% of England's abstraction licences for irrigation are located in the Eastern region. Power generation also requires a lot of water. "Energy plants across the region are major users of freshwater, particularly from the River Trent and River Great Ouse", (The Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan for Eastern England January 2022, page 27) and it is incorrect to assume that renewable energy production will not impact on water abstraction or usage. Decreased flows and reduced ground and surface water means less water to abstract for essential services such as food production and power generation.

4.43 Huntingdonshire sits within the Anglian River Basin District. Classification data from the Environment Agency shows the environmental condition or "status" of water bodies in the Anglian River Basin District. 634 water bodies are identified within this District which comprise 526 rivers, canals and surface water transfers, 46 lakes, 13 coastal, 18 esturine and 31 groundwater. Surface and ground waters are also assessed by ecological and chemical status. Tables 6 to 9 below show classification data from the Environment Agency (data was last updated on 22 May 2022).

Table 6 Ecological status for surface waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Ecological status or potential	Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Total
Number of water bodies	22	105	428	47	0	602
Number of water body elements	111	406	663	824	3,138	5,142

Table 7 Chemical status for surface waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Chemical status	Fail	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	603	0	603
Number of water body elements	1,205	7,007	8,212

Table 8 Quantitative status for ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Quantitative status	Poor	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	14	17	31
Number of water body elements	15	109	124

Table 9 Chemical status for ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District

Chemical status	Poor	Good	Total
Number of water bodies	15	16	31
Number of water body elements	23	132	155

4.44 The Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater are provided in a series of Groundwater Protection Position Statements. The primary aim of all of the position statements is the prevention of pollution of groundwater and protection of it as a resource.

4.45 Impacts of climate change and growth could increase pressure on water bodies for example through increased surface water run-off. This may impact on the future ecological status of these water bodies in terms of chemical pollutants or reduced ecological status.

4.46 Huntingdonshire's Stage 2: Detailed Water Cycle Study December 2014 provides information about the capacity of the water environment and water services infrastructure to accommodate required growth during the current Local Plan period (2011-2036).

4.47 It identified, at the time of the study, that there was constrained water treatment capacity at the waste water treatment works (WwTW) at Oldhurst, Ramsey, Somersham and St Neots. It also identified that without further capacity measures the WwTW at Buckden and Huntingdon would reach the constraints of water treatment capacity during the current local plan period (up to 2036), based on allocations contained in that plan. Proposals such as the Oxford Cambridge Arc growth corridor and growth in nearby authorities could also place increasing strain on wastewater treatment works, water quality and flooding from all sources which will need to be considered by Huntingdonshire District Council, private water companies and public and private organisations. A revised study will be undertaken as part of the next local plan to understand how capacity has changed and where there may be capacity issues.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district
- Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure
- Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located
- Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district
- Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all
- Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Inappropriately located development, putting economies, people, ecology and biodiversity at risk
- Lack of water resources to new and existing support residents, businesses and agricultural requirements
- Increased pressure on water resource management infrastructure

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Waste and Recycling

4.48 The waste hierarchy, gives priority to preventing the creation of waste in the first place, followed by preparing waste for reuse; to recycling, and then recovery. Disposal, such as landfill, is regarded as the worst option. This moves away from landfilling the majority of waste to a more circular economy where products and materials are recovered and regenerated where possible giving them a new lease of life, maximising their value and minimising waste. It also minimises the harmful environmental impacts of landfills and prolongs the lifespan of existing landfills and reduces the need to use finite natural resources and can help to lower green house gas emissions. This leads to a more sustainable way of consuming and using resources and ultimately a more sustainable way of living.

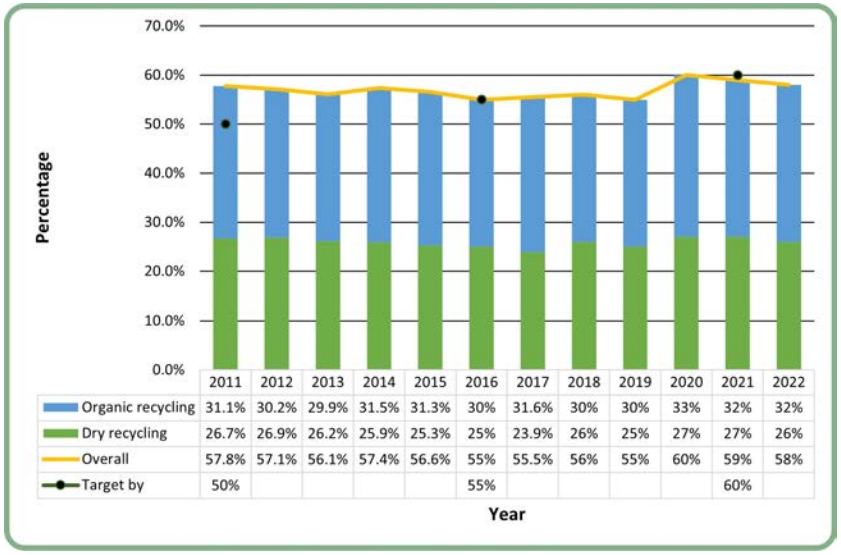
4.49 All households in Huntingdonshire are provided with a collection for residual and dry recycling waste while 90% of residents have access to an organic waste collection service. Residents have access to a network of 23 textile recycling banks from which all materials collected are re-used. There are three household recycling centres in the district located in Alconbury, Bluntisham and St Neots that are run by Amey for Cambridgeshire County Council (the waste disposal authority).

4.50 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2021) identifies several Waste Management Areas (WMAs) within Huntingdonshire. These are areas of existing operational sites, and committed sites (i.e. those with planning permission but which are not yet operational) that make a significant contribution to managing any waste stream. There are WMAs in Alconbury, Bluntisham, Buckden, Godmanchester, Hemingford Abbots, Little Paxton, Ramsey, St Neots and Somersham. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan does not allocate any sites for future waste management development as a Waste Needs Assessment prepared alongside the Plan did not identify any capacity gaps.

4.51 Local zero waste initiatives and projects are also available across in and around Huntingdonshire such as toy libraries, refill/ eco shops and pop-up repair cafes, full details on where these are and how to find more information is available on HDC's website. The Council works with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) to continuously improve waste services, increase recycling and reduce waste and find cost effective and environmentally responsible ways to meet the needs of local communities.

4.52 Figure 4.8 shows that more than 55% of the waste collected has been sent for recycling or composting over the past 10 years. Since 2011, HDC have performed on or above targets. The rates of recycling plateaued between 2015/16 and 2018/19 before picking up again from 2019/20. [13].

Figure 4.8 Recycling rates in Huntingdonshire since 2010/11



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Organic recycling	31.1%	30.2%	29.9%	31.5%	31.3%	30%	31.6%	30%	30%	33%	32%	32%
Dry recycling	26.7%	26.9%	26.2%	25.9%	25.3%	25%	23.9%	26%	25%	27%	27%	26%
Overall	57.8%	57.1%	56.1%	57.4%	56.6%	55%	55.5%	56%	55%	60%	59%	58%
Target by	50%					55%					60%	

13 Data collected from HDC's Waste and Recycling Team and reported annually in Annual Monitoring Reports up to 2018/19

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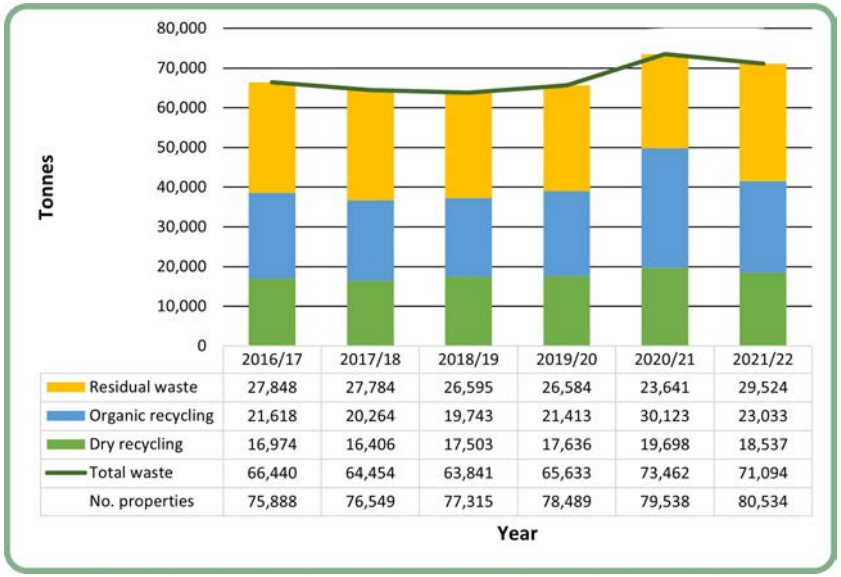
4.53 Each year the number of domestic properties that the Council's waste collection team service has increased. Despite the increase, Figure 4.9 shows that across domestic properties, the tonnes of waste collected across dry recycling, organic waste and residual waste have stayed relatively constant.

Figure 4.9 Amount of waste in tonnes collected from domestic properties since 2016/17 (sourced from HDC's Waste and Recycling team)



	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Residual waste	27,848	27,784	26,595	26,584	23,641	29,524
Organic recycling	21,618	20,264	19,743	21,413	30,123	23,033
Dry recycling	16,974	16,406	17,503	17,636	19,698	18,537
Total waste	66,440	64,454	63,841	65,633	73,462	71,094
No. properties	75,888	76,549	77,315	78,489	79,538	80,534

4.54 The contamination of dry recycling has considerable financial implications as well as environmental ones and means waste that could have been recycled may end up in landfill. In 2021/22, the Council's rejections rate of dry recycling material was 5.67% equating to approximately 1,068 tonnes (down from 6.86% in 2019/20 and from 7.97% in 2017/18). HDC's contamination rate is below the national average of 12.7%.

4.55 HDC's Waste and Recycling team carry out customer satisfaction surveys to give the Council an opportunity to gather residents' opinions on communication methods as well as more insight into how residents dispose of their waste. The 2020 survey found that overall 97% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the refuse/recycling service, this was an improvement from 89% in the 2019 survey.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres
- Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy
- Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services
- The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Less sustainable reuse of waste, particularly construction material
- Growth may not maximise the inclusion of additional recycling facilities and zero waste initiatives

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Environmental Characteristics

Landscape

4.56 Huntingdonshire is a largely rural district. It is 913km^2 (about 350 square miles). Huntingdonshire's landscape comprises many elements formed over millions of years which are constantly evolving through a combination of natural and human influences and exhibit features from different stages in their history and development. The majority of Huntingdonshire lies on Jurassic clay with glacial till covering the higher land in the northern and western parts of the district. The distinctive low lying, flat landscape of the Fens was formed by the post-glacial accumulation and subsequent drainage of peat. Alluvial material has been deposited along the floodplains of the Rivers Nene and Great Ouse giving fertile flood meadows with extensive gravel deposits in the Ouse valley. A small area to the north-west of the district is underlain by Oolitic limestone extensively used in the traditional buildings of the Nene valley.

4.57 The highest land in the district, rising to 70m AOD, lies across the western and southern parts with the eastern parts being typically no more than 30m AOD. The district is incised by the wide valley of the River Great Ouse as well as the steeper, narrower valleys of its tributaries, especially the River Kym, Ellington Brook and Alconbury Brook. The valley of the River Great Ouse flows south to north before turning west to east at Huntingdon. It comprises a broad, shallow sided valley with a wide floodplain which has been extensively worked for gravel extraction shaping the landscape through the resultant large bodies of water. The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns and historically was a significant transport corridor supporting the local and regional economy allowing the district to prosper.

4.58 The Fens are flat and at or below sea level. Former wetlands they were drained to allow agriculture on the rich, fertile soils. The landscape is dominated by straight, artificial watercourses with deep field ditches and a network of drainage channels. Inland of the fens the land rises steeply into the claylands which gently undulate between 10 and 50m AOD. Streams in this area are typically narrow, and flow generally west to east but they are not a strong visual feature in the landscape.

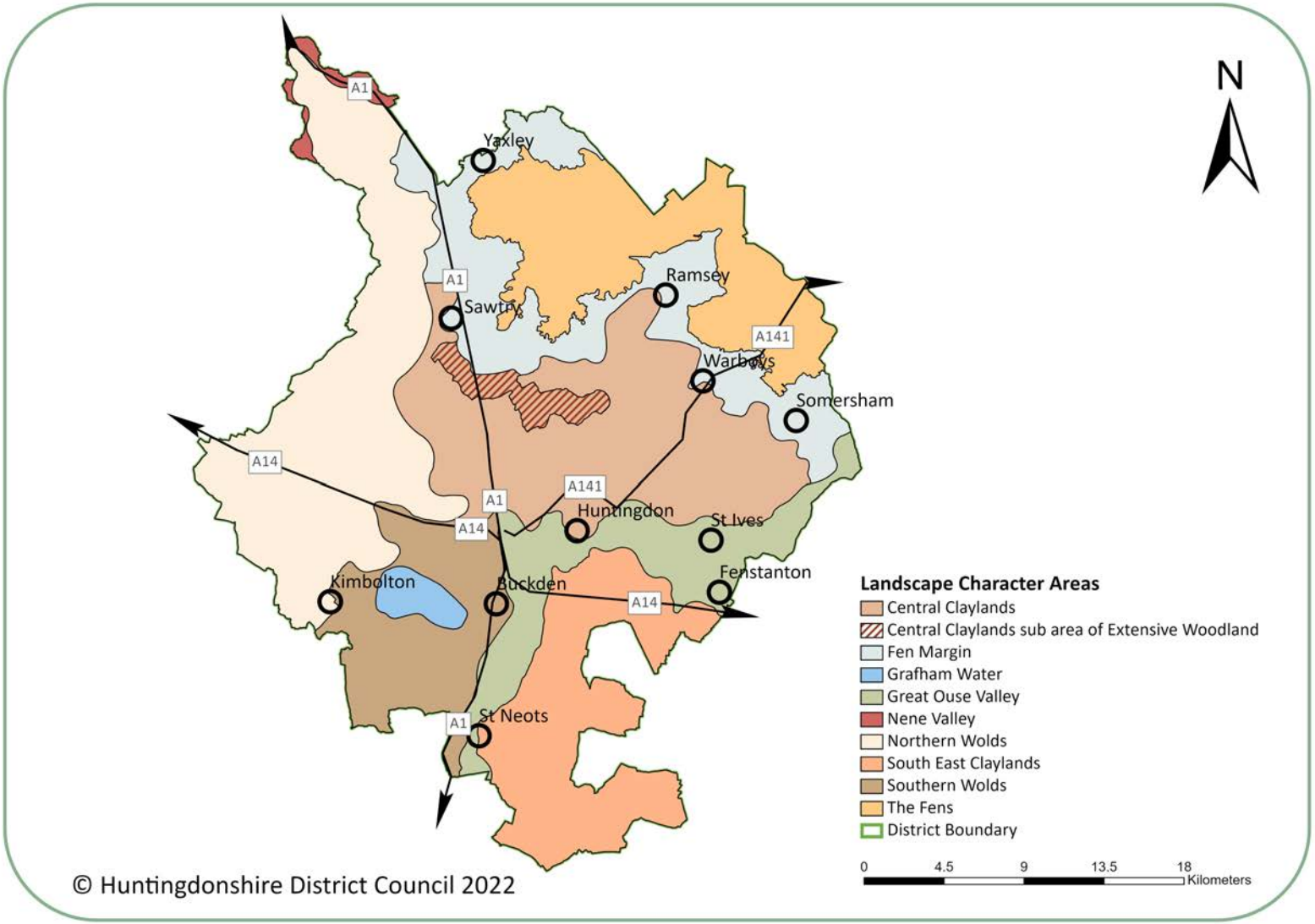
4.59 Huntingdonshire has nine identified landscape character areas (see Map 4.3), these are:

- The Fens
- Fen Margin
- Central Claylands
- Great Ouse Valley
- South East Claylands
- Northern Wolds
- Grafham Water
- Southern Wolds
- Nene Valley

4.60 These landscape character areas can be broadly divided into the low-lying fens, undulating claylands, upland areas (the Wolds) and main river valleys. A summary of their key characteristics is provided within this report but detailed character assessments of each landscape and pressures going forward are set out in Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) .

4.61 The identification of landscape character areas is an approach which protects the distinctive features of each type rather than favouring a particular selection, and provides clear criteria for making judgements. The Local Plan will seek to ensure that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced through the allocation process and as subsequent development occurs.

Map 4.3 Huntingdonshire's Landscape Character Areas



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The Fens

4.62 The Fens landscape character area lies in the north east of Huntingdonshire and is distinctive for its low-lying, flat, regular open character arising from its man-made network of drainage channels and waterways. It is predominantly used for arable agriculture on its dark peaty soil, as such there is sparse woodland cover. Settlement is limited to isolated farms, with a few linear villages along main roads. The area includes the Great Fen project which seeks to protect remaining fragments of the ancient fenland landscape, create large areas for wildlife and prevent further loss of the peat soils.

Fen Margin

4.63 The Fen Margin landscape character area comprises a narrow arc forming a transition between the Fens to the north and east and the Central Claylands and Northern Wolds landscape character areas to the south and west. The area is generally well vegetated, with deciduous woodland, hedgerows, trees and orchards. There is a matrix of land uses, comprising arable farmland, pasture, airfield, orchards, woodland and settlements.

Central Claylands

4.64 The Central Claylands is a large character area in the centre of Huntingdonshire. It includes Huntingdon, Alconbury Weald and St Ives and major transport corridors namely the A1/A14. In the northern part of the character area there is a small sub-area of extensive ancient woodland located between Aversley Wood and Wennington Woods.

Great Ouse Valley

4.65 The broad, shallow valley of the River Great Ouse flows roughly south to north between St Neots and Huntingdon then turns to flow west to east via St Ives and exits Huntingdonshire near Earith, thus influencing three of Huntingdonshire's towns. It has experienced large scale gravel extraction; the resultant pits have since been flooded to create habitats for wildlife, nature reserves and fisheries. The floodplain meadows play an essential role for flood storage and flow attenuation and are of high ecological value.

South East Claylands

4.66 The South East Claylands character area is situated in the south eastern corner of Huntingdonshire stretching up to the Great Ouse Valley in the north and west. It includes large areas of high quality landscape with a varied and typically gently undulating landform, established hedgerows and woodland and historic settlement patterns.

Northern Wolds

4.67 The Northern Wolds landscape character area forms a broad north-south strip on the western edge of Huntingdonshire. It has a strong topography of ridges bisected by pronounced valleys. The ridges are generally used for arable farming. The area has been significantly influenced by medieval development with many scheduled monuments present and distinctive historic villages and ecclesiastical architecture.

Grafham Water

4.68 The Grafham Water landscape character area is defined and dominated by the reservoir and its immediate landscape setting. Grafham Water is managed by Anglian Water. It has a strong sense of identity and is unique within Huntingdonshire being predominantly open water and is the third largest reservoir in England by area and is the largest Site of Special Scientific Interest in Huntingdonshire at 806ha. Recreation is a key activity, with facilities for sailing, fishing, walking, cycling and horse riding.

Southern Wolds

4.69 The Southern Wolds landscape character area incorporates the lower valleys of the River Kym and Ellington Brook. It completely encircles the Grafham Water landscape character area. It has a well-wooded landscape, with hedged fields, and some more recent plantations. There are scattered villages and isolated farms throughout.

Nene Valley

4.70 The Nene Valley landscape character area covers land associated with the River Nene just in the north west tip of Huntingdonshire, although the Nene valley stretches beyond the district boundaries into Northamptonshire. The local availability of limestone has strongly influenced the vernacular architecture of the area. The Nene Valley steam railway provides a recreational function, and distinctive landscape feature.

Low-lying Fens landscape

Undulating Claylands

Upland areas known as the Wolds

Main river valleys

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices
- Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district
- The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character
- The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Distinctive landscape features such as ancient woodlands, nature sites and orchards which enrich Huntingdonshire's landscape and ecological quality may be harmed or lost
- A scale and nature of new development may be implemented that is detrimental to the character of Huntingdonshire's landscapes
- New developments that are not sensitively integrated with their surroundings and do not incorporate appropriate landscaping may permanently harm Huntingdonshire's landscape and historic settlements
- Poorly managed riverside attractions along the Rivers Great Ouse and Nene may damage the landscape quality of the areas and the framing of villages and towns nearby

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Land, Soils and Agriculture

Soils

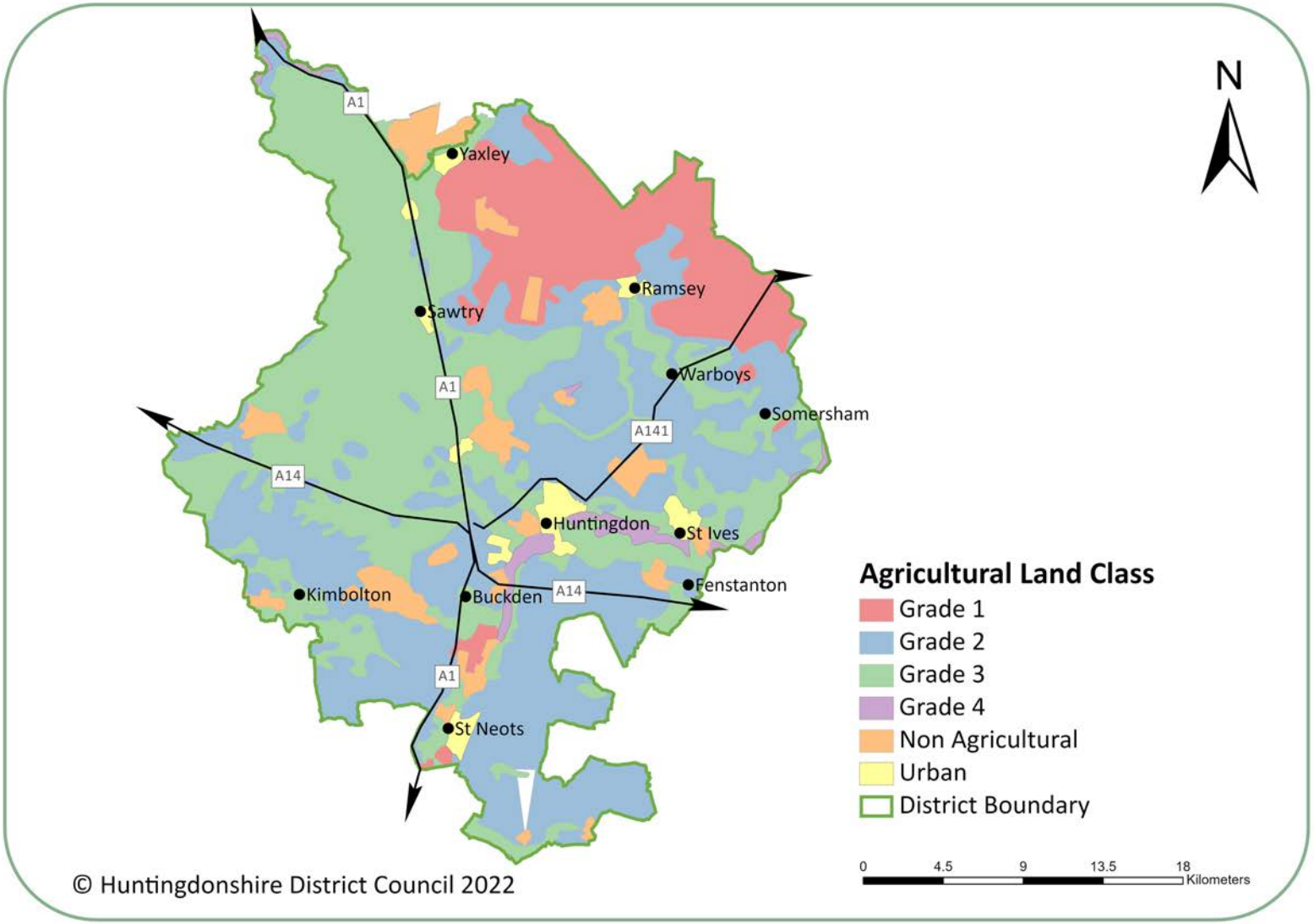
4.71 Huntingdonshire benefits from good quality agricultural land throughout almost all of the district outside of the built up areas. Map 4.4 shows the distribution of agricultural land grades across the district.

4.72 Grade 1 land is the best and most versatile agricultural land which predominates in the north east of the district where fenland peat is found. Peat is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to increased variability in water levels and higher temperatures affecting the peat. Drying out of the peat may worsen this further by releasing carbon emissions itself and through suffering greater wind erosion causing more depletion of the peat soils which exposes less fertile ground.

4.73 Much of the western and southern parts of the district comprise grade 2 agricultural land which is also highly productive; the only exceptions to this are predominantly found along the Great Ouse Valley and a belt of grade 3 land broadly running east from Woodwalton to Warboys and on to Somersham. The majority of the north west of Huntingdonshire comprises grade 3 agricultural land within which elements of grade 3a land are still classified as best and most versatile and so forming valuable productive agricultural land. Detailed mapping of 3a and 3b suitable for use at a site specific level is not currently available.

4.74 In terms of underlying geology, the vast majority of the district comprises Oxford clay (mudstone) with the eastern edge being formed of West Walton and Ampthill clay (mudstone). In the south eastern edge of the district Waresley and Great Gransden are situated on a Woburn Sands formation (sandstone). Geologically the northern tip of Huntingdonshire is by far the most diverse with narrow bands of bedrock relating to the River Nene routing. Directly under the river the bedrock mainly comprises Whitby Mudstone, adjoined by Grantham formation of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. A band of Rutland formation argillaceous rocks with subordinate sandstone and limestone follows the same looping formation. Upper, Lower, Blisworth and Cornbrash limestone are also all present along with small areas of Blisworth and Kellaways clay (mudstone). Overlaying much of the bedrock are superficial deposits comprised of clay, silt, sand and gravel some of which have been extracted often for construction materials.

Map 4.4 Agricultural Land Classification



4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Agriculture

4.75 Most farms in Huntingdonshire focus on cereal and general cropping production with limited amounts of livestock. DEFRA collate data on land and crop areas, livestock populations and agricultural workforce numbers as at 1 June to indicate the nature of the agricultural economy. The figures only include commercial scale production. Table 10 below shows that cereal crops account for just over half (52.8%) of all farmed land within Huntingdonshire with other arable crops comprising the second most extensive farmland. Fruit and vegetable growing has shown a marked increase in Huntingdonshire between 2010 and 2016 although it fell across Cambridgeshire overall. The numbers of livestock kept were more volatile in this period as shown in Table 11. Sheep and poultry numbers both decreased slightly in Huntingdonshire but the proportion of them compared to livestock across the whole of Cambridgeshire decreased significantly due to increases in the numbers kept in Fenland and Peterborough.

Table 10 Agricultural Land Use in Huntingdonshire 2010 and 2016

Crop	Total farmed area (ha)		Cereals (ha)		Arable (excluding cereals) (ha)		Fruit and vegetables (ha)		Grassland (ha)	
Year	2010	2016	2010	2016	2010	2016	2010	2016	2010	2016
Huntingdonshire	70,635	74,656	35,976	39,411	20,853	19,021	884	1,296	9,025	8,845
Cambridgeshire	262,465	268,034	130,396	139,552	73,826	70,547	11,069	7,863	29,878	29,735
Proportion grown in Huntingdonshire	26.9%	27.9%	27.6	28.2	28.2	27.0	8.0	16.5	30.2	29.8

Table 11 Numbers of Livestock on Huntingdonshire's Farms 2010 and 2016

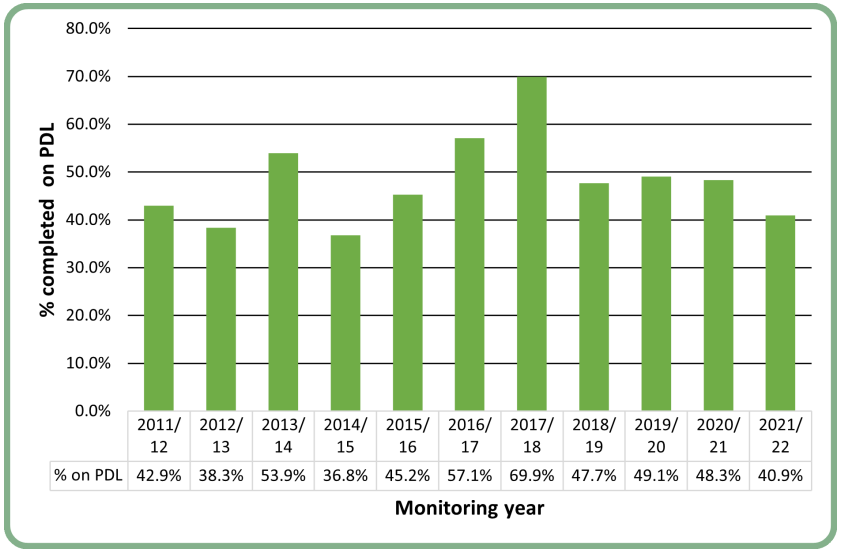
Livestock	Cattle		Sheep		Pigs		Poultry	
Year	2010	2016	2010	2016	2010	2016	2010	2016
Huntingdonshire	8,948	9,194	11,548	9,114	5,226	5,447	685,502	515,491
Cambridgeshire	26,552	27,606	36,037	41,329	29,225	24,903	2,015,238	2,182,263
Proportion produced in Huntingdonshire	33.7%	33.3%	32.0%	22.1%	17.9%	21.9%	34.0%	23.6%

Previously developed land

4.76 Previously developed land is concentrated almost entirely within former airfields and existing towns and villages. To reduce the greenfield land take, Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 allocated all the elements of RAF Alconbury and RAF Brampton that were redundant from military use for redevelopment for new homes, employment and community uses. The built elements of RAF Upwood were also allocated for redevelopment although the airfield itself remained. Some pockets of previously developed land remain available for reuse; others may be identified through a call for sites where existing land uses are of low viability. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 the Council maintains a brownfield register.

4.77 The percentage of completions on previously developed land within Huntingdonshire since the 2011/12 monitoring year are provided in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 % of new dwellings completed on Previously Developed Land



Key sustainability issues and problems

- A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land
- Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils
- There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Greenfield land may be at greater risk of development
- Land that is classed as best and most versatile may be permanently lost through development reducing the capability for production and food security

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment

4.78 Huntingdonshire contains many sites that are of biodiversity importance, including those designated at international level recognising their strategic contribution to biodiversity. Table 12 below identifies natural habitats in Huntingdonshire with international level designations reflecting their high level of importance for nature conservation. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) formerly identified as part of the Natura 2000 ecological network are now designated with the same status under the UK's National Site Network. Designated Wetlands of International Importance (known as Ramsar sites) are not part of the national site network. However, many overlap with SACs and SPAs, and may be designated for the same or different species and habitats and remain protected in the same way.

Table 12 Internationally Designated Sites

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Ouse Washes	Ramsar	2,518.66	Seasonally-flooded washland habitat supporting nationally and internationally important numbers of wintering waterfowl and nationally important numbers of breeding waterfowl. Of particular significance are the flocks of teal, pintail, wigeon, shoveler, pochard and Bewick's swan. The site Includes large areas of unimproved neutral grassland primarily managed as traditional hay meadows. The grassland areas are characterised by such grasses as reed and floating sweet-grass, reed canary-grass, marsh foxtail and a variety of sedges and rushes. The watercourses host aquatic species such as the fringed water-lily, greater water-parsnip and duckweeds.
	SAC	337.73	
	SPA	2,498.6	
	Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI)	2,518.66 (45.24 ha in Hunts)	
Portholme	SAC	91.79	Alluvial flood meadow grassland including as Yorkshire fog, yellow oat-grass, meadow foxtail, and meadow fescue. The range of herbs includes lady's bedstraw, pepper-saxifrage and great burnet. Portholme is one of the largest areas of this grassland type in the country and continues to be managed in a traditional manner with seasonal flooding adding nutrients to the otherwise unimproved grassland. Watercourses on the periphery of the site have populations of some uncommon invertebrates, including one dragonfly of nationally restricted distribution.
	SSSI	106	
Woodwalton Fen	Ramsar National Nature Reserve SPA SSSI	209 (all)	Mixed fenland habitat with fen, marsh, reedbeds, open water, scrub and woodland supporting very diverse flora and fauna. Flower-rich mixed fen covers much of the reserve and supports yellow flag, swamp meadow grass and great water dock. The acid peat supports purple moor-grass, ling, bog myrtle, tormentil and saw sedge. Woodwalton Fen provides habitats for some rare fen plants including fen wood-rush and fen violet; ditches support the rare water violet and carnivorous bladderwort. Bird species are found at the site include great bittern, reed bunting, tree pipit, long-eared owl and common teal. The area also provides habitats for around 900 moth species including marsh, lunar yellow underwing, four spotted, white-spotted pinion and silky wave. Over 1,000 beetle species, both terrestrial and aquatic, have also been recorded at the site.

4.79 Table 13 below identifies nationally designated sites within Huntingdonshire. By area, 62.9% of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire were judged to be in favourable condition in 2020/21, with a further 32.5% in an unfavourable but recovering state.

Table 13 Nationally Designated Sites

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Aversley Wood	SSSI	60	Ancient ash and maple woodland
Berry Fen	SSSI	18	Washland habitat of neutral grassland
Brampton Meadow	SSSI	0.95	Calcareous grassland
Brampton Racecourse	SSSI	21	Species rich neutral grassland
Brampton Wood	SSSI	132	Ancient wet ash and maple woodland with rich neutral grassland flora
Castor Flood Meadows	SSSI	42 (Part in Hunts)	Wet alluvial grasslands and alluvial meadow grassland
Godmanchester Eastside Common	SSSI	29.7	Calcareous loam and calcareous clay grassland
Grafham Water	SSSI	806	Reservoir and marginal land supporting wetland birds
Great Stukeley Railway Cutting	SSSI	34.7	Calcareous clay grassland
Hemingford Grey (Arthur's) Meadow	SSSI	0.67	Calcareous clay grassland
Houghton Meadows	SSSI	4.74	Neutral ridge and furrow grassland
Holme Fen	National Nature Reserve SSSI	63	Remnant fen habitat now containing the largest birch woodland in lowland England, ancient bog, acid grassland and heath. Three meres (lakes) with shallow banks and islands are the result of peat cutting. Holme Fen supports many birds such as siskin, redpoll, nightingale, blackcap and woodpecker. The habitat also supports dragonflies and marsh plants such as golden dock, twayblade meadow rue and fen wood-rush. The damp habitat also supports some 500 species of fungi.
Little Catworth meadow	SSSI	5.23	Calcareous loam grassland

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Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Little Paxton Pits	SSSI Local Nature Reserve	127 59.95	Flooded gravel workings supporting wildfowl and invertebrates with nationally important levels of wintering wildfowl
Little Paxton Woods	SSSI	44	Wet ash and maple woodland with diverse shrub layer and ground flora
Monks Wood	SSSI	157	Broadleaf ancient woodland including oak, ash, field maple and wild service trees with an understorey of hazel, blackthorn, dogwood and sallow. The woodland also supports neutral grassland. The woodland provides suitable habitat for over 400 plant species including greater butterfly orchid, violet helleborine, crested cow-wheat, small teasel and water purslane. Monks Wood also supports a wide variety of birds including tawny owls, red kites and buzzards along with badgers, hares and foxes. Butterflies including white admiral, grizzled skipper and white-letter hairstreak are found along with over 1,000 species of beetles.
The Odd Quarter (linked to Monks Wood)	SSSI	13	Wet ash and maple woodland with wild service trees
Perry Woods	SSSI	67.9	Ancient ash and maple woodland
St Neots Common	SSSI	33.35	Alluvial grassland with willow carr, ponds and ditches supporting aquatic flora and fauna
Somersham LNR	Local Nature Reserve	9.54	Mixed woodland, grassland, lake and wet woodland
Upwood Meadows	National Nature Reserve SSSI	6	Upwood Meadow comprises three fields of lowland grassland bordered by veteran trees and mature hedgerows. Designated for its diversity of flora the meadow supports cowslip, greater burnet, saw-wort, dropwort, sulphur clover and a large colony of green-winged orchids. The flora in turn support a diversity of bees and butterflies. The trees and hedgerows provide nesting habitats for many birds including turtle dove, blackcap and whitethroat and support winter visitors such as fieldfare and redwing.
Warboys and Wistow Woods	SSSI	44.5	Ancient ash and maple woodland also supporting invertebrates
Warboys Claypit	SSSI	12.5	Surface exposure of Upper Oxford lay and Ampthill clay
Waresley Wood	SSSI	62	Ancient ash and maple woodland with diverse flora enriched by varied underlying geology

Site name	Designation(s)	Area (ha)	Habitat description
Weaveley and Sand Woods	SSSI	76	Ancient ash and maple woodland straddling diverse geological formations
Woodwalton Marsh	SSSI	0.76	Lowland neutral grassland

4.80 Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) available through Magic Map are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts.

4.81 Huntingdonshire also benefits from having 135 County Wildlife Sites (CWS) which are judged to be of local nature conservation, biological or geological interest. These cover 2,348.7 ha of the district along with 133.9 kms of linear sites which are waterways where the county wildlife site comprises the river and adjacent semi-natural habitat.

4.82 The district also contains ancient woodland. Ancient woods are areas of woodland that have persisted since AD1600 in England. They cover just 2.5% of the UK, yet these are irreplaceable environments which contain complex communities of plants, fungi, insects and other microorganisms. In Huntingdonshire there are in the region of 45 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) sites and 25 Plantation on Ancient Woodland (PAWS) sites, totaling approximately 1,500ha of woodland. Huntingdonshire's Tree Strategy 2020-2030 states that there are no ASNW or PAWS known to be currently under threat in Huntingdonshire. Some of these ancient woodland sites will also be designated as SSSIs or CWS.

4.83 Huntingdonshire benefits from an extensive network of rivers, drainage canals and lakes which are already widely used for tourism, sport and leisure activities including boating, windsurfing, fishing and birdwatching. They also provide valuable wildlife habitats, for instance the River Great Ouse and its tributaries flow in part into the Ouse Washes, an important area for birds and many other species as shown in Table 12 above. The main rivers running through the district are the River Great Ouse, River Nene, River Kym and Alconbury Brook. Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) provides further information on their importance in shaping the landscape character of the district and the wildlife habitats they provide and support.

4.84 Enhancing biodiversity has become a bigger focus area at the national level, as demonstrated in the now mandatory minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for all new developments via the Environment Act 2021. Locally, in 2019 Natural Cambridgeshire set an ambition of doubling nature across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2050. This includes land managed for nature. Within this, it aims to create living landscapes, promote good practice for local food and farming, create better places to live, create sustainable jobs, healthy communities and promote heritage, culture and leisure.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Key sustainability issues and problems

- There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value
- Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices.
- Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state
- Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats
- Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change
- Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may adversely impact on the condition of designated an non-designated sites and damage vital habitats for wildlife
- Habitats may become fragmented
- Development may adversely impact protected species and their habitats

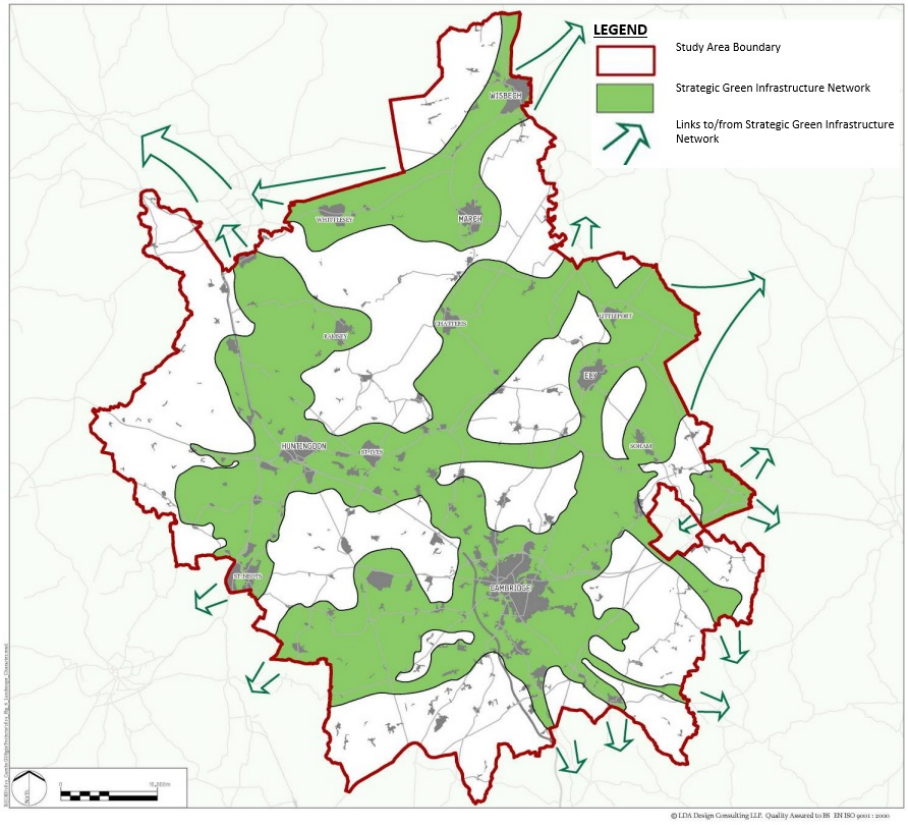
Green Infrastructure and Open Space

4.85 The last Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy was completed in 2011 and defines green infrastructure as 'a strategic, multi-functional network of public green spaces and routes, landscapes, biodiversity and heritage. It includes a wide range of elements such as country parks, wildlife habitats, rights of way, commons and greens, nature reserves, waterways and bodies of water, and historic landscapes and monuments. The network comprises rural and urban green infrastructure of different sizes and character, and the connections and links between them. It is part of (and contributes to) the wider environment.'

4.86 The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy established a series of strategic green infrastructure areas three of which cover land within Huntingdonshire: the River Nene, Huntingdonshire Fens and Woods and the Great Ouse (see Figure 4.11). This has been supplemented by designation of priority landscape scale nature recovery area of which four relate closely to Huntingdonshire: the Nene Valley, Great Fen, Great Ouse Valley and West Cambridgeshire Hundreds.

4.87 Green infrastructure supports a range of functions, including recreation and wildlife as well as landscape enhancement. Green infrastructure is essential to enhancing biodiversity by creating new habitats and helping to protect against habitat fragmentation, it aids mitigation and adaptation to climate change and provides multiple benefits for human health. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of access to local green space for people's physical and mental health as well as a place for social activity and local tourism. Huntingdonshire District Council collaborates with Natural Cambridgeshire, the local nature partnership, to help deliver the vision of doubling the area of rich wildlife habitats and natural greenspace across Cambridgeshire by 2050.

Figure 4.11 Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network



4.88 Huntingdonshire's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) identified that our communities benefit from a wealth of greenspaces. Across Huntingdonshire there is as average of 87 m^2 of green space per person which is significantly higher than the average across the East of England of 42.75 m^2. Survey results from the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy indicated that 68% of Huntingdonshire's residents visit a greenspace at least once a fortnight compared to the UK average of 57%.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.89 The Ordnance Survey National Greenspace Map has mapped parks, open spaces, village greens and play areas across Britain. It must be noted that the data set does not include all sites on a local level but gives a good picture at a strategic level the provision of various types of open green spaces available. At this strategic level, mapping data from April 2022 identified that there were 605 open green spaces across the district covering 1,229ha of land, including 276ha of land set out as public parks and gardens. As well as large scale sites 209 play areas were identified covering 16.4 ha of land. Further details can be found in Table 14.

Table 14 Ordanance Survey open green space data as at April 2022

Type of open green space	Number of sites	Total Area (m^2)	% of total open green space
Allotments or Community Growing Spaces	47	615,147.93	5%
Bowling Green	19	55,175.03	0.45%
Cemetery	44	408,093.47	3.32%
Golf Course	10	5,263,372.33	42.81%
Other Sports Facility	36	496,595	4.04%
Play Space	209	164,329.85	1.34%
Playing Field	88	2,120,592.44	17.25%
Public Park or Garden	37	2,758,285.89	22.44%
Religious Grounds	98	392,592.55	3.19%
Tennis Court	17	19,987.93	0.16%
Total open green space	**605**	**12,294,172.42**	**100%**

4.90 Across Huntingdonshire's towns and villages there are also opportunities for more formal sports facilities and play spaces, these are usually managed by parish and town councils and meet the needs of local communities. Additionally, the District Council manages One Leisure centres in Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots providing for a range of indoor and outdoor sports and leisure activities.

4.91 The Green Flag Award is the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom. As of July 2022, there are three open spaces managed to the Green Flag Award by Huntingdonshire District Council. These are Hinchingbrooke Country Park in Huntingdon (60ha), Paxton Pits Nature Reserve in Little Paxton (75ha) and Priory Park in St Neots (32ha). Sudbury Meadow in St Neots (0.8ha) has not reapplied due to a lack of resources and voluntary commitment. In 2022, the St Neots Riverside Miniature Railway were awarded a Green Flag Community Award. In addition to open spaces managed by the Council, Grafham Water, which is managed by Anglian Water, holds a Green Flag, as does the Queen Elizabeth II playing field in Little Paxton.

Hinchingbrooke Country Park

Little Paxton Pits Weedy Lake

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds
- Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement
- Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places
- Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Developments may not provide adequate provision for open green space to meet the needs arising from them and put pressure on existing spaces through overuse
- Open green space may not be provided in accessible locations
- Planning contributions and obligations may not be made/secured to improve the quality and quantity of open green spaces and strategic green infrastructure projects

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Pollution

Air Quality and Pollution

4.92 Air quality impacts human health, quality of life, the natural environment and built environment in the short and long term. Air quality across Huntingdonshire is considered to be good, there are however, four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the district in Huntingdon, St Neots, Brampton and along the A14 from Hemingford to Fenstanton. These were designated in 2005 and 2006. An AQMA is an area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives and are declared for specific pollutants and objectives.

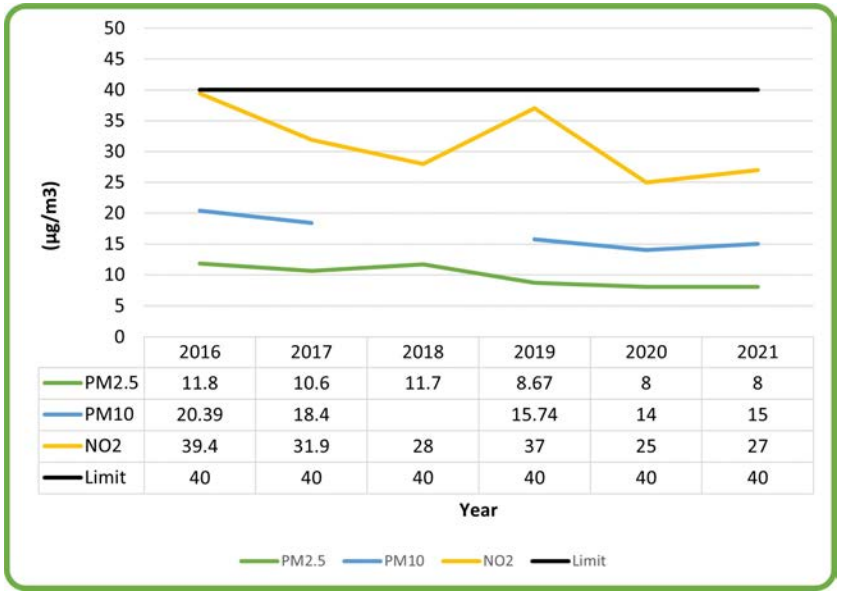
4.93 The main air quality issues within Huntingdonshire primarily relate to NO_2 (nitrogen dioxide) from vehicle emissions, mostly originating from the strategic road network along the A14 and to a lesser extent the A1. Local traffic and congestion within the market towns also contributes to some elevated levels locally, compared to the rest of the district. The AQMA designations reflect these areas where elevated air pollutants are found.

4.94 HDC's Environmental Health team continuingly monitor air quality across the district and produce an Air Quality Annual Status Report every year. The report monitors the presence of air pollutants within each AQMA and assess whether objectives are being met or exceeded. For Huntingdonshire, these objectives were set in the Cambridgeshire Air Quality Action Plan (2009) undertaken in collaboration with Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

4.95 In 2021, it was recorded that all sites met the NO_2 objective level (not exceeding 40µg/m3, or 40 micrograms per one cubic metre of air). Results in 2020 were significantly lower than previous years likely due to the relocation of the A14 and travel restriction measures to stop the spread of coronavirus. Results in 2021 were overall very slightly up from 2020 levels but still lower than pre-2020 levels. Although national travel restriction measures were less stringent as those in 2020, they are still likely to have resulted in a reduction in traffic, and therefore an improvement in related pollution levels. These measures, coupled with the continued A14 works to remove the viaduct within Huntingdon centre, have influenced the air quality results, continuing to make it difficult to assess the benefit of relocating the A14.

4.96 Fine particulate matter PM2.5 concentrations for the past five years have shown an overall downward trend and a reduction in the annual mean from 8.67µg/m3 in 2019 to 8µg/m3 in 2021. Also over the last five years, there has been an overall reduction in particulate matter PM10. The annual mean PM10 figure decreased from 15.74µg/m3 in 2019 to 14µg/m3 in 2020 with a slight increase to 15µg/m3 in 2021. Figure 4.12 shows the performance against the annual mean, the Air Quality Annual Status Reports include detailed assessment on each objective.

Figure 4.12 Annual mean monitoring results shown in µg/m3 for PM2.5, PM10 and NO2. For PM10 there was no data recorded in 2018.



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
PM2.5	11.8	10.6	11.7	8.67	8	8
PM10	20.39	18.4		15.74	14	15
NO2	39.4	31.9	28	37	25	27
Limit	40	40	40	40	40	40

4.97 As objectives have been complied with over the last several years, the Council proposes to revoke St Neots, Brampton, and the A14 Hemingford to Fenstanton AQMA's. The Huntingdon AQMA will also be reviewed as its objectives are being met, however due to travel restrictions arising from Covid-19 in 2020, it has not yet been possible to fully assess what the impact the re-routing of the A14 has had on air pollution. Also Covid restrictions on traffic means the data is unlikely to be representative of long-term trends in pollutant concentrations. In addition, the A428 upgrade of the route between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet roundabout with a new 10-mile dual carriageway and a number of junction improvements may have an impact on air quality particularly around St Neots.

4.98 The annual all-cause adult mortality attributable to anthropogenic (human-made) particulate air pollution (measured as fine particulate matter, PM2.5) is expressed as the percentage of annual deaths from all causes in those aged 30+. Figure 4.13 shows that the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in 2020 (the last available year at the time of writing) was 5.7% in Huntingdonshire, this was slightly higher than the recorded fractions for England (5.6%)[(14)]. The slight increase in the 2019 and then again in the 2020 data coincides with an increase in the recorded annual means of PM2.5 for 2018 (a figure which has since decreased from 2019) and NO_2 in 2019 (a figure which in 2020 and 2021 has since decreased).

Figure 4.13 Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Huntingdonshire	5.4%	5.3%	5.5%	5.4%	5.1%	5.5%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	5.7%
England	5.4%	5.1%	5.3%	5.1%	4.7%	5.4%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%	5.6%

Noise Pollution

4.99 Noise can have an effect on health, wellbeing, productivity and the natural environment. Within Huntingdonshire, Defra's strategic noise mapping data shows that along the strategic transport (road and rail) network there are several Important Areas (IAs). These are 'hotspot' locations where the highest 1% of noise levels at residential locations can be found. These are along the A1, A14, A141, A1307, A1123 and the East Coast Mainline Railway.

14 Office for Health Improvements and Disparities, public health data: indicator D01 - fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

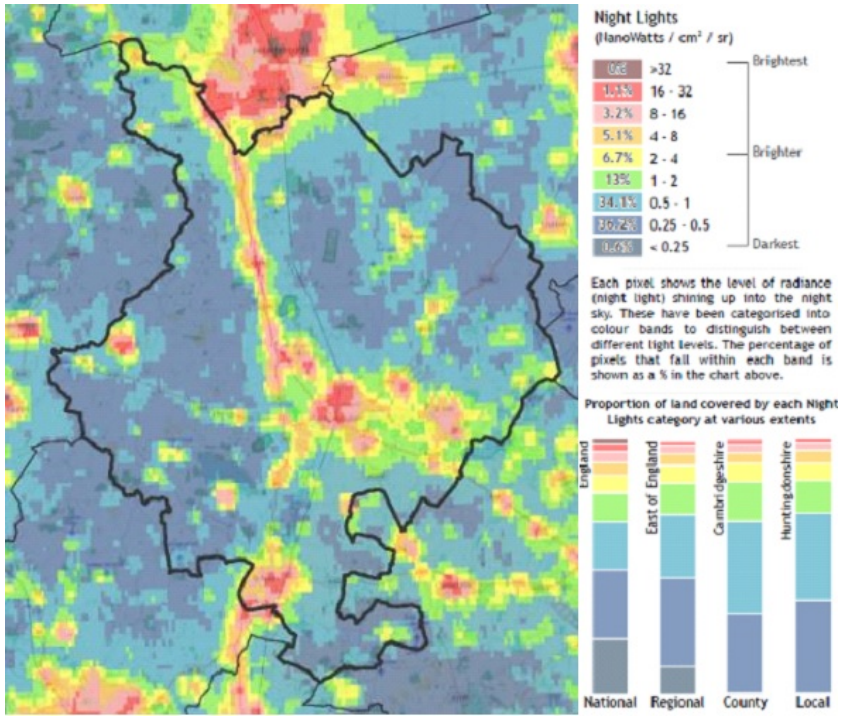
Light Pollution

4.100 There is increasing awareness of the potential impacts of light pollution on wildlife by interrupting natural rhythms including migration, reproduction and feeding patterns and the quality of life of residents by disrupting sleep and for some increasing levels of anxiety. It can also harm people's enjoyment of the countryside. In 2015, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) commissioned a national interactive map of England's light pollution. The light pollution maps help define areas of dark skies.

4.101 This maps shows that Huntingdonshire is the 92nd darkest authority area of the 326 within England recorded on the dataset. Huntingdonshire has a greater proportion of its land covered by darker skies when compared to the proportion for all of Cambridgeshire (Figure 4.14 [15]).

4.102 The market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots are shown to be the brightest areas. The strategic road network contributes to increased levels of light particularly along the A1. The rural parts of the district are the darkest with some small concentrations of increased levels of light within villages. Generally, darker skies are also observed where there are nature reserves and sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar, Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Great Fen enjoys dark skies and has been awarded the designation of a Dark Sky Discovery Site by the Science and Technologies Facilities Council at two sites: The Wildlife Trust Countryside Centre and New Decoy Farm Information Point.

Figure 4.14 Light pollution map for Huntingdonshire



15 Created by LUC Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2016 Image and Data processing by NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center. DMSP data collected by the US Air Force Weather Agency

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion
- Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife
- Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport
- Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may take place without adequate assessment on air quality and may increase concentration levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter
- Development may be located in locations that reinforce car usage rather than in areas that can utilise lower polluting or non-polluting means of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking
- The health and quality of life of Huntingdonshire residents may be adversely affected as a result of air, light and noise pollution
- Development may take place without full consideration on the suitability, location and design of lighting within schemes and as such lighting may be obtrusive

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

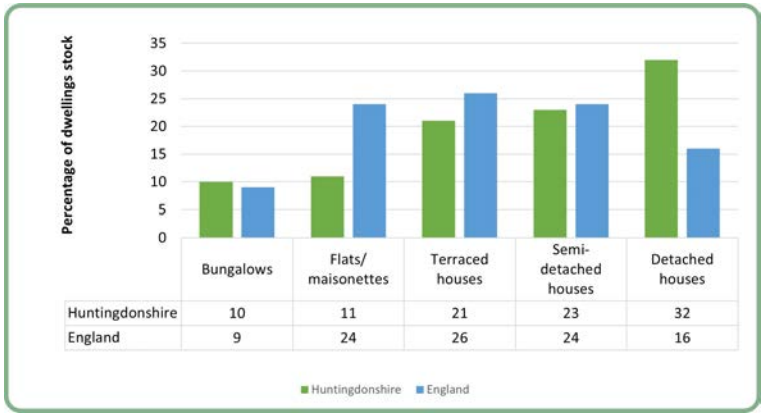
Socio-Economic Characteristics

Housing

Current housing stock

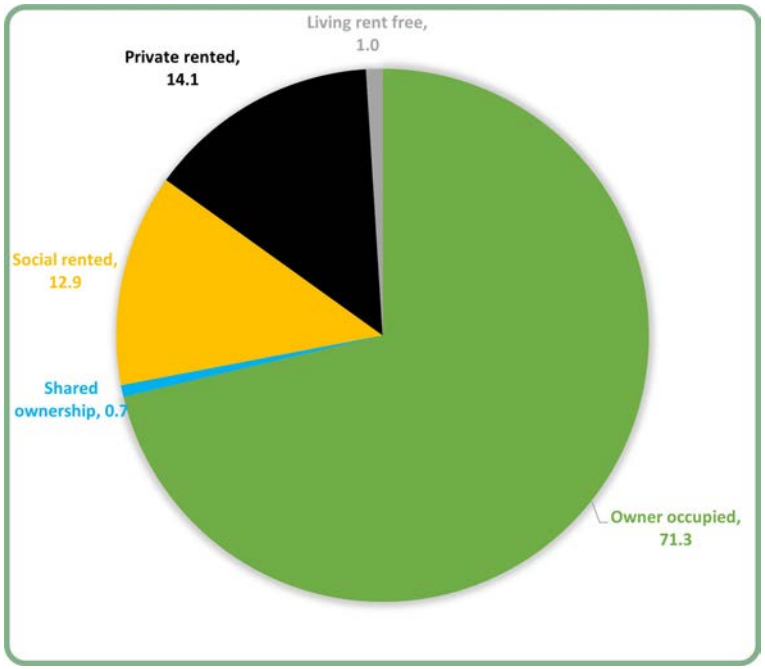
4.103 Huntingdonshire has an estimated 80,021 dwellings as of 1 April 2022. This is based upon the 2011 Census figure of 71,450 plus known completions from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2022. The composition of the housing stock is shown below in Figure 4.15. This illustrates how Huntingdonshire's dwelling stock is strongly weighted towards provision of detached houses at twice the average proportion for these in England. There are correspondingly far fewer flats or maisonettes than the average for England reflecting the district's semi-rural nature and relatively small scale of the towns.

Figure 4.15 Dwelling Type, 2011



4.104 Figure 4.16 shows housing tenure data from the 2011 Census (table KS402UK). Owner occupied housing dominates at 71.3% which exceeds both the Cambridgeshire average of 66% and the England average of 63.4%. Social rented stock in Huntingdonshire is notably low at 12.9% compared to the Cambridgeshire average of 15.4% and the England average of 17.7%. However, considerable efforts have been made since 2011 to increase the availability of social and affordable rented properties and to diversify the affordable tenures available to include more shared ownership properties.

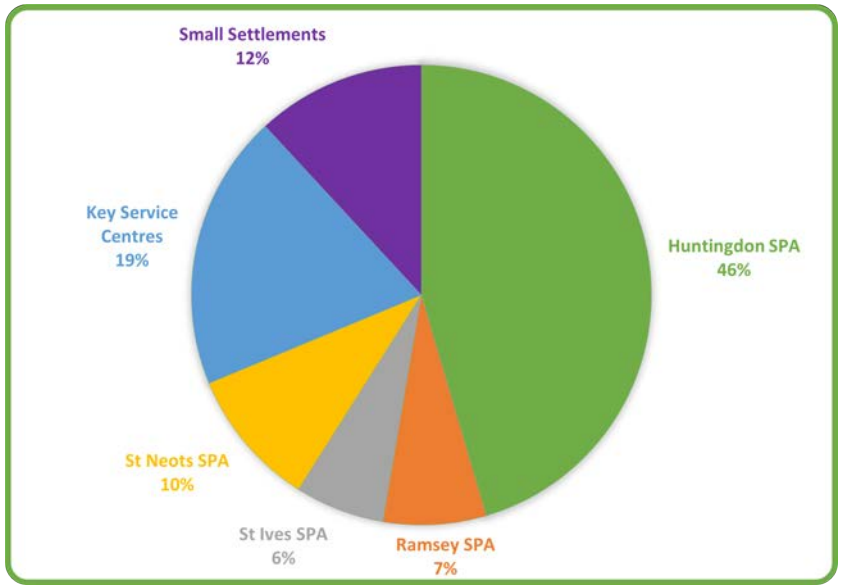
Figure 4.16 % Tenure of Dwelling Stock, 2011



4.105 Recent housing growth has been shaped by Policy LP2 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 which has sought to focus approximately 75% of the district's new housing growth within the four designated spatial planning areas focused on Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. The remaining 25% is focused on the seven key services centres of Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley as well as being distributed around the many smaller settlements. The distribution pattern achieved for completed new homes from 2015/16 to 2021/22 is shown below in Figure 4.17 which illustrates

how 69.7% of completions in that time were situated within the spatial planning areas. This is expected to increase as homes on more recently granted planning permissions come through to completion, in particular those at the St Neots East strategic expansion location.

Figure 4.17 Distribution of housing growth 2016-22



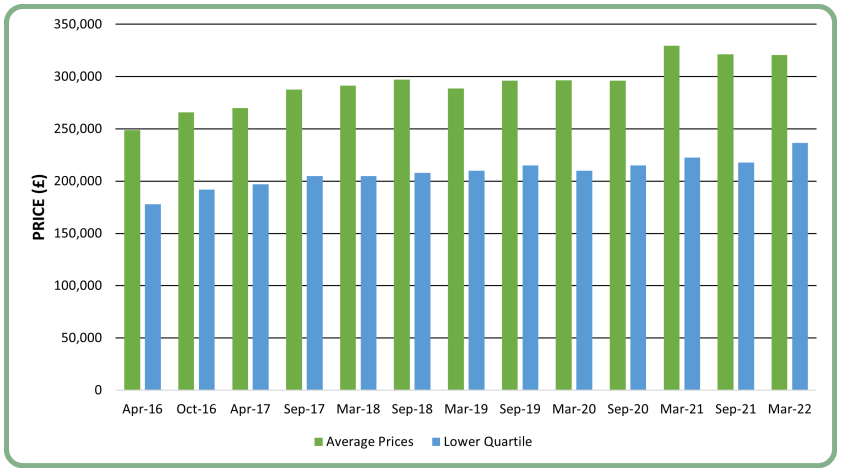
Affordability

4.106 Housing affordability has been an increasing challenge for Huntingdonshire's residents over the last three decades (see Figure 4.18). In March 2022 the average residential property price based on sales and valuations in Huntingdonshire was £360,295 [(16)] based on both sales and valuations. This is an increase of £33,539 over the previous 6 months and an increase of £27,214 over the previous 12 months.

4.107 Actual sales prices vary from valuations. The average actual sales price in March 2022 was lower at £320,699 (down by £3,573 on the previous 6 months and down by £11,211 over the previous 12 months). In August 2006 this figure was £205,088. This indicates an increase of 56% across a 15 year period. By way of comparison prices in Cambridge City rose 111% from £265,308 in August 2006 to £560,674 in March 2022 and in Fenland prices rose 57% from £154,234 in August 2006 to £242,460 in March 2022.

4.108 House prices are measured in two ways to indicate the average overall and the average of the lowest priced quarter of the market. The median average comprises the sale price of the middle home in a list of properties ranked from the highest sale price to lowest over a set period of time. The lower quartile house price comprises the sale price which is valued at a quarter of the way through the total range of sales when ordered from lowest to highest. It is used to provide an indicator of the costs incurred by those purchasing homes in the more affordable section of the market.

Figure 4.18 Average House Prices



16 Source: Hometrack data, presented in the quarterly Housing Market Bulletins prepared by the Housing Board for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough & West Suffolk, the last edition was published in July 2022 using data from March 2022

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4.109 Affordability ratios are used to assess house prices compared to average earnings to show how many times local income local house prices represent. They are calculated by dividing house prices by gross annual workplace or residence-based earnings. The higher the ratio, the less affordable it is for people to get onto the property ladder. Lower ratios tend to suggest greater affordability but may indicate lower earnings, reduced purchasing power and/or lower demand in an area. It should be noted that affordability ratios are calculated on a district wide basis and can hide significant variations between different locations within the district. The Office for National Statistic publish an annual affordability ratio based on the median price paid for residential property and earnings data, the 2021 data gives a figure of 9.6 for Huntingdonshire.

4.110 In Huntingdonshire the lowest median house price affordability ratio since December 2016 was experienced in June 2017 at 6.5 and the highest in September 2021 at 9.4, this had dropped to 7.6 by March 2022. For those in the lower quartile of earnings and seeking properties within the lower quartile of the market the affordability ratio is even more challenging. The lowest affordability ratio experienced since December 2016 was 8.8 also in June 2017 with the highest being 10.1 in March 2022. By way of comparison elsewhere within the Cambridge sub-region housing market area the worst median affordability ratio as at March 2022 was in Cambridge City at 10.6 and the best in Peterborough being 7.1. Again in March 2022, for the lower quartile the lack of affordability is even more stark with Cambridge City again being worst at 14 and Fenland and Peterborough being best at 9.9. The amount that can be borrowed for a mortgage varies across different lenders but typically ranges between 3 and a maximum of 4.5 times the household's income. Although Huntingdonshire is one of the less expensive district within the housing market area both the median and lower quartile ratios significantly exceed the typical lending ranges indicating considerable financial challenges to those trying to enter the housing market, particularly for the first time or if relocating from a lower value area.

4.111 Around a quarter of homes within Huntingdonshire are rented, either privately or through a range of social landlords. Weekly median private rents in March 2022 were £150 for a 1 bedroom property, £190 for 2 bedrooms, and £229 for a 3 bedroom property. The local housing allowances for the Huntingdon broad market area which covers the majority of the district range from £65.59 for a room, £130 for a 1 bedroom property up to £253.15 for a 4 bedroom property. For all accommodation sizes the local housing allowance is lower than the weekly median private rents. The northern part of the district, including Ramsey and Yaxley fall within the Peterborough broad rental market where prices and local housing allowances are correspondingly lower. Weekly median private rents in March 2022 were £137 for a 1 bedroom property, £172 for 2 bedrooms and £201 for a 3 bedroom property. The local housing allowance ranged from £65.59 for a room, £110.47 for a 1 bedroom property up to £207.12 for a 4 bedroom property.

4.112 Housing associations (also known as registered social providers/ landlords) provide the majority of rented affordable homes in Huntingdonshire. Rent levels vary depending upon the nature of the contract. Net weekly rental charges for general needs housing for 2021-22 for those in social rented properties were £81 for 1 bedroom, £94 for 2 bedroom and £103 for 3 bedroom and for those in 'affordable rented properties were £112 for 1 bedroom, £133 for 2 bedroom and £157 for 3 bedroom. 4 bedroom prices are not listed due to the rarity of such properties.

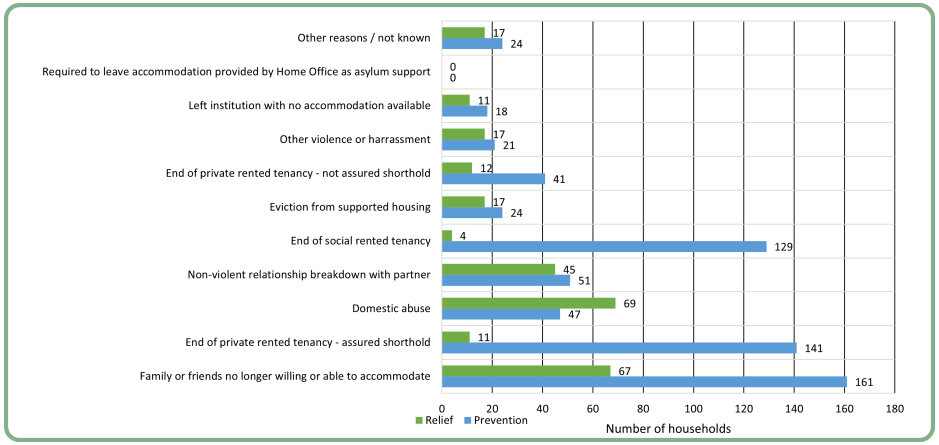
4.113 As can be seen from the baseline data above, provision of affordable housing remains a major challenge for the next Local Plan.

Homelessness

4.114 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a duty to both prevent and relieve homelessness on local authorities. The prevention duties include activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness within 56 days from becoming homeless which can include relocation to alternative accommodation as well as assisting people to remain in their existing property. For those who are homeless, or become so within the 56 days of the prevention duty period, the relief duty requires local authorities to take all reasonable steps to help eligible people to secure suitable accommodation. Figure 4.19 below shows the significance of the prevention duty in resolving cases with the majority of cases addressed at this stage rather than through the relief duty.

4.115 Data taken from the DLUHC/ MHCLG Statutory Homelessness detailed local authority level tables financial year 2020-21 show that 928 households were assessed as owed a duty of prevention or relief from homelessness. Where issues cannot be resolved through the prevention actions a household may be counted again within those seeking help under the relief duty. The largest single cause of homelessness was family or friends no longer being willing or able to provide accommodation.

Figure 4.19 Reasons for Homelessness, 2021-22

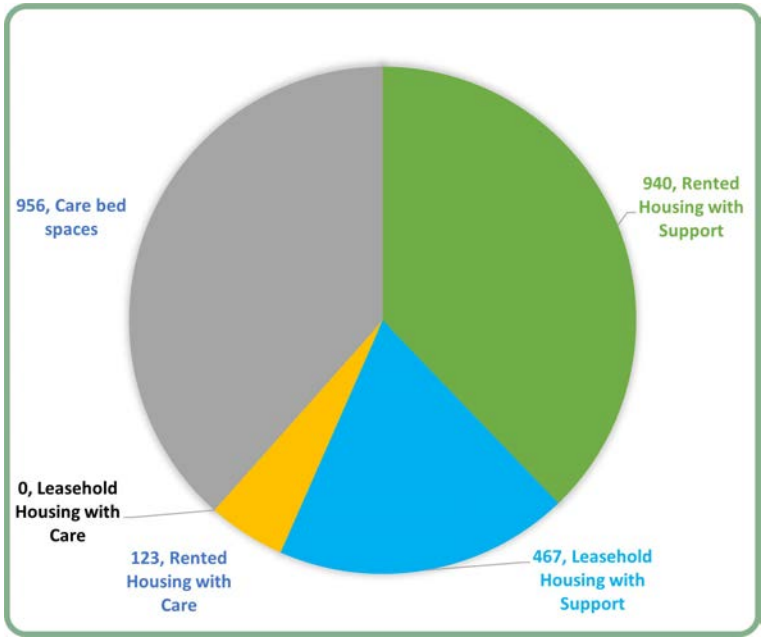


4.116 Of the 659 households for whom the prevention duty ended during 2020-21 accommodation for 6 months or more was successfully secured for 370 households. Of those for whom the relief duty ended accommodation for 6 months or more was successfully secured for 157 households. 172 households were accepted as remaining homeless more than 56 days after the relief duty period started of which 143 households were considered to be in priority need primarily through having dependent children or containing household members with physical or mental health problems. The main duty ended for 145 households during 2020-21 with 113 accepting social housing offers and 2 accepting private rental offers; 10 households however were reclassified as becoming intentionally homeless from temporary accommodation.

Specialist housing

4.117 Older people can have specialist housing needs ranging from properties with improved accessibility within an otherwise standard house type through to care home beds with high levels of support. The Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Housing Needs of Specific Groups study (2021) indicates the current supply of specialist older people's housing as shown below in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20 Specialist Older People's Accommodation by Property Type, 2020



4.118 Based on the SHOP@ Assumptions the level of need for specialist accommodation in Huntingdonshire is forecast to increase by a total of 2,082 units by 2040.The expected housing types for these comprise additional demand for 554 rented housing units with support, 977 leasehold

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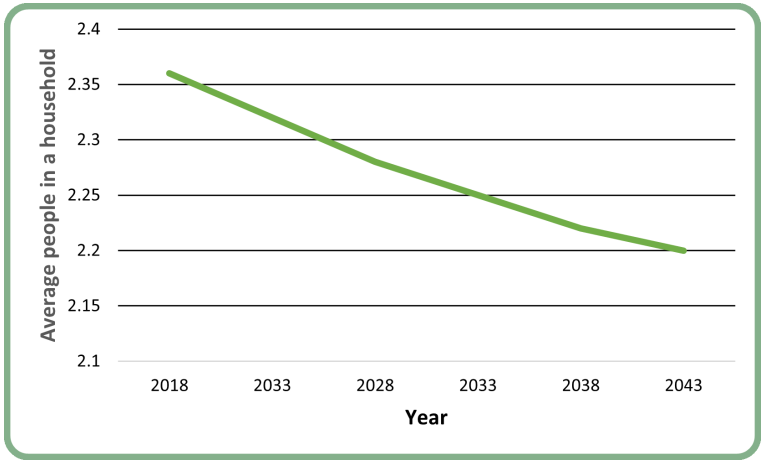
housing units with support, 241 rented housing units with care and 310 leasehold housing units with care. The provision of a choice of attractive, suitable housing options for older people is a key element of providing a good housing mix. This may enable some older households to downsize from homes that no longer meet their housing needs or are expensive to run and can provide opportunities to move into suitable, accessible accommodation that helps improve people's quality of life.

Household Characteristics

4.119 Average size is one of the key characteristics of households that affects planning for housing. A household may be a single person or any group of people, related or not, who live in a property and share cooking and other facilities; communal establishments such as nursing homes or prisons are excluded. Average household size is the typical number of people living within a single property. Figure 4.21 shows the Office for National Statistics' predicted average household size for Huntingdonshire up to 2043. It reflects a decline from 2.36 people per household in 2018 to 2.20 by 2043.

Figure 4.21 Average household size predictions



Key sustainability issues and problems

- Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations
- Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population
- Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges
- Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless
- Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall

What may happen without a Local Plan

- The amount of new housing provided may be insufficient to meet needs creating further price inflation or an excessive supply may be permitted resulting in uncertainty over delivery of sites
- New housing provision may be less well suited to meeting local needs in terms of size and type
- The specialist accommodation needs of older people may not be met

Population and Health

Population Characteristics

4.120 The national Census is taken every 10 years and records the current population. The 2021 census recorded a total population for Huntingdonshire as being 180,830 people, this is an increase of 6.7% from the 2011 Census where there were 169,500 people. At 6.7%, Huntingdonshire's population increase is lower than the increase for the East of England (8.3%). Bedford, Cambridge and Peterborough saw their populations increase by around 17.7%, 17.6% and17.5% respectively, while others such as Fenland saw an increase of 7.6% and East Cambridgeshire saw smaller growth (4.6%).

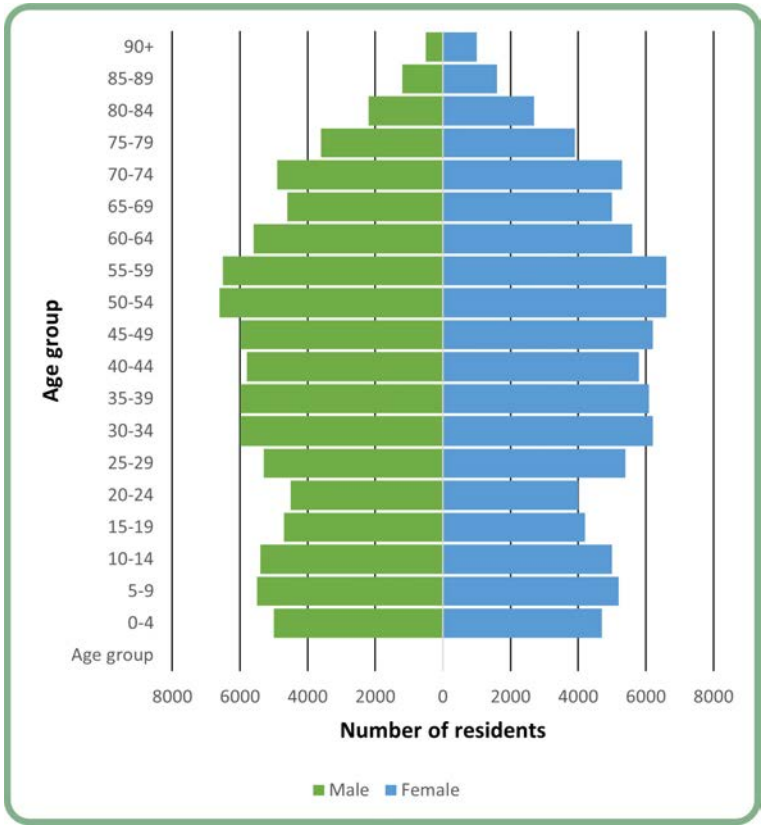
4.121 The fastest growth rate experienced by Huntingdonshire's population was during the 1960s and 1970s. The 1961 Census gave a population of 66,068; by 1981 this had grown by 89% to 124,773. By 2021, the population had increased by 44.9% over the 1981 figure. These growth rates should be treated with a degree of caution reflecting changes in Census methodologies and area boundaries over time.

4.122 Detailed population data showing the proportion of the population belonging to each ethnic group have not yet been released for the 2021 Census. The 2011 Census recorded that 89.5% of Huntingdonshire's population were white British, with 2.5% recorded as being Asian/Asian British, 1% Back/Black British and 1.5% recording themselves as mixed ethnicity.

4.123 There were 434 residents/km^2 in England in 2021, up from 407/km^2 in 2011. As of 2021, Huntingdonshire is the 14th least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around one person living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

4.124 The first results of the 2021 census provides data for Huntingdonshire's resident population by 5 year age groups (Figure 4.22). It only provides projections by traditional male or female categories; no data is available for people identifying as gender neutral. Huntingdonshire's census 2021 population is estimated as 49.6% male (89,700 residents) and 50.4% female (91,100 residents). This is a 0.3% change from census 2011. The gender balance of the population is broadly equal in younger age groups. Broadly, Huntingdonshire has seen higher population growth in older age groups, in particular the 65 years and over age group (increased by 33.7%). In contrast, younger population groups have seen limited growth or small declines (for example, an increase of 1.5% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 1.8% in children aged under 15 years).

Figure 4.22 Age structure of Huntingdonshire's population at the 2021 census



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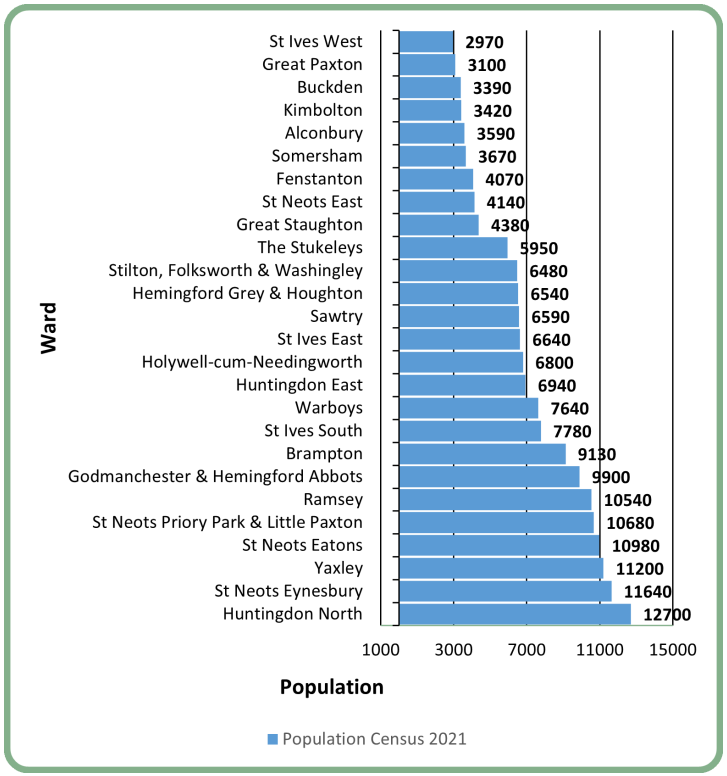
4.125 Huntingdonshire's average population per household (calculated for only residents living in households) decreased from 2.41 in Census 2011 to 2.32 in Census 2021.

4.126 Cambridgeshire Insight are releasing localised Census 2021 outputs. Recent summaries have shown that population growth at ward level in Huntingdonshire has been more unevenly spread compared to other districts in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Huntingdon North is the most populous ward with 12,700 people followed by St Neots Eynesbury (11,640) and then Yaxley (11,200). The least populous ward is St Ives West with 2,970 people. See Figure 4.23 for more details.

Figure 4.23 Huntingdonshire's population by ward, Census 2021

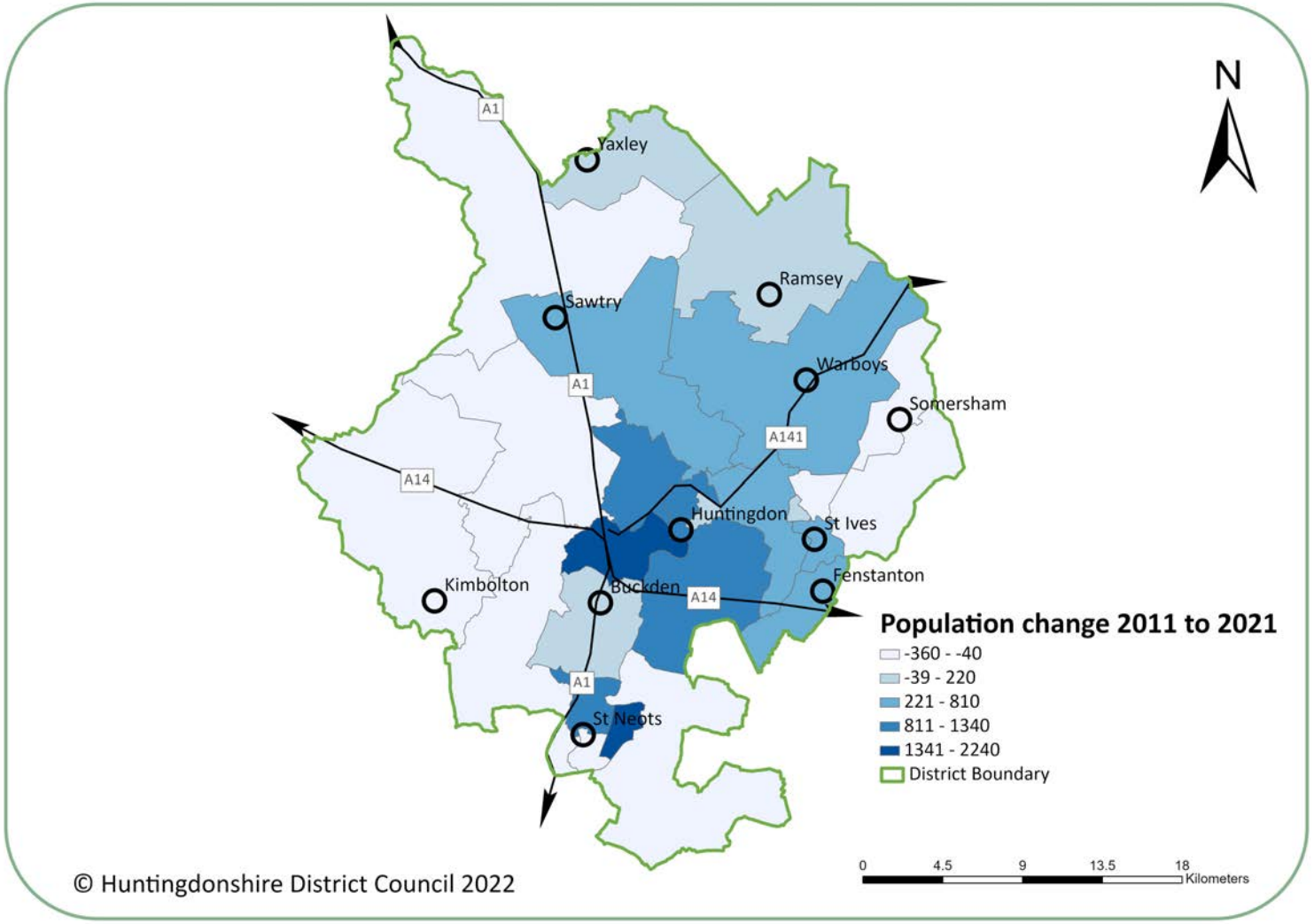


4.127 16 wards have seen population increases since Census 2011, whereas 10 wards have seen population decreases. The largest decrease has been in St Ives East, with a population decrease of -360 residents or -5.2%. In contrast, there has been notable population growth in the wards of:

- **St Neots East**: an increase of 2,240 residents - growth of 118.5% - and an increase of 770 households. This is the second highest percentage population growth in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This is largely attributed to development of Loves Farm and now Wintringham Park.
- **Brampton**: an increase of 2,060 residents - growth of 29% - and an increase of 900 households. This is attributed towards the redevelopment of RAF Brampton and other major developments within the village.
- **The Stukeleys**: an increase of 1,290 residents - growth of 27.6% - and an increase of 670 households. This is a result of the Alconbury Weald development that is ongoing.

4.128 Map 4.5 shows visually the population change between 2011 and 2021 in each of Huntingdonshire's wards. Data has been taken from the Census 2021: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough provisional ward level population summary document published on Cambridgeshire Insight. The map shows that the rural western part of the district has seen population decline throughout with increases focused in and around the towns and larger villages. Population decline gives rise to challenges in supporting local services because there are less people to use them.

Map 4.5 Population change between 2011 and 2021 at ward level



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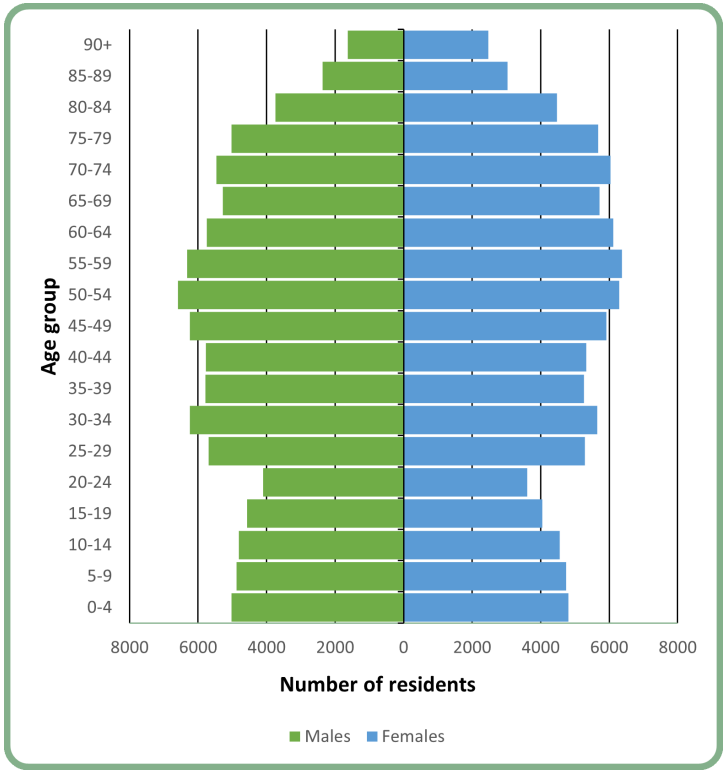
Population Projections

4.129 Figure 4.24 shows the forecasted age structure for Huntingdonshire for 2042 [(17)]. The data shows that by 2042 the proportion of people aged 0-19 is predicted to decline from 21.9% of the population to 19.7% and those aged 20-64 to decline to 53.7%. In contrast those aged 65-79 are predicted to increase to 17.4%. The greatest relative increase is predicted amongst those aged 80 and over going up to 9.3%.

Figure 4.24 Age structure forecast for 2042



4.130 Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire at birth is higher than the national average for both males and females. The ONS calculate life expectancy based on a three year average figure.

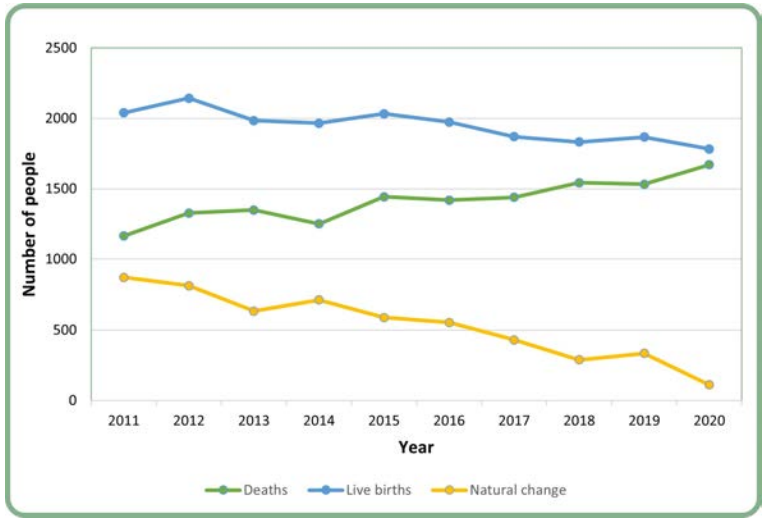
4.131 For a female born 2001-2003 life expectancy was 81.56 years, by a birth date of 2010-2012 this had increased to 84.18 years and by a birth date of 2018-2020 a female's life expectancy had fractionally decreased to 84.14 years. For Cambridgeshire as a whole a female's life expectancy for 2018-2020 was 84.46 years with both being higher than the average for England at 83.14 years. Life expectancy for males was lower than that for females across all dates and locations.

4.132 As of 2001-2003 a male's life expectancy was 77.50 years in Huntingdonshire, increasing to 80.77 years by 2010-2012 and further increasing fractionally to 80.98 years by 2018-2020. Again this was marginally below the average for Cambridgeshire for 2018-2020 at 81.07 years but but were higher than the average for England at 79.40 years.

4.133 Figure 4.25 below shows the trends in live births, deaths and subsequent natural population change for 2011 to 2020. It broadly indicates that annual deaths are exceeding whilst live annual births are decreasing. Natural change is still giving rise to a small positive growth rate but this has declined significantly over the decade from a peak natural change growth of 875 in 2011 to just 112 in 2020. Given the projected population profile for Huntingdonshire by 2042 it is likely that natural change rates will be negative.

17 These projections are produced by the Office for National Statistics, the last available data are 2018-based population projections. ONS aim to update these projections towards the end of 2022 following the data outputs from the 2021 census

Figure 4.25 Natural change rate of population 2011 to 2020



4.134 The Office for National Statistics has recorded weekly death occurrences by all causes and those specifically attributed to Covid-19. There were two distinct peaks of Covid-19 related deaths, firstly in spring 2020 and secondly in the first quarter of 2021. In 2020, week 20 saw 50% of deaths recorded in Huntingdonshire as being related to Covid-19. The first quarter of 2021 saw a peak of 40% of deaths attributed to Covid-19 in week 4, since then rates continued to fall.

4.135 A range of NHS primary care facilities are available within Huntingdonshire to support the local population's health (see Map 4.6). Hinchingbrooke Hospital is a 304 bed district general hospital located in Huntingdon offering a range of general surgery, specialist units, maternity and emergency care along with a 23 bed treatment centre. Residents also frequently access services at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge and Peterborough City Hospital.

4.136 There are 21 full time General Practioner Surgeries with also many offering extended hours on specific evenings and the St Neots Health Centre offering some weekend access. The greatest concentrations of GP surgery provision are within Huntingdon and St Neots reflecting the greater density of population in these towns. Four surgeries provide GP access on a part time basis in smaller settlements each offering services at least three days a week. In September 2020 the Church Street Surgery in Somersham closed down which also resulted in the closure of its two branch surgeries in Earith and Bluntisham which had limited opening hours. Again for some residents the nearest GP surgery may be outside Huntingdonshire.

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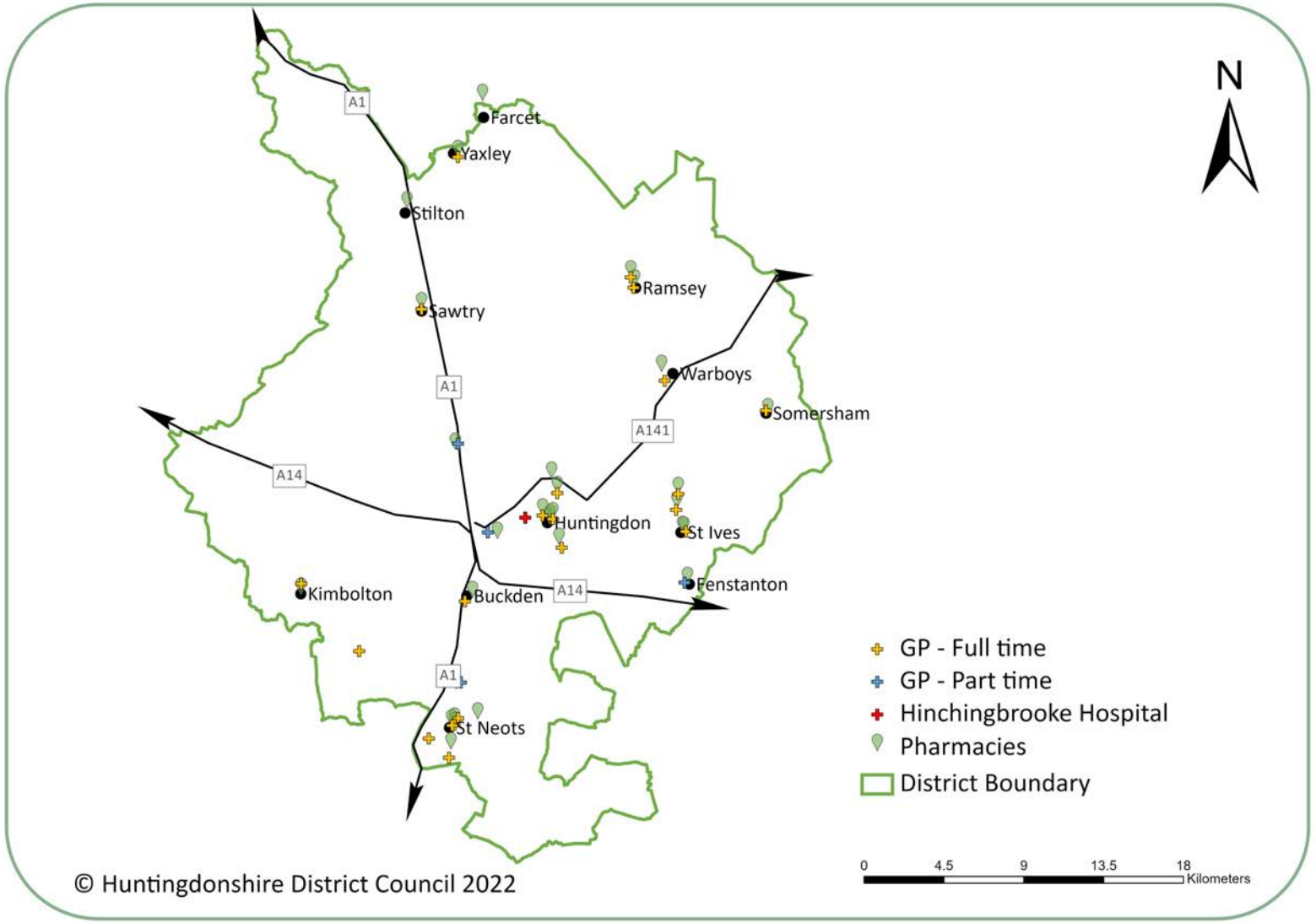
Map 4.6 Health Facilities in Huntingdonshire, March 2022



4.137 Data from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities indicates that in overall terms the health of Huntingdonshire's population is slightly better than that for England as a whole. A small range of health indicators which relate reasonably closely to impacts of the built environment on health are presented in Table 15 below to provide a summary picture of this.

Table 15 Health Indicators

Indicator	Date range	Huntingdonshire	England
Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution	2020	5.7%	5.6%
Percentage of physically active adults	2020/21	68.6%	65.9%
Under 75s mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases (1 year range)	2020	55.8 per 100,000	70.4 per 100,000
Hip fractures in people aged 65 and over	2020/21	509 per 100,000	529 per 100,000
Under 75 mortality rate from cancer (1 year range)	2020	104.6 per 100,000	125.1 per 100,000
Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese	2020/21	65.3%	63.5%
Prevalence of obesity or severe obesity for children in Year 6 (10-11 years old)	2019/20	19.6%	21.0%

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options
- Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants
- Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers
- GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations
- Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas

What may happen without a Local Plan

- New homes may not contribute to the provision of additional healthcare provision designed to meet the increased needs generated
- Less emphasis may be placed on development of sustainable neighbourhoods facilitating active forms of travel which can boost people's physical and mental health
- Less emphasis may be placed on construction of safe, accessible developments which facilitate ease of access for all
- Rural areas may continue to see their populations decline and subsequent loss of any remaining services

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Income and Deprivation

4.138 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD).The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 measures deprivation levels across England based on 7 topic areas:

1. Income
2. Employment
3. Education, Skills and Training
4. Health Deprivation and Disability
5. Crime
6. Barriers to Housing and Services
7. Living Environment

4.139 Each topic area has a subset of detailed indicators to derive a comprehensive assessment of deprivation across geographical areas such as Local Authority areas and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA)[18]. Huntingdonshire is the 69th least deprived district out of 317 English Local Authorities. Of other Cambridgeshire authorities, South Cambridgeshire is the 16th least deprived, East Cambridgeshire is 45th least deprived, Cambridge City is the 107th least deprived, and Fenland and Peterborough rank 80th and 51st respectively. When comparing all LSOA across England results show that Huntingdonshire has two LSOAs that fall within the 20% most deprived (H 008A in Huntingdon West and H 008B in Huntingdon North). A summary report on deprivation in Huntingdonshire can be found at Cambridgeshire Insight.

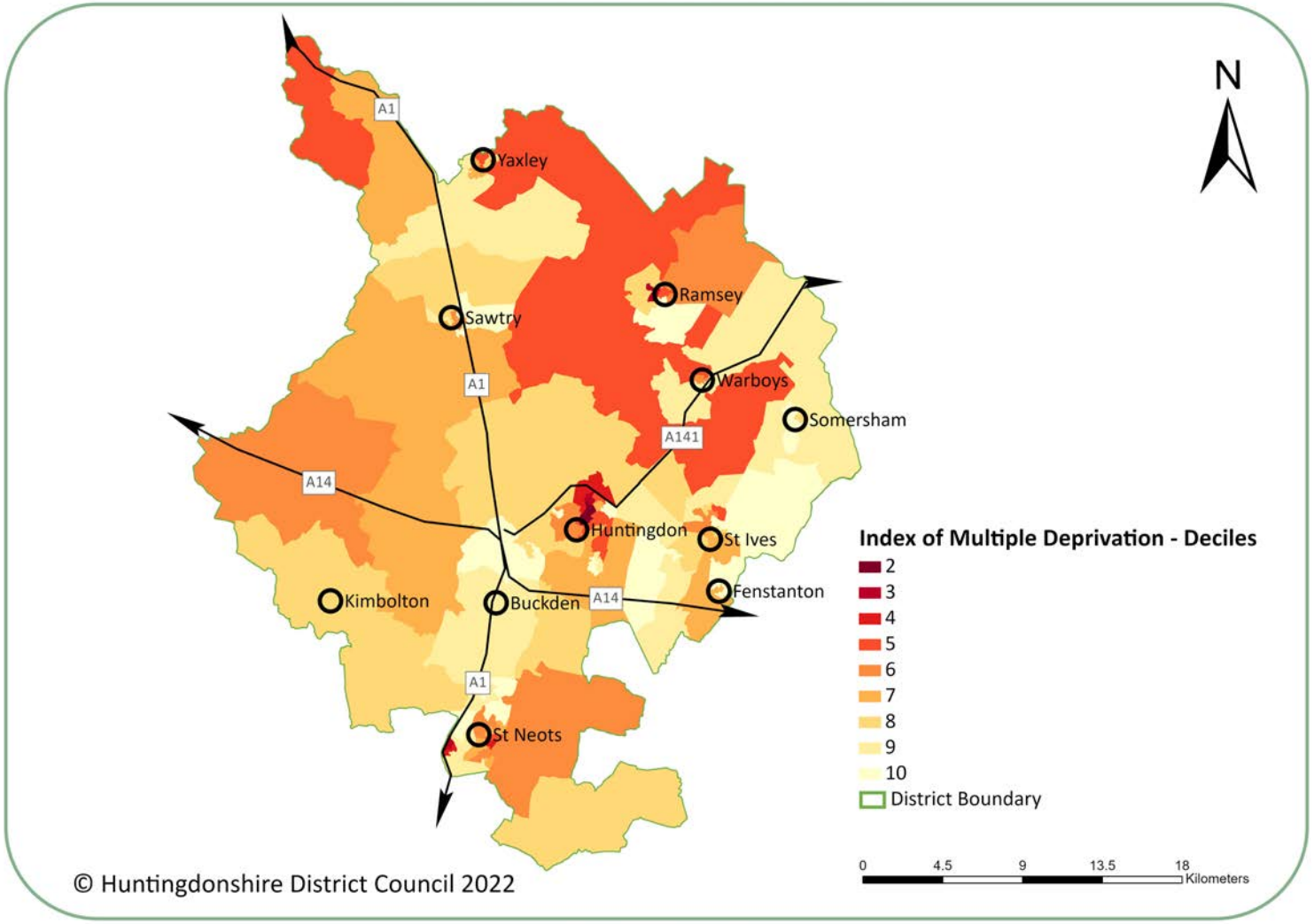
4.140 Map 4.7 shows the Index of Multiple Deprivation by deciles across Huntingdonshire. Of the deprivation categories identified in the IMD for Huntingdonshire, 'Barriers to Housing and Services' ranks as the lowest nationally (117 out of 317 authorities of which 1 is the most deprived). 'Income', 'Employment' and 'Health and Disability' categories perform above average, ranking 250th, 245th and 242nd out of 317 local authorities respectively.

4.141 Within Huntingdonshire income deprivation rankings vary significantly. Of the 105 LSOAs in Huntingdonshire, 1 LSOA falls within the 2nd decile of most income deprived areas (this is Huntingdon North), whereas 20 fall within the 10th decile (the least deprived).

4.142 In Huntingdonshire 79.7% of the working age population (16 to 64 years) were in employment (Jul 2021-Jun 2022) [19], this compares to % in the 80.3% in the Eastern region and 78.6% for Great Britain.

18 A LSOA is split in areas that contain up to 3,000 people or 1,200 households Source: ONS: Census Geography
19 Employment and unemployment (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022) - ONS Annual Population Survey from NOMIS Local Authority Profiles

Map 4.7 Index of Multiple Deprivation by Deciles - 2019



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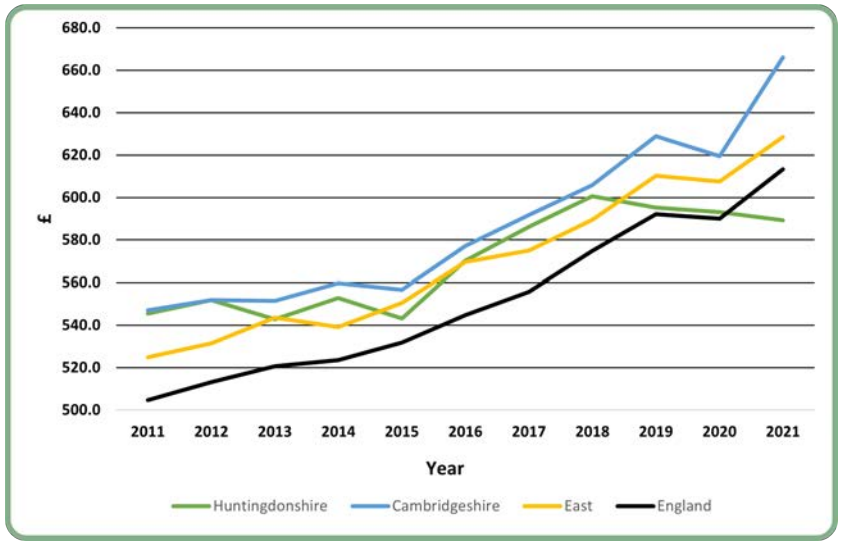
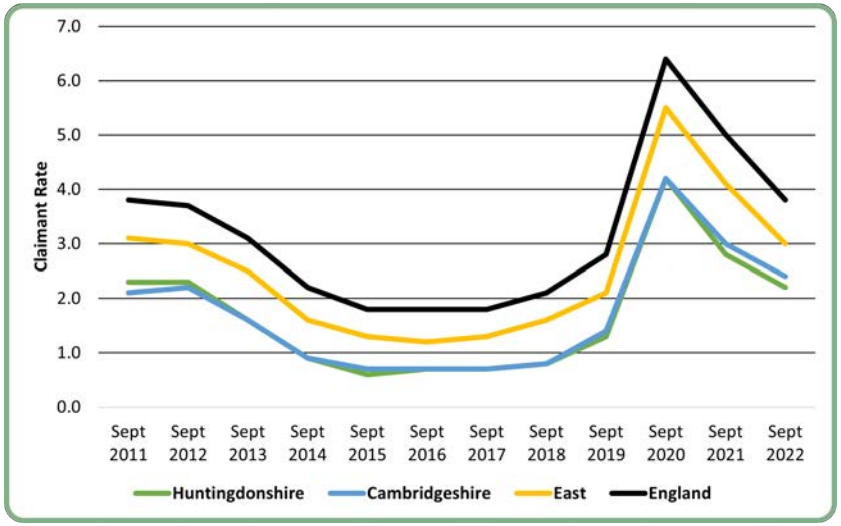
4.143 Median weekly pay (gross) in Huntingdonshire has bucked local and regional trends (Figure 4.26). The ONS annual survey of hours and earnings (resident analysis 2021) demonstrates that although median weekly pay continues to rise in Cambridgeshire, regionally and nationally, pay in Huntingdonshire has been slowly declining since 2018. Weekly median pay in Huntingdonshire peaked at approximately £600 in 2018. 2020 saw a temporary decrease in weekly pay across the country as a result of the pandemic, however other authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have recovered to demonstrate increasing pay since. Currently median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire sits at approximately £589, this is below regional and English pay of around £628 and £613 respectively. Residents in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire earn on average more ranging between £728 and £783 respectively. It is notable that median weekly pay in East Cambridge was £629 in 2021 (the third highest within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), whilst Peterborough and Fenland sit below the national average at approximately £565 and £546 respectively.

Figure 4.26 Weekly Pay (Gross)



4.144 Although median weekly pay has decreased in Huntingdonshire, the claimant rate as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+ has remained in line with local and national trends (Figure 4.27). Claimant rates peaked in 2021 appearing to coincide with the post lockdown impacts on businesses and the gradual repeal of the national furlough scheme. As at September 2022 claimant rates in England, the East and across Cambridgeshire have continued to decline. Within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area Huntingdonshire has the third lowest claimant count rate (2.2 as at September 2022) after South Cambridgeshire (1.8) and East Cambridgeshire (2.0). (ONS Claimant Count - Claimants as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+)) Distributed across age ranges approximately (as at September 2022) 16% of claimants in Huntingdonshire were aged 16 to 24 and 25% aged 50 or over; the majority of claimants sit within the 24 to 49 age group (59%). There remain future challenges ahead including but not limited to increasing energy price rises, uncertainty surrounding the economy and the impact that this may have on the cost of living.

Figure 4.27 Claimants as a proportion of economically active residents aged 16+



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Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation
- Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Income and deprivation disparity may continue to increase
- Residents across the district may continue to face financial hardship exacerbating the cost of living crisis

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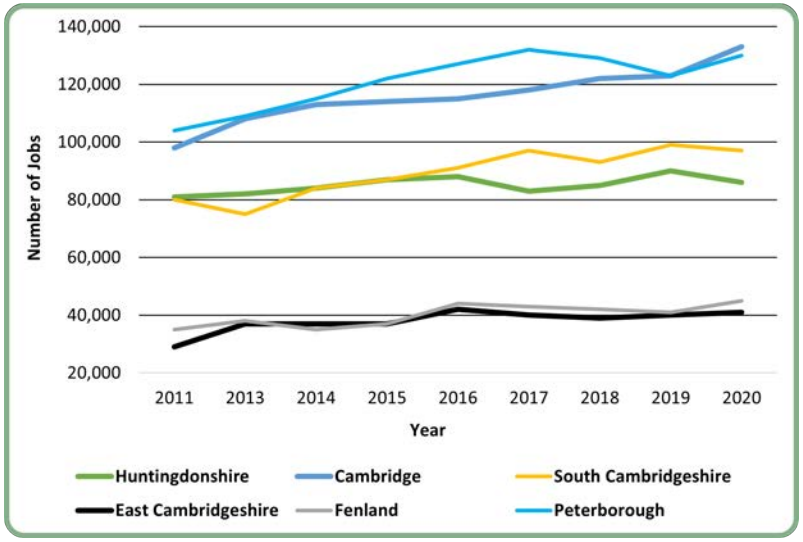
Employment and Businesses

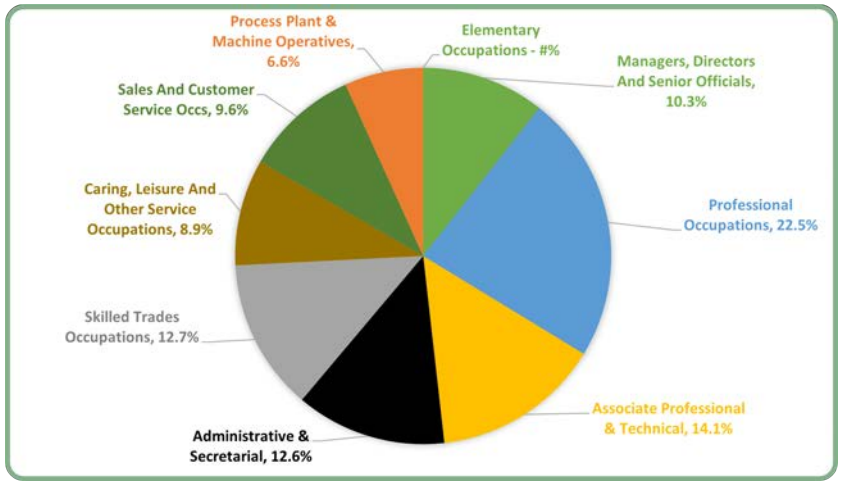
4.145 There are approximately 86,000 employees in Huntingdonshire, the fourth highest in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough after Cambridge City Council (133,000), Peterborough (130,000) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (97,000)[20]. The number of jobs in Huntingdonshire declined by 4.4% between 2019 and 2020; the decline although greater mirrors a downward trend in the Eastern region of 0.76% and in England of 3%. South Cambridgeshire also saw a decline of 2.2% however other local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have bucked the national decline, see Figure 4.28.

Figure 4.28 Number of Jobs 2020



4.146 Huntingdonshire has a diverse range of occupations (Figure 4.29), 22.5% of residents are employed in Professional Occupations, this occupational classification requires residents to have "a degree or equivalent qualification, with some occupations requiring postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training"[21]. This is generally in line with trends in the Eastern region (21.9%) and in England (23.4%). The neighbouring authorities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire exhibit a higher percentage of high level occupations than average displaying 41.5% and 39.9% of their population in Professional Occupations. Conversely those in Managers, Directors and Senior Officials occupations in Huntingdonshire (10.3%) is more similar to Cambridge (10.5%) and South Cambridgeshire (12.6%). when comparing Huntingdonshire to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, those in Skilled Trades and Occupations (12.7%) are second proportionately only to Fenland (18.2%).

Figure 4.29 Employment by Occupation

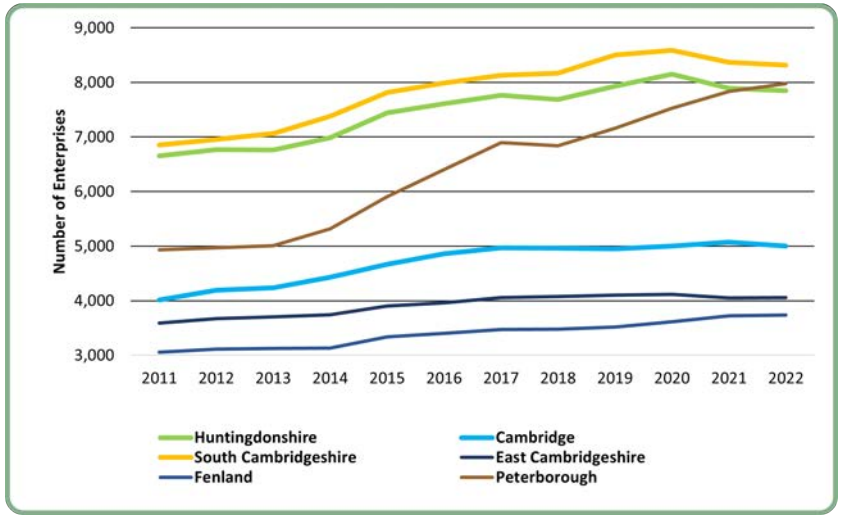


Source: ONS Annual Population Survey - Employment by occupation (Oct 2020-Sep 2021)

20 Source: ONS jobs density 2020. Total jobs includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces
21 ONS: SOC2010 volume 1: structure and descriptions of unit groups

4.147 Huntingdonshire has approximately 7,845 enterprises (Figure 4.30). 89.93% of which are classed as Micro organisations (employ 0-9 workers), 8.29% are Small (10 to 49), with 1.47% Medium (50 to 249 employees) and 0.38% Large (employing over 250). The percentage of businesses by size is generally reflective of County, Regional and English distribution (Source: Inter Departmental Business Register 2022 (ONS)[22] The effects of Covid and Brexit appear to have impacted on the number of enterprises in Huntingdonshire, declining by approximately 3.7% between 2020 and 2022. This decline is largely reflected across the Eastern Region, with the exception locally of Cambridge (no change), Peterborough (increase of 6.05%) and Fenland (increase of 3.46%). Generally across England the number of Enterprises has remained relatively stable with a slight increase of 0.71%, whilst the Eastern region has returned to positive position (0.48% increase since 2020); Cambridgeshire demonstrated a decrease of -1.70%.

Figure 4.30 Number of Enterprises



4.148 Table 16 shows the *Industries by Size of Business* and sets out the main types of business that reside within Micro, SME and Large categories. Unsurprisingly the table demonstrates that the majority of micro organisations include small scale businesses such as hairdressers, builders, plumbers, electricians and accountancy services; more surprisingly some micro organisations fit within the creative, digital and biotech industries. This could be as a result of the 'Cambridge effect', however more research would be required to understand if this is the case. SME organisations clearly demonstrate the district's links with manufacturing and advanced manufacturing which is a high priority sector for the district (Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Strategy For Huntingdonshire District 2020-2025), whilst the influence of organisations such as Hinchingbrooke Hospital can be clearly seen in the Large organisation category.

Table 16 Industries by Size of Business

Micro 0-9 employees	SME 10-249 employees	Large 250+ employees
• Creative and digital industries • Building, plumbing, electrician • Computer consultancy • Biotech • Hairdressing & beauty therapy • Accounting & auditing services	• Management consultancy • Plastics manufacturing • Paper manufacturer • Composites • Metal fabrication • Hospitality • Primary education • Freight transport • Retail • Financial management	• Meat processing & preserving • Food manufacturing • Hospital & other human health activities • Utilities (Water collection, treatment & supply) • Manufacture of electrical equipment • Secondary education

Source: ONS Inter Departmental Business Register (2021).

22 An **enterprise** can be thought of as the overall business, made up of all the individual sites or workplaces. It is defined as the smallest combination of legal units (generally based on VAT and/or PAYE records) that has a certain degree of autonomy within an enterprise group.

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4.149 As with the number of enterprises, the trend in the number of local units over time is similar, with local units seeing a decline of approximately 3% between 2020 and 2022. Around 9,075 local business units exist in Huntingdonshire (Figure 4.31). The distribution of these local units across industry show a high proportion of businesses in the construction and professional, scientific and technical industries. Since 2015 a downward trend has occurred in the wholesale, information and communication, agriculture and public administration and defence, whilst there has been more substantial growth in transport and storage, accommodation and food services, construction and motor trades.

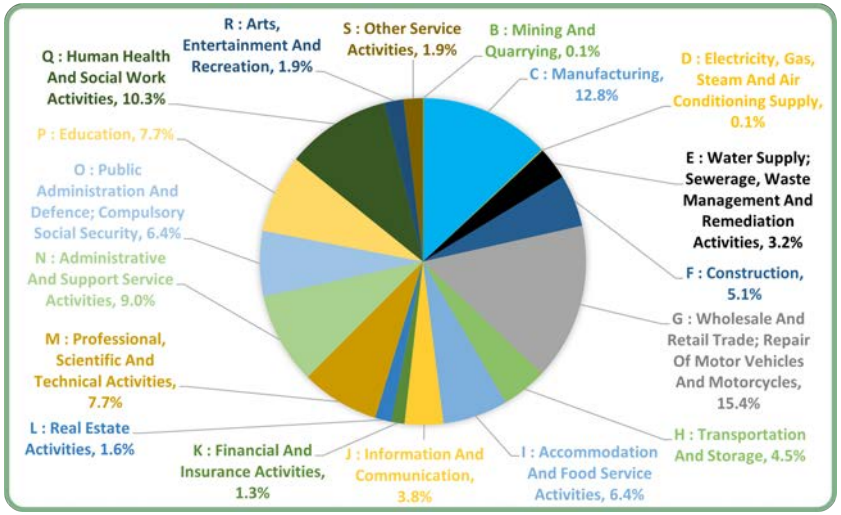
Figure 4.31 Business Counts in Huntingdonshire

Industry	2015	2022	2015 vs 2022	Trend
1 : Agriculture, forestry & fishing (A)	525	480	-9%	
2 : Mining, quarrying & utilities (B,D and E)	65	75	15%	
3 : Manufacturing (C)	545	555	2%	
4 : Construction (F)	1,005	1,245	24%	
5 : Motor trades (Part G)	275	335	22%	
6 : Wholesale (Part G)	455	380	-16%	
7 : Retail (Part G)	640	670	5%	
8 : Transport & storage (inc postal) (H)	345	510	48%	
9 : Accommodation & food services (I)	400	525	31%	
10 : Information & communication (J)	660	570	-14%	
11 : Financial & insurance (K)	155	155	0%	
12 : Property (L)	265	310	17%	
13 : Professional, scientific & technical (M)	1,290	1,275	-1%	
14 : Business administration & support services (N)	750	735	-2%	
15 : Public administration & defence (O)	120	110	-8%	
16 : Education (P)	170	190	12%	
17 : Health (Q)	395	400	1%	
18 : Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services (R,S,T and U)	520	550	6%	
Total	**8,585**	**9,075**	**6%**	

Source: UK Business Counts - local units by industry and employment size band, 2022

4.150 Although the number of local units show that Huntingdonshire has a high proportion of businesses in the construction and professional, scientific and technical industries, it is manufacturing (C) and human health and social work (Q) that employ the largest proportion of employees at 12.8% and 10.3% respectively. Manufacturing and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles account for 15.4% of employment in combination. See Figure 4.32.

Figure 4.32 Employee Jobs by Industry 2021



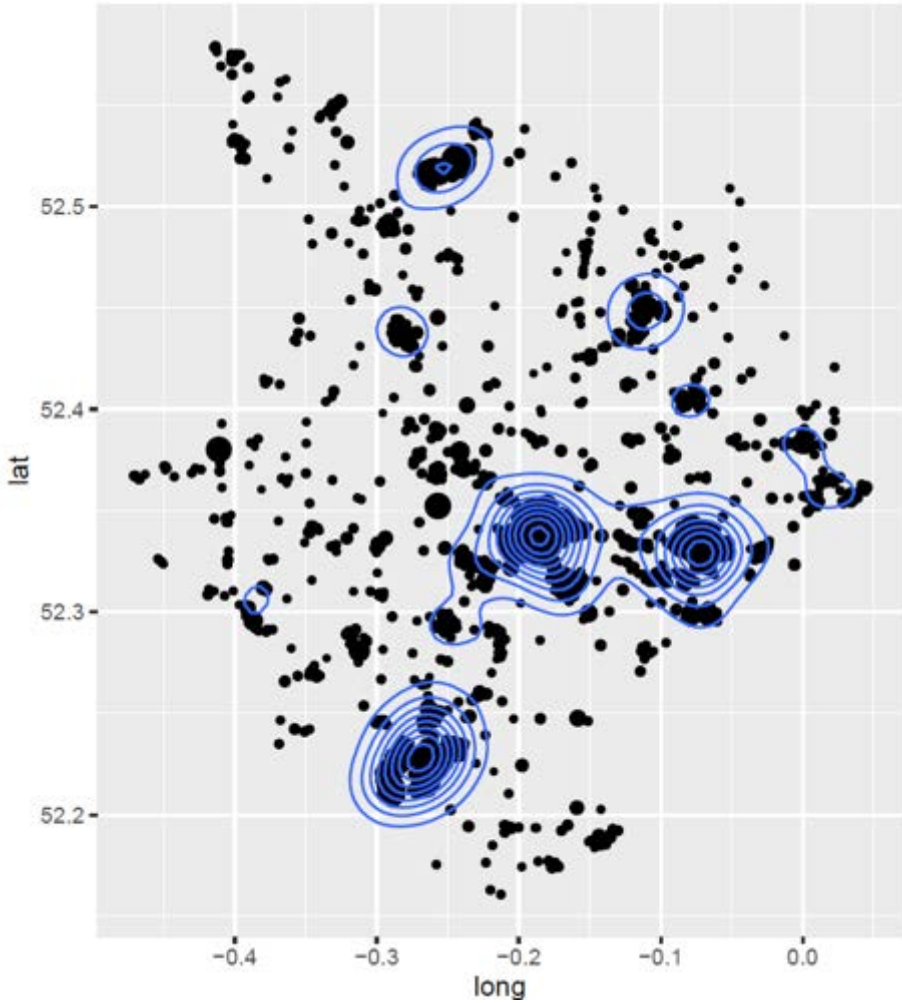
Source: Employee Jobs 2021: ONS Business Register and Employment Survey. (23)

23 Latest data as at October 2022 was for the year 2021. The definition of employee jobs excludes self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces and farm-based agriculture.

4.151 Research by the Council's Economic Development team identifies that the business density is higher in the district's market towns of St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives. Clear business clustering can also be seen around Ramsey, Sawtry and Yaxley (see Figure 4.33).

4.152 The black dots represent the location of employees (i.e. trading address/registered office). The size of the dot represents the number of employees in that place. The blue lines represent kernel density bands which show the relative density of the combined dots across the entire District demonstrating where both the number and total employees across the district are grouped closely together.

Figure 4.33 Kernel density estimations of all enterprises, scaled to number of employees



Source: FAME (2021) and IDBR (2020) data

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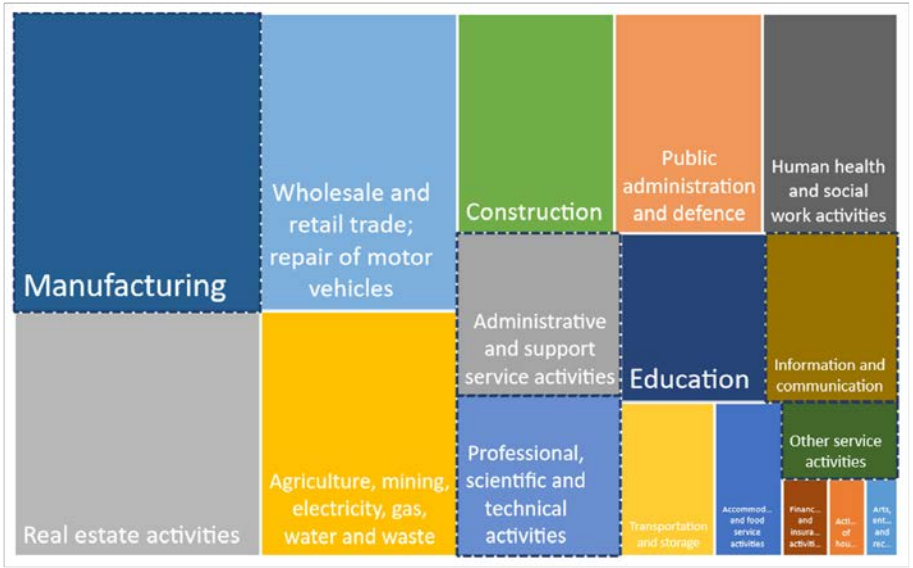
4.153 The graphic below (Figure 4.34) shows the contribution of the main industry sectors to GVA in Huntingdonshire. Sectors with a dashed border denotes location of Knowledge Intensive (KI) subcategories[24] within the overall sectors that contain both KI and non-KI subcategories. The sectors of *manufacturing* include high-tech & life sciences; *administrative and support services* includes KI services; *professional, scientific and technical services* includes life sciences and *information and communication*, and *other service activities*, include ICT all of which are major contributors to overall GVA within the District.

Figure 4.34 Main Industry Sectors



Source: ONS Regional Accounts (2018) data. GVA by subcategory is not available.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district
- Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion
- Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters
- Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district
- Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district
- Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries
- Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Continued decline in the number of jobs and enterprises resulting in less sustainable access to employment
- Reduced opportunity for rural enterprises to thrive, limiting employment opportunities in rural areas
- Lack of land to facilitate economic growth resulting in the loss of key industries outside the district
- Inability to to deliver sustainable development and a strong and competitive economy

24 as defined by Cambridge Ahead's Cambridge Cluster Insights methodology: CBR Database Methodology - Companies in the wider Cambridge region 2021

Travel and Transport

4.154 Huntingdonshire has very good connections to the national and regional strategic road network including the A14, A1 and A1(M), A428, A141, A1123, A1096, A1198 and A605. In terms of rail travel, the district is bisected by the East Coast mainline railway and is served by railway stations at Huntingdon and St Neots providing services south to London St Pancras International and onwards to the South Coast and north to Peterborough where onward connections run north to Edinburgh.

St Ives bus station

4.155 High quality bus services are provided via The Busway which operates three routes within the district primarily linking Cambridge to St Ives and Huntingdon supplemented by connecting services to Peterborough and several villages. St Neots is served by buses connecting Cambridge to Bedford as well as to Huntingdon. Several bus operators provide commercial services within the district connecting villages to our market towns and on to larger service centres in surrounding districts. Bus services in the north-east and western parts of the district are less frequent although a Ting service now covers the West Huntingdonshire area including key towns such as St Neots, Huntingdon, Sawtry and surrounding villages. The service has been introduced to West Huntingdonshire to improve transport links for those living in rural areas, removing young people's dependence on parents for lifts and allowing local residents to lessen their reliance on cars.

4.156 A variety of active travel routes are found across the district. National cycleway routes 12, 24 and 51 all run through parts of Huntingdonshire. A cycleway also runs parallel to The Busway providing an off-road route from St Ives towards Cambridge. Dedicated cycleways serve parts of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives, generally as shared routes with footpaths. Grafham Water offers a significant leisure cycling opportunity. Within towns and villages roadside pavements provide high levels of local connectivity with footpaths often providing more direct linkages and shortcuts only available to people walking. Extensive networks of bridleways and public rights of way offer horse riding and walking opportunities throughout the district.

The Waits at St Ives

4.157 Waterways provide leisure travel routes around the district with several marinas facilitating long and short stays along with boat servicing and maintenance. The River Great Ouse provides a major route through St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives and the River Nene provides routes around the northern edge of the district. The Middle Level Navigations offer a network of Fenland leisure routes.

4.158 A range of transport infrastructure improvement projects are underway or proposed which have the potential to significantly enhance transport opportunities and connectivity for Huntingdonshire's residents and businesses. The main projects are briefly summarised below.

A14 bypass south of Godmanchester

4.159 Improvements to the A14 are drawing to an end with the main new carriageway section having opened in May 2020 and the previous route being reclassified as the A1307. Pathfinder Link Road connecting the eastern section of A1307 into Huntingdon ring road at Mill Common opened in October 2019. Views Common Road linking the north western section of the A1307 to Hinchingbrooke Park Road opened in September 2020. Mill Common Link Road will provide a connection between Pathfinder Link Road and the junction of Edison Bell Way near the railway station using the line of the old A14 but at lower grade. Preparation for demolition of the A14 viaduct across the East Coast mainline began in 2019 and

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demolition completed in 2022. This is followed by works around Huntingdon railway station to improve the forecourt and improve connectivity between different travel modes.

4.160 The A428 between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet roundabouts is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project as it is a large, complex infrastructure project which needs to be brought forward under a Development Consent Order (DCO). The DCO was granted by the Secretary of State for Transport in August 2022. The proposal is to upgrade the A428 route between the Black Cat roundabout on the A1 and the Caxton Gibbet roundabout at the junction of the A428 with the A1198 which is the only remaining single carriageway stretch on the A421/ A428 route from Milton Keynes to Cambridge and a focal point for traffic congestion regularly affecting people travelling between St Neots and Cambridge. Proposed improvements include provision of a 10 mile stretch of dual carriageway, a three tier junction at the Black Cat roundabout to allow traffic to flow freely on the A1 and new junctions at Caxton Gibbet and at Cambridge Road St Neots to connect the proposed route to the existing A428. Intended works also include new bridges over the River Great Ouse and East Coast mainline railway and improved routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders that connect with existing public rights of way.

4.161 The A141 around the north of Huntingdon connects westwards to the A14 and A1 at Brampton Hut junction and eastwards to Warboys, Chatteris and onto Wisbech serving as a major route into the Fens. The road network around St Ives includes the A1123, A1096, B1040 and B1090; the Busway crosses the A1096 at the south eastern tip of the town from where the route transfers eastwards onto the formal guideway. Congestion levels can be high particularly at peak times with road safety issues and lack of safe cycling and walking routes impeding take up of active travel options. Promoted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority options for potential improvements were published for consultation in 2021 with further consultation in 2022. The intention is for the highway works to be complemented with support for active travel and public transport improvements to aid sustainable travel options alongside reducing congestion and improving safety on the roads. Further details of the project are expected to be developed through 2022 through a Strategic Outline Business Case.

4.162 Recent improvement to the East Coast mainline railway targeted at increasing capacity include a grade separated tunnel at Werrington, extra track and a new platform at Stevenage and track and signalling upgrades on the approach to Kings Cross. Network Rail's Eastern Region Strategic Plan (2021) sets out their delivery aspirations for 2019-24. Huntingdon: A Prospectus for Growth published by the District Council in 2020 recognises the importance of the proposal to add a railway station at Alconbury Weald and join it to the national rail network and acknowledges the challenges of doing so.

4.163 East West Rail proposes a new rail route connecting Oxford to Cambridge via Bicester, Bletchley and Bedford. From Oxford to Bedford the route involves existing and refurbished tracks, however, from Bedford to Cambridge a wholly new route is required. This is the section of greatest relevance to Huntingdonshire. A preferred route corridor has been identified; in 2021 public consultation was held on possible route alignments within this preferred corridor including suggestions for a new railway station south of St Neots or at Temspford. The proposed scheme offers opportunities for faster and better long-term connectivity for local residents to Cambridge and Bedford and beyond, investment in economic growth and new jobs and further transport infrastructure improvements joining any new railway station into St Neots and the existing railway station.

4.164 Cambridgeshire County Council published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for consultation in 2021 which identified priority cycling and walking routes in main urban areas across the county. The plan will be used to seek funding for improvements to the walking and cycling network which focus on actions likely to significantly enhance the ability of walkers and cyclists to travel between key employment, school, leisure and shopping destinations and particularly favours routes to schools. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are strong advocates of active travel including walking, cycling and horse riding along with micro-mobility options such as e-bikes and e-scooters. Improvement

projects and trials of innovative travel modes are funded and supported with some as pilot projects to ascertain their suitability for use across wider areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

4.165 In October 2022, Cambridgeshire County Council commenced consultation on a transport strategy for Fenland and Huntingdonshire. These will provide a strategy and an action plan of schemes to address the transport challenges facing those districts, whilst also looking at sustainable access to services and a safe and healthy environment. The County Council are also consulting on an Active Travel Strategy which aims to make active travel the 'go to' option for local journeys.

4.166 Daily travel patterns have been disrupted throughout 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic with uncertainty remaining over their form and scale going forwards. Hybrid working options are impacting some previous commuting patterns, use of deliveries has affected shopping trip patterns and changes to use of cars, public transport, cycling and walking both for business and leisure have yet to settle down into new routines. There is limited data availability at district level with most being published at county or wider areas.

4.167 The Department for Transport (DfT) produce some statistics at individual district level which provide indications of the levels of accessibility residents experience to key services and facilities. These indicate that in 2019 85% of Huntingdonshire's primary school pupils lived within 15 minutes walking or public transport distance and 97% were within 30 minutes. In contrast just 18% of secondary school students were within 15 minutes by walking or public transport. However, 74% were calculated as being within 15 minutes by cycle based on 16 kms/h; it is noted that this seems extremely high given some of the traveling distances involved particularly from western parts of Huntingdonshire into catchment schools in Huntingdon and St Neots and from many villages into Ramsey. DfT statistics also indicated that in 2019 17% of Huntingdonshire's households were within 15 minutes walking or public transport time of a town centre, 45% of households were within 15 minutes cycle distance of a town centre and 76% within 30 minutes cycle distance. In terms of traveling to work, the DfT consider access for the population aged between 16 and 74. Of this group some 77% are within 15 minutes walking or public transport travel of an employment centre offering between 100 and 499 jobs with 85% within 15 minutes by cycle. Access to larger employment centres offering between 500 and 4,999 jobs can be obtained within 15 minutes walking or public transport travel for 66% of the group and by cycle for 85%.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel
- A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys
- The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys

What may happen without a Local Plan

- An increase in developments reliant upon the strategic road network may arise
- Encouragement of infrastructure provision for active travel would be more dependent upon countywide or national policies
- Reduced coordination with local and strategic transport infrastructure providers impacting on effective cooperation and timely provision of interdependent infrastructure and other developments

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Digital Infrastructure and Communications

4.168 A reliable mobile and internet connection is now widely accepted as essential to facilitate a good standard of living. Fast, reliable mobile connections and broadband technology allows residents to access online services, such as banking and retail, to promote home working and to gain access to essential emergency services. In general, cities and large towns have more reliable and faster broadband capacity with many rural areas lagging behind due to lack of investment or cost benefit due to smaller population sizes.

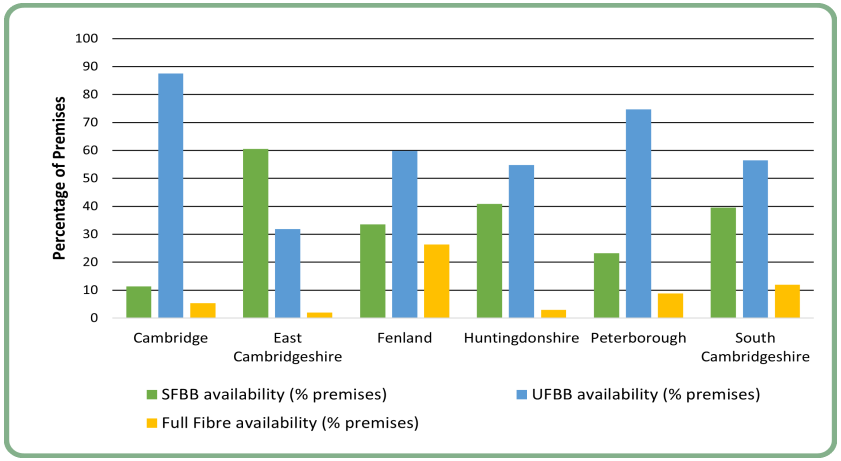
4.169 Economic success across the district also relies on employers and commercial operations having high quality connections to mobile and broadband infrastructure. A reliable service maximises opportunities for productivity, efficiency and increases access to markets. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority produced 'Connecting Cambridgeshire Delivering a Digital Connectivity Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2018 -2022 (2018)' which aims to capitalise on these benefits by providing more reliable infrastructure across the County.

4.170 Data from Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 sets out the most recent information on mobile and broadband connectivity. Connection speeds reflective of standard broadband speeds between 10Mb to 20Mb for uploads and downloads, are only really sufficient for "two people who're looking to just send emails, browse social media and do some online shopping". However a large family who may be "simultaneously streaming and gaming across multiple devices will require a much faster fibre broadband package, which start at a superfast 24Mb and go all the way up to a premium ultrafast 350Mb offering" (Source: Broadband Compared). The rollout of full fibre connections is the next stage in improving internet reliability and speed; it uses fibre-optic cables replacing the old copper connections. Speeds with full fibre connectivity can reach speeds of one gigabit per second[25]. Broadband connectivity in Huntingdonshire is as follows:

- Percentage of premises that have Superfast Broadband (SFBB, 30Mbit/s to less than 300Mbit/s) coverage - 40.8%
- Percentage of premises that have Ultrafast Broadband (UFBB, 300Mbit/s or greater) coverage - 54.8%
- Percentage of premises that have coverage from a full fibre service - 3%
- Percentage of premises that do not have access to services above 30Mbit/s - 4.4%

4.171 Across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the type and availability of services is variable, in 2019 Fenland district saw the highest percentage of properties with access to full fibre (26.3%), whilst Cambridge demonstrates the majority of properties have access to Ultrafast Broadband (87.5%), see Figure 4.35.

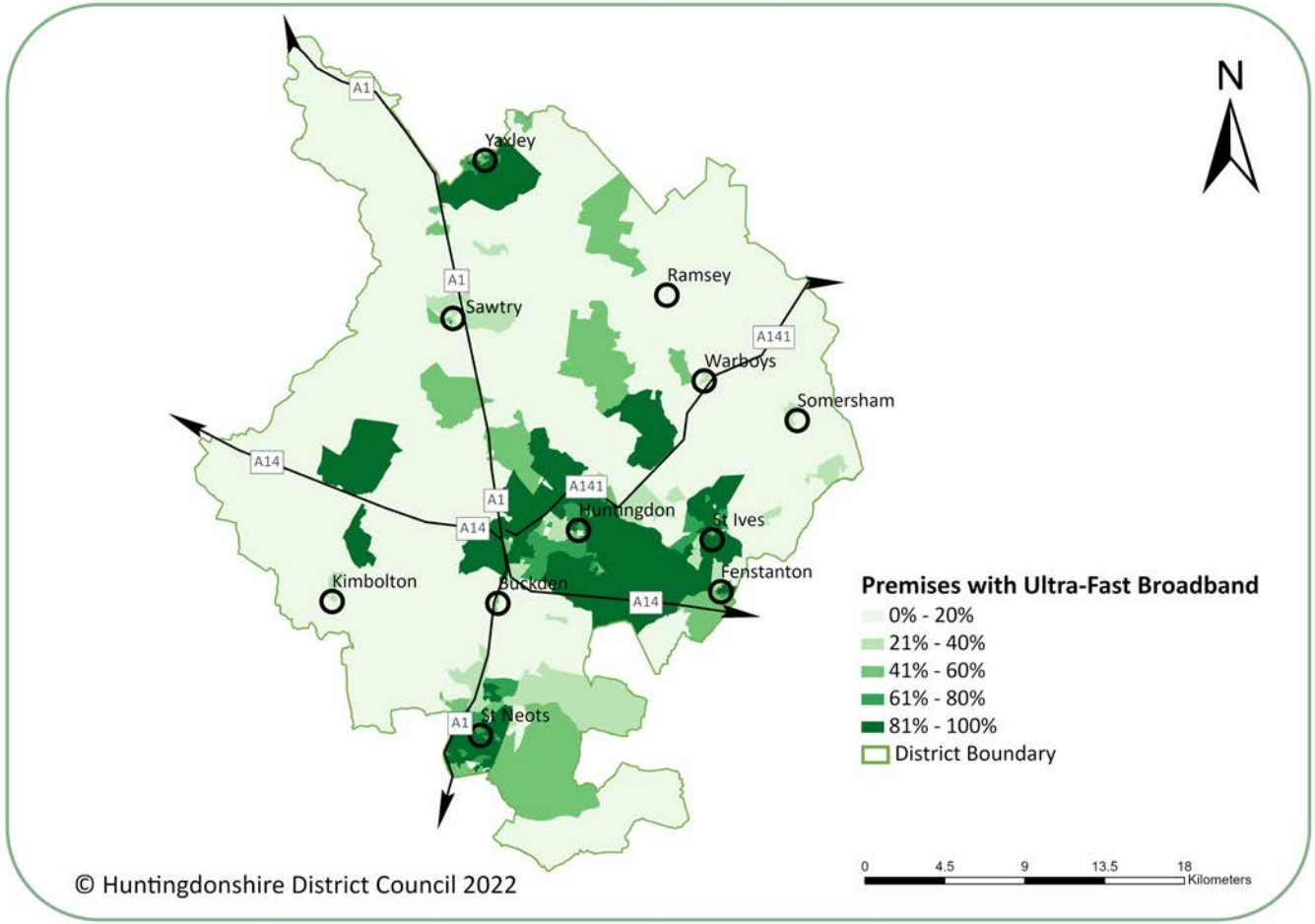
Figure 4.35 Broadband availability as a percentage of all premises



25 https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/full-fibre-future

4.172 The most recent data from Ofcom (2019) demonstrates that the rollout of Ultra-Fast broadband connections is mostly centred around the more urban areas in the district (Map 4.8). Whilst largely rural areas show that Ultra-Fast broadband is not readily available, some rollout has occurred.

Map 4.8 Pecentage of properties with Ultra-Fast Broadband



Source: Ofcom: Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 - Fixed Local and Unitary Authority Data

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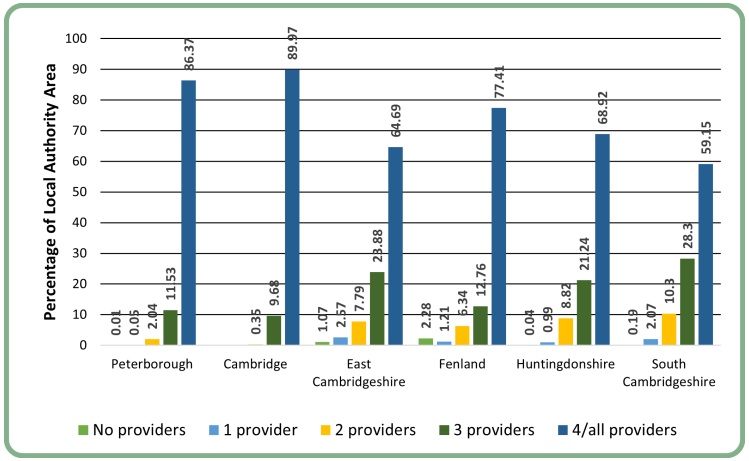
4.173 Although the Government is currently working towards rolling out 5G network services across the country (Department for Culture Media & Sport: Guidance: Factsheet 6: 5G, 24 November 2020), Ofcom is not yet readily recording the availability of this network. In fact, in a recent speech by Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman noted that 4G coverage across 95% of the UK is not expected until the end of 2025[(26)].

4.174 Figure 4.36 below shows the percentage of local authority area and the number of providers that provide indoor access to the 4G network. Data from Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 shows that indoor 4G coverage with an adequate choice of providers (all operators) has not yet been fully implemented across the whole of Huntingdonshire (only 68.92% of the district), meaning the choice of available network providers and as such the cost options available to residents, reflecting the range of people on varying incomes that can access mobile service provision varies across the district. This is reflective of the rural nature of the district, all round provision across the district is lagging behind the more urban authorities of Cambridge and Peterborough.

Figure 4.36 Number of 4G providers that provide indoor 4G networks by Local Authority



4.175 In contrast however, Ofcom's Connected Nations update: Spring 2019 shows that outdoor 4G provision in Huntingdonshire is much more achievable:

- Percentage of geographic area that can receive a 4G signal (indoor) from all operators - 68.92% , 21.24% from 3 operators, 8.82% from 2 operators, 0.99% from 1 operator
- Percentage of premises that (outdoor) that receive a 4G signal from all mobile operators - 95.27%
- Percentage of geographic area that can receive a 4G signal (outdoor) from all operators - 97.1%

Note: all operators refers to four mobile network providers: EE, O2, Vodaphone and Three. There are other mobile service providers, however Ofcom confirms that these providers will all use one of the four identified networks via a wholesale arrangement.

4.176 A number of improvements have been made in the district through the Connecting Cambridgeshire Strategy including:

- Upgrades in Spaldwick from superfast to gigabit broadband in July 2021 following a successful Community Fibre Partnership with Openreach using the Government's Gigabit Broadband Voucher scheme to fund the installation of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to the majority of premises. FFTP allows every single building the opportunity to access ultrafast speeds up to 900 Mbps, resulting in improved reliability and faster speeds at affordable prices (page 5)
- Expansion of CambWifi across Huntingdonshire's market towns allowing free public access to Wifi in public buildings, village halls and community sites (page 6)
- "Smart market towns Digital totems are being installed in Huntingdon town centre to display useful information for residents and visitors about what's on, shopping, and travel options, which will also be accessible via mobile phones." (page 9)

Source: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025

26 Matt Warman's Keynote Speech at Connected Britain 2020, 23 September 2020

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Key sustainability issues and problems

- Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure
- Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas
- Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage
- Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage

What may happen without a Local Plan

- The lack of improved broadband and mobile coverage in rural areas will continue to create a divide between rural and urban areas
- Social inclusion, economic opportunity and maintaining and developing successful enterprises in rural locations will be difficult to achieve

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Retail and Town Centres

4.177 Huntingdonshire sits within a largely rural district, key retail, services and facilities are largely based around the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, acting as service centres for nearby settlements (Huntingdonshire contains one other town, Godmanchester.) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 also identified seven further settlements that were considered to provide a healthy concentration of services and facilities that could provide services to other nearby communities, these are: Buckden, Fenstanton, Kimbolton, Sawtry, Somersham, Warboys and Yaxley.

4.178 The market towns of Huntingdon and St Neots also provide additionality in the form of 'Out-of-Town' Retail parks. These out of town retail parks provide access to more specialised retail such as hardware and DIY stores, warehouse retailing, garden centres, furniture stores etc. where a larger store footprint is required and car use to transport goods is more essential due to the nature of the items purchased. This can provide an offer to the wider area and is a signifier of a larger settlement. The most notable retail parks include:

- Stukeley Road Retail Park, Huntingdon
- Huntingdon Retail Park, Huntingdon
- Quora Retail Park, St Neots
- Abbey Retail Park, St Ives

St Ives, Market Hill

Quora Retail Park, St Neots

4.179 Further work is underway by the Council to enhance the market towns in Huntingdonshire. The Council has secured funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund, £12.8 million is anticipated to be invested in St Neots town centre. The investment will deliver six projects, transforming the market town for the benefit of local people, businesses, and visitors. Construction associated to the six projects is expected to commence in 2023.

4.180 The Council is working on a Market Towns Programme to develop interventions to improve the town centres of Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey is also underway. Studies and baseline reports have been commissioned by the Council which have informed a 'masterplan' for each area outlining interventions to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres. These masterplans have been out for consultation during the Autumn of 2022. The Masterplans follow on from previous work on the 'Prospectus for Growth' documents which identified a vision and key objectives to enhance the three market towns.

4.181 The 2021 Baseline Reports for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey identify a number of key insights into the health of the town centres and retail. The reports identify that footfall in Huntingdon and St Ives is strongly concentrated between 8am and 5pm. In Huntingdon the night-time economy only accounts for around 10% - 12% of total quarterly expenditure, seemingly limited in comparison to the size of the town. St Ives' evening economy however accounted for 20% of daily spend in 2020 and retail spend is reported to rely more on attracting residents from other towns and visitors to the area than the towns of Huntingdon and Ramsey. In fact Ramsey exhibits a very small evening economy with 70% of retail spend coming from people living within 10km of the town.

4.182 In Huntingdon St Benedict's Court (comprising 29 commercial units) has been unsuccessful in finding a tenant for the former Waitrose unit (Unit 15); the 2,538 sq. m. unit has lain empty since 2017. The impact of more recent Permitted Development Orders on the health of the high streets are also currently unknown; these include:

- the amendment to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987[27] in July 2020 which consolidated a number of uses, including but not limited to uses such as shops, restaurants, financial services, offices, indoor sports and fitness facilities, certain types of medical and health services and nurseries to a single Commercial, Business and Service Class E use; and
- the amendment to the General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015[28] which allows for the change of use of Class E properties to residential (limitations/exemptions apply).

4.183 In the wider Huntingdonshire area the Baseline reports (using CoStar data) identified that retail market values in 2021 fell below £200 per square foot, whilst market yields have increased since 2018 to 6.9%, this expected to increase to over 7% in 2022. Yields for retail space in Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey were estimated in 2021 to be 8.5%, 9% and 9.5% respectively. These figures are reflective of a good secondary high street location (Knight Frank Yield Guide notes that good secondary high street retail locations are generally achieving yields in the order of 8.25% - 8.50%, whilst secondary/tertiary retail high streets are achieving yields of circa 10%).

4.184 It is well known that the use of online retailing services increased during the pandemic. The Office of National Statistics notes that there has been a continuing decline in online retail spending which peaked in February 2021 (36.8%). Whilst the online spending represented 26.9% in November 2021, this does however still remain far higher than the proportion of online retail spending in February 2020 before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which was 19.7%. [29]. The general trends towards increasing online sales has had a marked effect on high streets across the country[30].

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district
- Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability
- Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods
- Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Decline of the high street and retail centres
- Decrease in viability for remaining high street businesses due to reduced high street 'offer'
- Lack of sustainable access to leisure, services, retail and centralised employment opportunities
- Increased perception of unsafe neighbourhoods

27 Through The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
28 Introduced through Class MA of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021
29 Source: ONS, Retail Sales, Great Britain, November 2021
30 The Royal Society for Public Health's study Health on the High Street 2019 - Running on Empty

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Tourism and Leisure

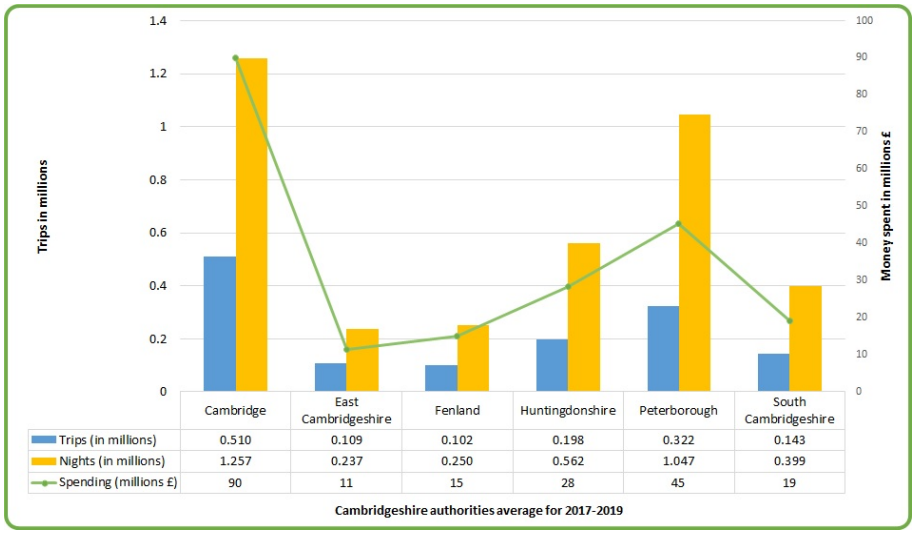
4.185 Huntingdonshire has a smaller tourism sector than other parts of the county such as Cambridge and Peterborough but it is diverse and widely spread across the district. Due to the predominately rural nature of the district, tourist attractions are comparatively modest in nature but do nevertheless contribute to the local economy.

4.186 There is limited up to date data at local authority level on tourism, the Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) is however a useful resource to gain an insight into tourism trends. The GBTS is a national consumer survey measuring the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips taken by residents in Great Britain and provides detailed information about trip and visitor characteristics. Data from the most recently published report and survey have been extracted for Huntingdonshire and other Cambridgeshire authorities to gain an insight into the trends up to 2019 in the tourism sector [31].

4.187 The most recently published data from the GBTS shows that on average, between 2017 and 2019, 1.38 million trips were taken each year to Cambridgeshire, of which 198,000 where to Huntingdonshire. These equated to 3.75 million nights per year to Cambridgeshire and 560,000 nights per year to Huntingdonshire. The annual value of these trips were £210 million and £28 million respectively [32]. As shown in Figure 4.37, only Cambridge and Peterborough had a higher number of trips and higher annual value for them. Most trips within Huntingdonshire and also across Cambridgeshire were to visit family and friends.

4.188 The impact of the pandemic on levels of domestic and localised tourism remains to be seen. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that as a result of the pandemic, people will be visiting more local tourist attractions and undertake leisure pursuits closer to home. As restrictions relating to international travel cease, the longer term impact on local tourism destinations will be more apparent.

Figure 4.37 Average number of trips, nights and money spent for all Cambridgeshire authorities 2017-2019



4.189 Due to the abundance of wildlife sites, strategic green infrastructure areas and variety of landscapes found across the district, Huntingdonshire's tourism sector is primarily nature and conservation based with opportunities to enjoy the wildlife and undertake leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling and water based activities.

4.190 Huntingdonshire has an extensive public rights of way (PROW) network enabling access to the countryside and to leisure opportunities. There are also three national cycle routes that run through parts of the district, these

31 The survey is undertaken continuously throughout the year, however, there has been a disruption to this due to the coronavirus pandemic. Fieldwork resumed in April 2021 with plans to publish results in the Autumn of 2022.

32 The GBTS 2019 Annual Report is available from Visit Britain's website , on page 121 of the report (table 2.8 – Local authority destination and purpose) there is a link to download Local Authority data

are routes 12, 24 and 51. Route 12 runs in sections from Enfield Lock in north London to Spalding via Stevenage, St Neots and Peterborough. This route connects to the Grafham Water circular route. Route 24 is a traffic route on the network and is found south of St Ives heading through Fenstanton. Route 51 is a long-distance cycling route that connects several cities in southern England, on its route from Oxford to the coast at Felixstowe, it runs through Huntingdonshire via St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives. A cycleway also runs parallel to The Busway route from St Ives towards Cambridge where access to and views across the Great Ouse Valley landscape character area can be enjoyed.

4.191 The River Great Ouse provides recreational opportunities for water based sports and past times with a long distance footpath extending the whole length of the area. The numerous lakes, linked by the river provide boating and canoeing opportunities along with fishing, walking and wildlife viewing. Sensitive restoration of many gravel workings has enabled them to blend successfully into the landscape as nature reserves and fishing lakes, Paxton Pits is an example. There are several marinas across the district such at Buckden, Huntingdon, Hartford which provide a range of fixed and floating moorings to suit the majority of craft types found on inland waterways. Huntingdon Boathaven also provides caravan pitches for camping and caravanning trips as does the Crystal Lakes leisure and fishing park in Fenstanton.

4.192 Grafham Water attracts thousands of visitors throughout the year for walking, cycling and watching wildlife at the Wildlife Trust nature reserve, as well as attending events such as triathlons and fishing competitions. It is home to an array of wildlife with 170 species of birds recorded there.

River Great Ouse

Sailing at Grafham Water

4.193 The Great Fen is a strategic habitat restoration project of national significance. As well as the environmental benefits of the project, it is promoting the eco-tourism sector within the district. There are several key sites to visit namely Ramsey Heights Nature Reserve, Woodwalton Fen, Holme Fen and New Decoy. There are walks and trails, there is also an electric all-terrain electric Tramper which is available to hire for those with mobility issues. Another key aim of the project is to celebrate and preserve the fenland heritage through education and outreach programmes.

4.194 Another aspect of Huntingdonshire's tourism sector is the historic environment. There is an abundance of historic buildings and structures found across the district, as well as villages that have retained their historic form and historic landscapes, monuments and registered parks and gardens.

4.195 There are several key attractions found across the district, a sample are: Houghton Mill, a working 18th-century watermill and campsite managed by the National Trust; Huntingdon Race Course which hosts a number of national horse racing events every year with dining and hospitality services; Hamerton Zoo, a popular attraction for families with its collection of rare and endangered animals; the ruins of Ramsey Abbey managed by the National Trust; and Elton Hall and its gardens.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.196 The market towns provide the greatest draw for tourism due to the concentration and mix of restaurants, cafes, shops and built heritage as well as their connecting routes out in to the countryside. The River Great Ouse flows through or around all towns but Ramsey which has routes out into the Fenland landscape. Each of Huntingdonshire's market towns have their own museum: the Norris Museum in St Ives, the St Neots Museum, the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, and Ramsey Rural Museum. The Cromwell Museum was recorded as being the 15th most visited free attraction in the East of England for 2020 [33]. These museums are frequently involved in local history events and weekends and visited by schools. Huntingdon and St Ives also have weekly markets with all market towns hosting farmer or themed markets throughout the year.

4.197 Improvements to the tourism and leisure offer within the market towns are underway through the District Council's Market Towns Programme .

Houghton Mill and the River Great Ouse

Key sustainability issues and problems

- The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits
- Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all
- Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities
- Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development may take place without adequate assessment on the additional demand they will place on existing tourist attractions, strategic green infrastructure and leisure facilities
- Development may be located in locations that are not accessible by walking and cycling to tourist attractions, strategic green space and leisure facilities
- Opportunities for the improvement or expansion of existing tourist attractions may not be realised

33 Visit England's Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions: Latest results

Community Services and Facilities

4.198 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that healthy communities require shared spaces and community facilities to promote social interaction and healthy lifestyles. It identifies local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship (Paragraph 93 a). This section will focus on those spaces that have not been covered in other sections - i.e. libraries, community centres, town and village centres and public houses.

4.199 The library provision in the district is centered primarily in the market towns and larger villages (see Map 4.9). There are eight libraries in total plus two community libraries in Brampton and Somersham. Libraries are important community centres, often including more than just library services with activities and events, volunteering, community support, and Local Authority services among the services offered.

4.200 According to Cambridgeshire Insight's Library Data, 31,356 people attended 2,118 event dates hosted by Huntingdonshire's eight libraries in 2019. Between April 2018 and December 2019 the District's libraries were visited 830,616 times. Buckden Library received the least visits with 13,653, whilst Huntingdon Library received the most with 321,310. These attendance figures highlight the key role libraries play as community centres.

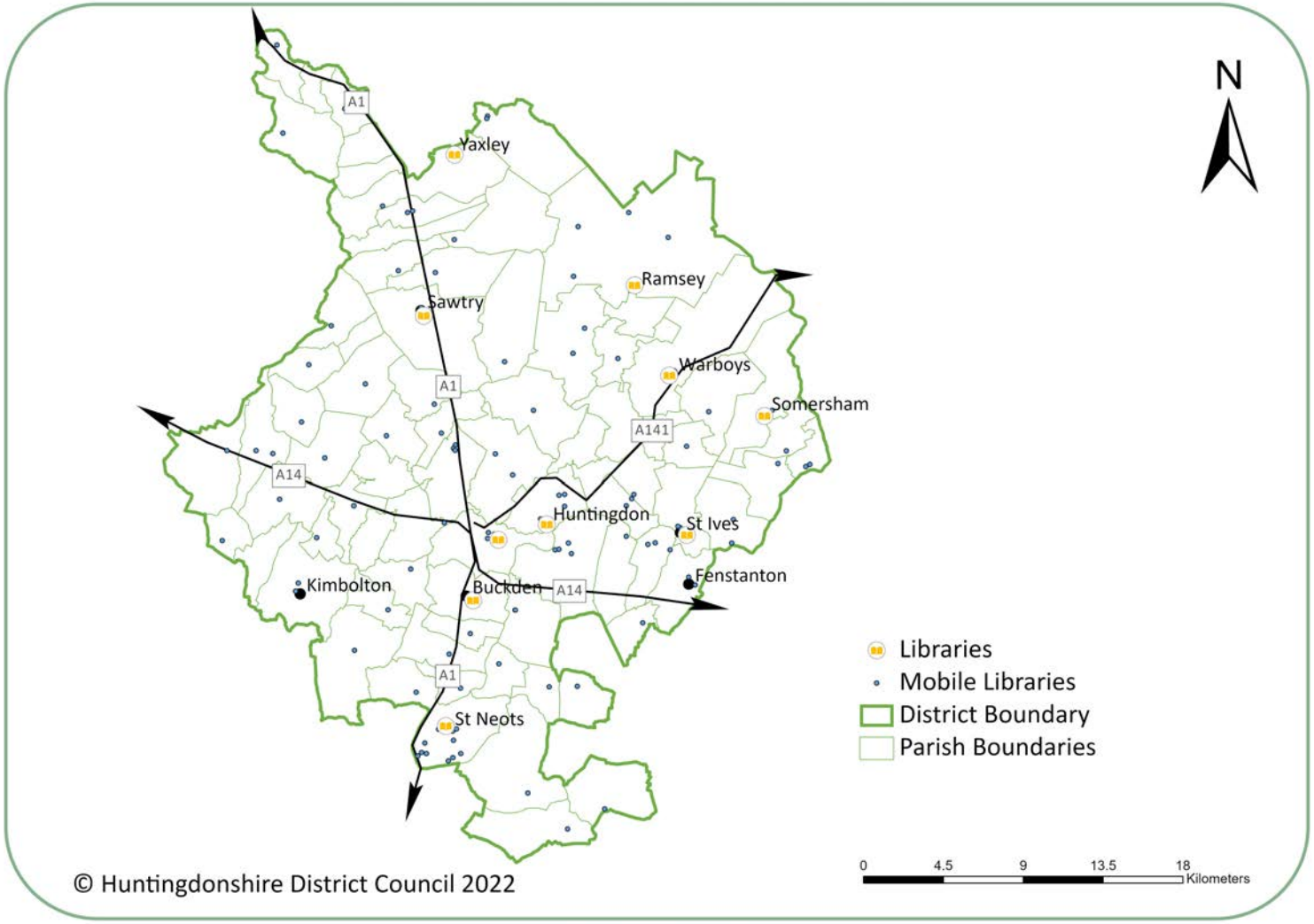
4.201 As of April 2022 there were two mobile library services operating in the district - Fenland and Huntingdonshire mobile libraries. Mobile libraries increase accessibility to services allowing those who cannot travel to the main libraries to benefit from the service. The two mobile libraries operate monthly or twice monthly visits to over 113 stops throughout the district. Overall, library services can be accessed in 68 out 81 parishes in the District.

4.202 Community centres, village halls and other halls, for example church halls or scout halls - are vital meeting places that provided indoor space for a variety of purposes, such as pre-school and after school activities, parish meetings, sports activities, community support groups as well as other social events throughout the year.

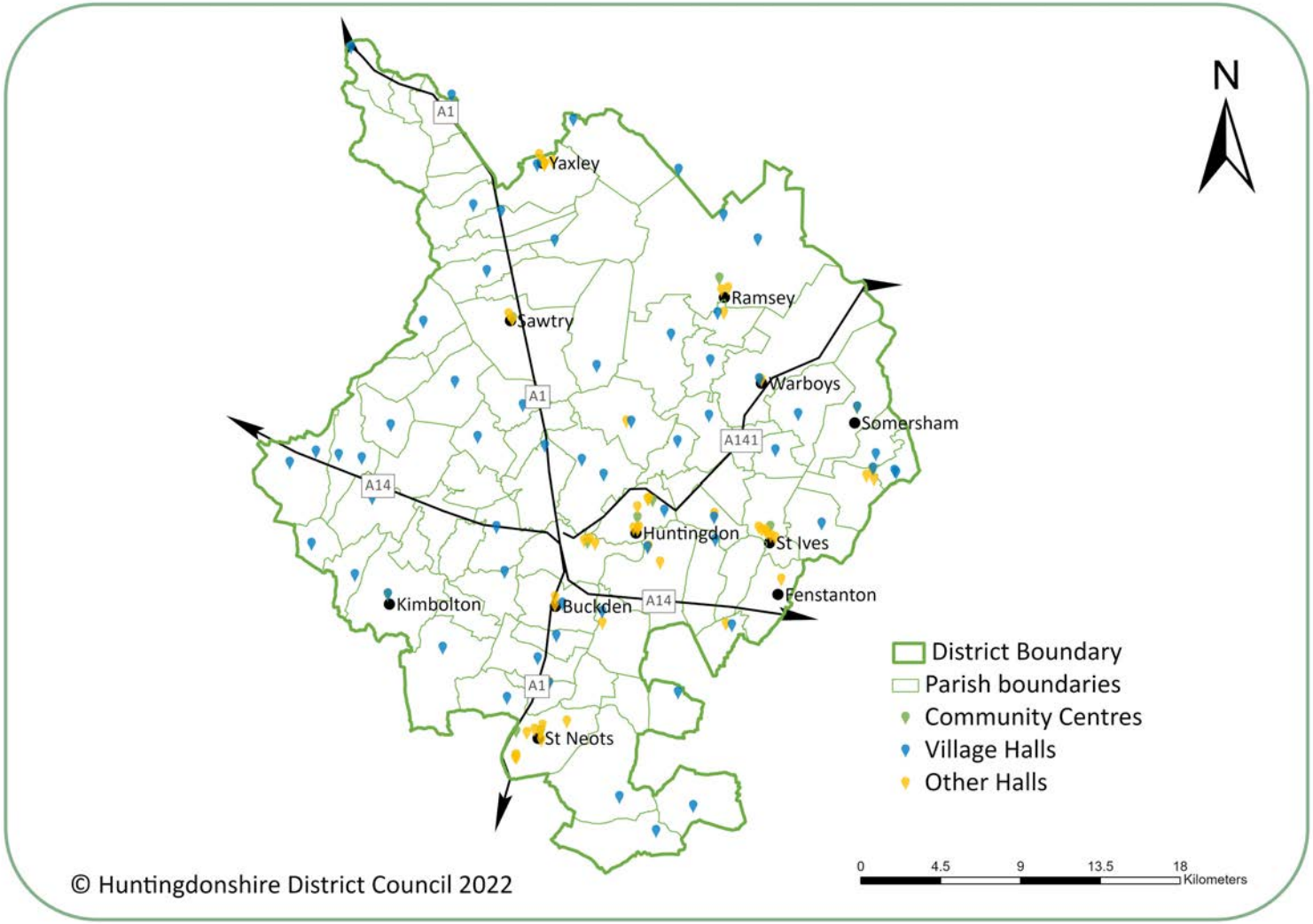
4.203 As of April 2022, community centres (which may also include public services) were located in the market towns and some of the district's larger villages, whilst village halls were located in villages in rural areas, ensuring the availability of these spaces throughout the district (see Map 4.10). There are approximately 68 identified village halls in the district; work is currently underway through the Huntingdonshire Built Facility Strategy to assess the 'offer', demand for the halls, quality and accessibility.

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Map 4.9 Library Provision in Huntingdonshire



Map 4.10 Community Facilities in Huntingdonshire



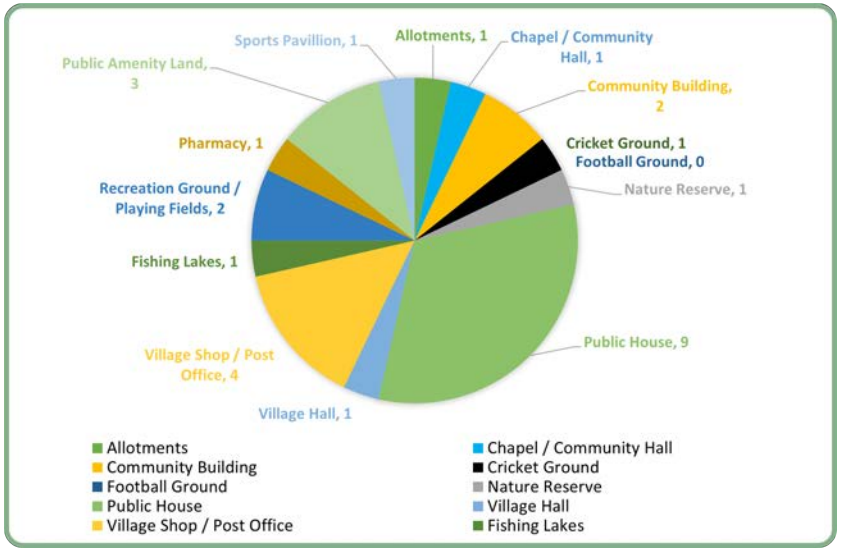
4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.204 The Community Right to Bid aims to keep valued buildings or land in use by a community. Local community groups can nominate buildings or other land to be included on the Council's list of Assets of Community Value. To be classed as an Asset the building or land should contribute to the community's social well-being or social interests. Once on the register, if an asset is put up for sale or lease, community groups are given a moratorium period of six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase or lease the land or building, delaying sale on the open market and allowing the community the time to potentially buy the Asset for their community.

4.205 As of October 2022, there were 28 Assets of Community Value on the Council's *List of Community Assets*. The assets were registered by 14 different town or parish councils and one by the Huntingdonshire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Little Paxton and Houghton and Wyton Parish Councils have registered the most assets - eight and six respectively. Six parishes registered 1 asset; whilst St Neots has registered 3, Great Gransden 2, and Hemingford Grey 4.

4.206 Sixteen of the community asset nominations are located in small settlements, reflecting the difficulty of maintaining services; a further 11 are located in Spatial Planning Areas - specifically Godmanchester, St Neots and Little Paxton. Public houses are by far the most commonly registered community asset. The types of registered Assets of Community Value are shown in Figure 4.38.

Figure 4.38 Assets of Community Value - Oct 2022



4.207 Public houses are considered to provide a number of benefits to the community, presenting themselves as community hubs where people can gather and share ideas and trades, meet new people and socialise. As of April 2022, 29 pubs across 14 parishes had closed in the district since 2012 according to the Campaign for Real Ale What Pub? webpage. This is an important loss as according to the same organisation there were 155 pubs in the district as at April 2022. Public houses were therefore in decline prior to the recent Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of which on the financial stability of these community facilities has yet to be determined. The current situation is illustrated further by the fact that Public Houses are the most commonly registered Assets of Community Value - 9 in total and spread over 9 different settlements, highlighting their value and precarity across the district.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather
- Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district
- Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Development in areas without access to services and facilities
- Loss of existing services and facilities which may lead to an increase in social exclusion, loneliness and negative impacts on health
- Increasing reliance on motorised transport for access to services and facilities
- Access to services for the ageing population

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Education

4.208 Good quality education contributes to the creation of sustainable communities by reducing inequality and deprivation and providing more future economic opportunity for children. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is the education authority, in Huntingdonshire they oversee 7 infant schools, 7 junior schools, 49 primary schools, 7 secondary schools (all with a sixth-form) and 3 schools that specialise in Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (see Map 4.11). Catchment areas allow for Huntingdonshire pupils to be educated in the district but some families choose to school their children outside the district. Huntingdonshire has one public school provider, Kimbolton School for boys and girls with currently 1,100 pupils aged 4 to 18 years.

4.209 The following secondary schools and further education providers are available in Huntingdonshire:

- Abbey College, Ramsey - secondary and sixth form
- Cambridge Regional College, Huntingdon - sixth form/further education provider
- Ernulf Academy, Eynesbury - secondary and sixth form
- Hinchingbrooke School, Huntingdon - secondary and sixth form
- Longsands Academy, St Neots - secondary and sixth form
- Kimbolton School - preparatory, secondary and sixth form
- St Ivo School, St Ives - secondary and sixth form
- St Peters School, Huntingdon - secondary and sixth form
- Sawtry Village Academy, Sawtry - secondary and sixth form

4.210 Huntingdonshire Regional College merged with Cambridge Regional College to become Cambridge Regional College in 2017. The college provides post-GCSE programmes, further education qualifications and some higher education courses. T Levels started being rolled out in September 2020 which are equivalent to 3 A levels developed in collaboration with employers and businesses combining classroom and on the job training.

4.211 CCC's Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (Page 64) identified that the average annual cohort size of Huntingdonshire residents attending sixth forms or sixth form college provision in the period 2016-18 was 860. Of those 9% travelled to Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire, 1.7% travelled to Peterborough and 0.3% to Fenland. For Further Education in the same time period the cohort was 570, of these 32.2% went to providers in Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire, 20.1% went to Peterborough and 17.3% outside Cambridgeshire (for example Bedford) and 0.4% to Fenland. It is expected that future planned provision in the district and through new developments such as Alconbury Weald will meet future needs to 2036.

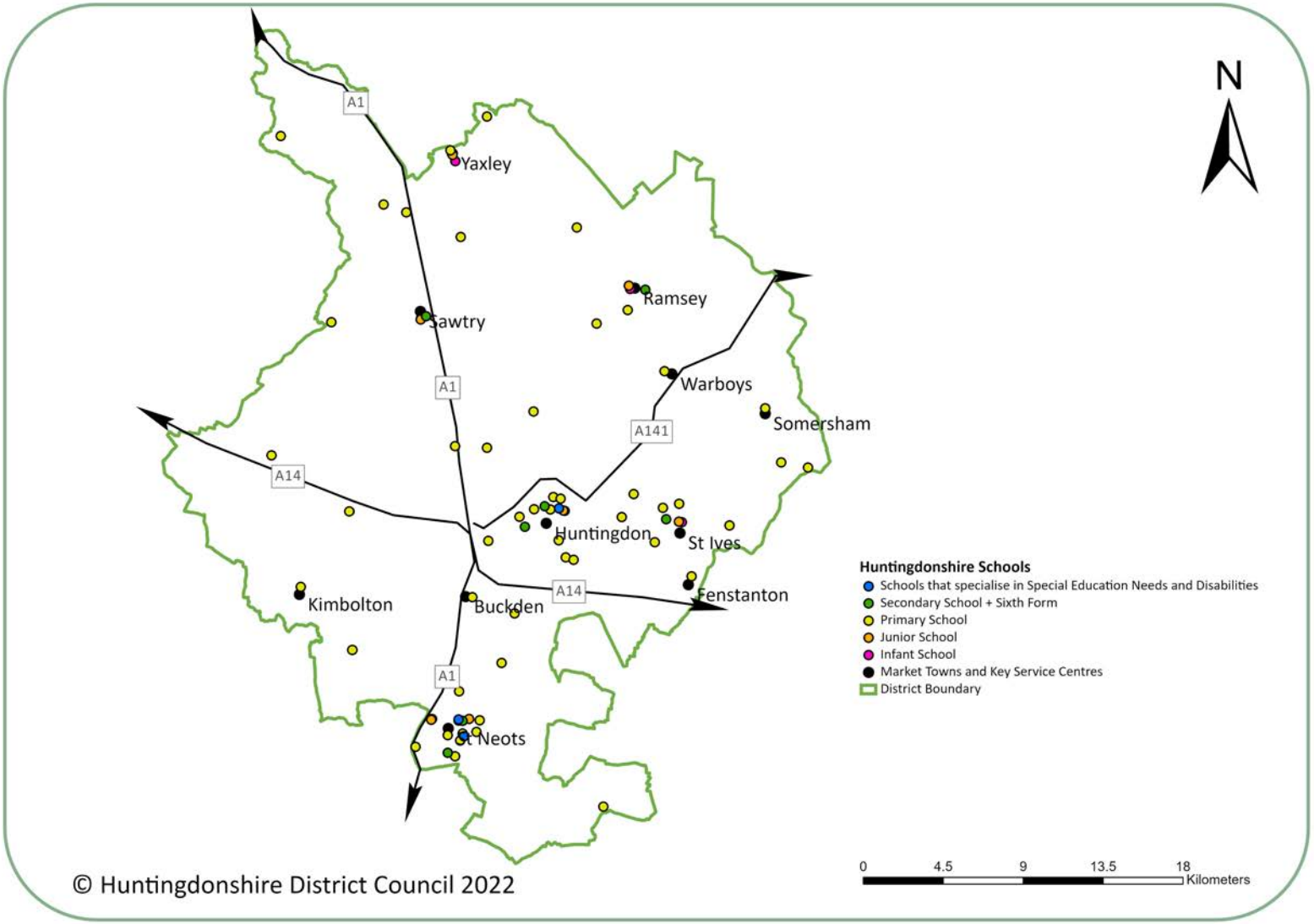
4.212 Huntingdonshire has three schools that specialise in Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND):

- Riverside Meadows Academy, St Neots - Secondary School
- Samuel Pepys School, Eynesbury - Pre-school, Primary and Secondary (ages 2 to 19)
- Spring Common Academy, Huntingdon - Pre-school, Primary and Secondary School (ages 2 to 19)

4.213 These schools provide specialist, tailored education to pupils who have severe or complex learning difficulties, disabilities, or have additional needs such as medical, social, emotional, behavioural and sensory or physical, or those who require modification to the curriculum and personalised learning approaches. Improvements have been made to the Spring Common Academy to address issues with suitable accommodation; the Samuel Pepys School in St Neots is currently operating at capacity. As a result the County Council has identified a project to expand the school by 63 places, this is due to be fulfilled by September 2023. Further SEND provision will be required as a due to the development at Alconbury Weald, this is anticipated to be addressed by the building of an 'Area Special School' (Prestely Wood) containing 150 places covering the ages of 2 to 19 and be run by the Spring Common Academy Trust [34].

34 CCC's Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (pages 70-71)

Map 4.11 Cambridgeshire County Council provided schools across Huntingdonshire

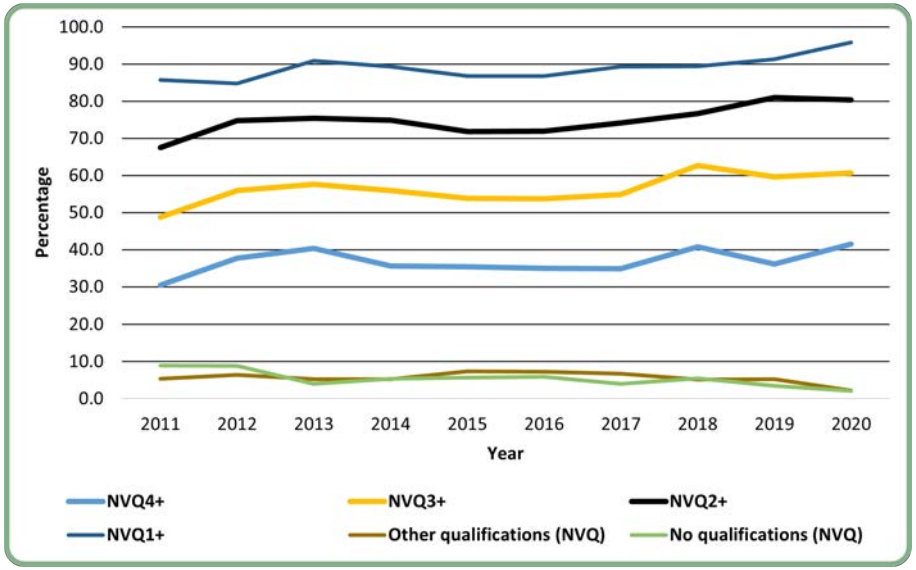


4 A2: Collecting baseline information

4.214 Local childcare is a particular requirement for those with young children. CCC's statutory responsibility in respect of early years and childcare includes: securing sufficient, accessible, flexible and affordable childcare to enable parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment. A directory of childcare providers can be found on the County Council's website. Provision of sufficient pre-school and nursery facilities allows families to return to work (where possible or wanted) and help to draw people with young children to an area, thus helping to stimulate the economy and improve the prosperity of residents. The availability of places in pre-schools and nurseries provides an indication of the opportunities available for potential new residents and the sustainability of a settlement to provide services to its existing residents or those working within it.

4.215 Figure 4.39 shows that since 2011 Huntingdonshire has seen an increase in the percentage of residents aged 16 to 64 who have qualifications equivalent to and including NVQ level 1 and above [35]. In particular, the percentage of those with an NVQ Level 3 (or equivalent) has increased from 48.8% in 2011 to 60.7% in 2020[36]. Those with no qualifications has decreased from 8.9 % to 2.1% between 2011 and 2020, demonstrating improvements in Cambridgeshire County Council's strategy to support all children to achieve their potential.

Figure 4.39 Percentage of Huntingdonshire residents ages 16 to 64 with qualifications



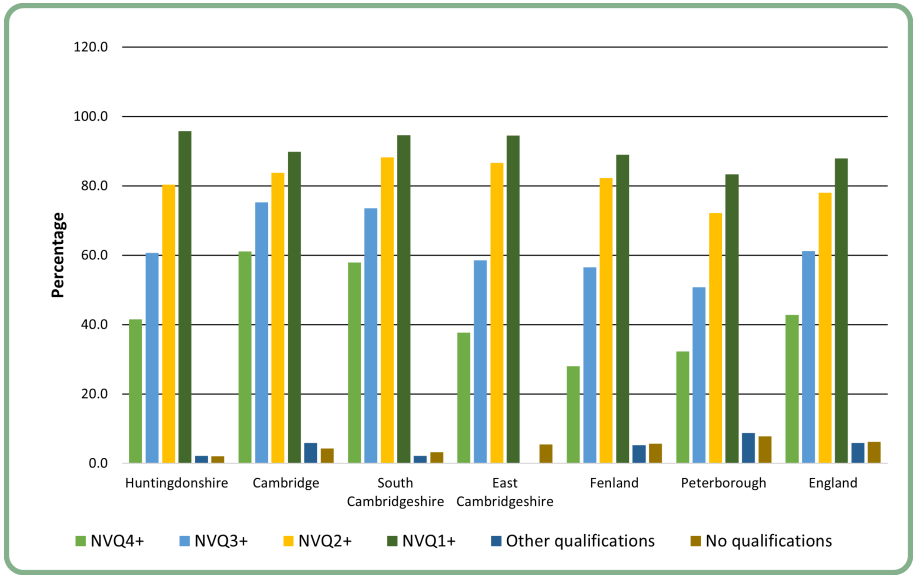
Source: ONS annual Population Survey

4.216 When compared against the average qualification levels across England, the percentage of residents with an NVQ 4 or above or equivalent (41.5%) is slightly below the English average of 42.8%. Huntingdonshire trails behind Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire when compared with those who have NVQ level 3 or equivalent or above. See Figure 4.40.

35 Definitions: NVQ Level 1 (equivalent to 1-4 GCSEs), NVQ Level 2 (equivalent to 5 or more GCSEs), NVQ Level 3 (equivalent to 2 or more A Levels or equivalent), NVQ Level 4 or above (equivalent to first or higher degree, or equivalent professional qualifications), Other qualifications (other vocational work, work related qualifications and non-UK foreign qualifications).

36 All data is measured from January to December

Figure 4.40 Percentage of residents ages 16 to 64 with qualifications



Key sustainability issues and problems

- Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population
- Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district
- Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth

What may happen without a Local Plan

- Limited access to education may limited resident social mobility and economic growth of the district
- Lack of pre-school provision could limit parents who wish to return to work, limiting household income
- Lack of access to a range of qualifications and education providers may lead to some residents travelling further or relocating elsewhere

4 A2: Collecting baseline information

Heritage

4.217 Huntingdonshire has a rich history and this is reflected in the large number of historic structures and environments found within the district, many of which are protected as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens and scheduled monuments. These heritage assets and their setting and the historic environment more widely play an important role in placemaking by shaping high quality design reflective of local character. Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) provides further details.

4.218 Listing marks and celebrates a building or structure's special architectural and historic interest. Listing also brings them under the consideration of the planning system, so that they can be protected for future generations. Structures that can be listed range from bridges, signposts, walls and gates that have architectural or historic value.

4.219 Listed structures across Huntingdonshire are incredibly varied ranging from medieval parish churches, timber framed buildings, vernacular cottages, grand houses, Georgian town houses, Victorian/Edwardian terraced houses, agricultural buildings and outbuildings, former mill and industrial buildings, bridges, commemorative statues, war memorials, walls and railings. There are also local variations across the district reflecting the variety of building materials used. For example, limestone and stonework detailing are a characteristic of historic properties located in the Nene Valley to the north of the district.

4.220 At the time of writing, there are some 2,216 designations across Huntingdonshire listed on Historic England's website. Gradings for listings are as follows:

- 62 grade I designations (2.8%)
- 130 grade II* designations (5.9%)
- 2,024 grade II designated (91.3%)

4.221 The above includes five registered parks and gardens (one at grade II* and four at grade II), these are: Elton Hall, Abbots Ripton Hall, Hamerton, Hilton Maze and Leighton Bromswold. Parks and gardens include gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares. They are protected due to their significance as a 'designed' landscape and are popular local tourist attractions.

4.222 A full list of these can be found on Historic England's website and visually on HDC's Planning Policies map and Conservation webpage. Historic England also have several Advice Notes such as Advice Note 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets and Good Practice Advice in Planning 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans.

4.223 Between 2011 and April 2022, there have been 25 new listings across Huntingdonshire, all grade II. The majority of these are war memorials but this also includes the How in St Ives which was listed in 2019. Since 2013, there have been 2 delists.

Elton Park

Hartford Church and cottages

4.224 Scheduled monuments are the oldest form of designation and relates to nationally important archaeological sites. There are 84 such sites across Huntingdonshire ranging from deserted medieval villages, ruins of a castle and abbeys, former Bishop's palaces and sites of Roman settlements.

4.225 Huntingdonshire contains extensive archaeological remains dating from successive waves of settlement, and reflecting its diversity of landscape types with the Fens and the river valleys having been particular areas of activity. Roman towns existed at Godmanchester and Water Newton, along the line of the Roman Road (Ermine Street) which runs across the district from south east to north west. Ramsey Abbey was

established on a peninsula in the fen in the tenth century, and smaller monastic houses in St Ives, St Neots and Huntingdon had a major impact on the growth of these towns. The main threats to these remains are agriculture and development. This makes it particularly important that provision is made for appropriate excavation, analysis, recording and preservation in areas of archaeological potential.

4.226 Despite the growth that has taken place across the district, many of Huntingdonshire's smaller villages retain some of their historic form. Nucleated forms, with development clustered around a church and/or village green, and linear patterns are both common. Hamlets are comparatively rare in Huntingdonshire, but isolated farms are scattered across the area.

4.227 Huntingdonshire also has 61 designated conservation areas. The areas vary significantly in character and size from a relatively small group of buildings to a substantial part of an individual town or village. Character assessment statements have been prepared for many of these and can be found on the Council's website as Conservation Area Documents.

Listed buildings along the Causeway in Godmanchester

Listed buildings in St Neots Market Square

4.228 The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is a comprehensive source of information on non-designated heritage assets and archaeological sites and finds in Cambridgeshire. The County Council are working in collaboration with Huntingdonshire and other Cambridgeshire authorities on compiling a local listing criteria with the intention of identifying non-designated heritage assets.

4.229 Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage, some of which is at risk. Historic England maintains a Heritage at Risk Register, which includes several listed structures and 4 scheduled monuments 'at risk' in the district.

4.230 Overarchingly, climate change poses significant risks to the historic environment, including the preservation of archaeology, flood and water damage, soil shrinkage and changes in temperatures leading to increased fungal, plant and insect infestation in historic buildings.

Key sustainability issues and problems

- There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk
- Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting
- Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation
- Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered
- Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment

What may happen without a Local Plan

- More listed structures and scheduled monuments may go onto the Heritage at Risk Register
- More designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings may see a harm or a gradual erosion of significance
- Sites of archaeological potential may go undiscovered or lost through development without proper investigation

5 A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E
• A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives • A2: Collecting baseline information • **A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems** • A4: Developing the SA framework • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA				

5.1 The purpose of this task is to help focus the SA and streamline the subsequent stages, including baseline information analysis, setting the SA objectives, prediction of effects and monitoring.

5.2 At the end of each of the topic chapters within the A2 stage, a box summarises the key issues and problems. These have been used to inform the A3 phase of work within the scoping process. Tables 17 to 19 consolidate the identified sustainability issues for each of the three groupings (climate emergency, environment and socio-economic). The tables also then take these issues a step further by exploring how these issues will shape the SA framework.

Key sustainability issues and problems

Table 17 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for climate emergency baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Carbon Emissions and Targets: • Increased summer temperatures will impact on comfort and usability of existing properties • Drier summers and wetter winters will create issues for flooding, water storage and management, soil and agricultural productivity and habitat survival • CO_2 emissions are reducing across industrial, commercial, domestic and public sectors • CO_2 emissions are very high for transport, influenced by the presence of the A1, A14 and East Coast Mainline Railway coupled with the largely rural nature of the district • Per capita emissions are significantly higher than for England but typical for Cambridgeshire • Increasing the climate resilience and energy efficiency of buildings and spaces	SA framework objectives could include: • Support transition to low carbon and eventually zero carbon • Reduce carbon emissions arising from transport • Reduce reliance on private car usage • Locate development in sustainable developments that can utilise sustainable modes of transport • Development must be resilient to the impacts of climate change and be low or zero carbon • Support provision of electric vehicle charging points
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: • Renewable power generation within Huntingdonshire has shifted from a focus on wind turbines to solar farms requiring extensive areas of land but with some scope for complementary agricultural use • The age of the housing stock means that retrofitting of energy efficiency measures will be crucial in boosting the sustainability of the district's homes • Fuel poverty was already an issue for over 1 in 10 households before the April 2022 price rises; this is expected to become more intense in the short term • Access to mains gas is not universal throughout the district with some locations relying on individual oil tanks; in such circumstances alternative community heating systems may offer a more sustainable solution • The visual impact of on-shore renewable energy production needs to be balanced with the impact on local landscape and communities	SA framework objectives could include: • Support appropriate renewable energy generation • Support community energy generation projects to meet local need and reduce reliance on oil tanks to heat homes, particularly in rural parts of the district • Promote retrofitting of older properties to make them more energy efficient and reduce the cost to residents • Build homes to a high standard of energy efficiency • Support provision of electric vehicle charging points • Ensure there is capability and capacity for new development to be connected to the national grid
Flooding and Water: • The impacts of climate change will see increases in extreme weather events, leading to increased rainfall, rainfall intensity and sea level rises all of which will increase the impact of all sources of flooding in the district. Potential to impact on existing and new developments, infrastructure and agricultural productivity, social and economic impacts across the district • Potential need to set aside land for flood mitigation measures due to increased flood risk and understand effectiveness flood management infrastructure • Increased flood risk may influence where development can be sustainably located	SA framework objectives could include: • Support flood mitigation measures and flood management infrastructure • Minimise the risk to life and property arising from flooding events • Locate development in areas that are not in an area at risk of flooding • Ensure there is sufficient water supply to service growth • Use water sustainably

5 A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• Ensuring that new growth does not adversely affect water resources or water resources management infrastructure and that there are sufficient measures in place to balance water supply across the district • Ensuring that homes and businesses are resilient to flooding and provide effective water management to maintain water resources for all • Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies	• Locate development where there is waste water capacity or where it can be made available • Avoid harm to the ecological and biological status of water bodies
Waste and Recycling: • Many tonnes of waste are sent to landfills and recycling centres • Increasing levels of recycling and re-using materials reduces how much material ends up in landfills reducing their environmental effects and supporting a circular economy • Growth places additional demand on existing waste and recycling collection services • The waste attributed to the construction of new buildings	SA framework objectives could include: • Reduce waste production and increase reuse, recycling and composting • Promote the reuse of materials, particularly in construction to support a circular economy • Promote sustainable waste management

Table 18 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for environmental baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Landscape: • Huntingdonshire's landscape and its distinctive qualities are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, insensitive new development and land management practices • Water management is key to landscape character throughout much of the district • The expansive, flat wetlands of the Fens are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change degrading fertile peat soils and its landscape character • The River Great Ouse flows through or around three of Huntingdonshire's four market towns providing a high quality landscape setting to them and recreational opportunities but also an increased risk of flooding	SA framework objectives could include: • Protection of important landscapes and their characteristics • Mitigate the impacts of climate change on the natural environment • Minimise the impact of human actions on the landscape through sustainable land and water management and agricultural practices
Land, Soils and Agriculture: • A very high proportion of the district's agricultural land is classified as best and most versatile, whilst this is beneficial for production and food security it provides challenges for focusing development onto less valuable land • Degradation of peat and soil erosion resulting in the loss of the most fertile soils • There are limited remaining opportunities for largescale reuse of previously developed land	SA framework objectives could include: • Promote the reuse of previously developed land • Make most efficient use of land • Restore peatland and minimise soil erosion • Support sustainable agricultural practices vital for food supply and a prosperous rural economy

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems 5

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment: • There are several sites designated at an international and national level for their biodiversity and habitat value as well as non-designated sites identified for their local nature conservation value • Nature conservation sites and ancient woodland are vulnerable to new developments and land management practices. • Two thirds of SSSIs in Huntingdonshire are in a favourable state, with approximately a third of SSSIs not in a favourable condition, although these are in a recovering state • Visitor pressures on designated and non-designated sites may harm the quality of these sites for nature conservation and vital habitats • Nature conservation sites and other natural environments are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change • Trees are a natural carbon store, with established and mature trees taking in the most carbon	SA framework objectives could include: • Protection and enhancement of biodiversity for species and habitats in designated and non-designated areas • Preserve ancient woodland • Improve the condition of SSSIs across the district • Minimise visitor pressures to nature sites • Conserve and enhance tree coverage across the district
Green Infrastructure and Open Space: • Huntingdonshire has several strategic green infrastructure areas: the Great Fen, Nene Valley, Great Ouse Valley and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds • Strategic green infrastructure and localised provision of open green space provide important social benefits to human health and wellbeing as well as opportunities for habitat and biodiversity conservation and enhancement • Green infrastructure and open space must be located in accessible places • Several public parks and gardens are managed to the Green Flag Award standard, with others aspiring to the standard	SA framework objectives could include: • Support and enhance the strategic green infrastructure network • Enhance connectivity and accessibility to green infrastructure and open space • Sustainably manage areas of open space and strategic green infrastructure • Provide additional open spaces to support growth
Pollution: • The most significant air quality issues arise from traffic and congestion • Air, noise and light pollution can have serious implications on the health and wellbeing of people and cause harm to the natural environment and disrupt the lifecycles of wildlife • Homes, employment, schools, services and facilities should be accessible via walking, cycling and public transport • Light and noise pollution can reduce the tranquillity of the countryside and green spaces within settlements	SA framework objectives could include: • Reduce air, light and noise pollution • Support walking and cycling opportunities • Reduce reliance on private cars for journeys • Locate development in sustainable locations

5 A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Table 19 Sustainability issues and how these could shape the SA framework for socio-economic baseline topics

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Housing: • Ensuring the delivery of an ongoing supply of new homes in sustainable locations • Ensuring new homes provide a mix of types, sizes and tenures aligned with the composition of the local population • Affordability ratios of house prices to around 9 times average earnings create significant stress in the housing market and result in strong social sustainability challenges • Proactive work through the prevention duty regarding homelessness has high effectiveness rates and reduces social sustainability challenges through the trauma otherwise experienced by those who become homeless • Ensuring a range of accessible, adaptable and specialist new homes are available suitable to meet the changing needs of residents as the population ages overall	SA framework objectives could include: • Increasing housing supply including affordable housing in sustainable locations • Delivery of new homes that offer a mix of types, sizes and tenures to meet local needs including gypsy and traveller pitches • Planning for demographic changes and changing needs of residents
Population and Health: • The ageing and in some locations declining population may lead to challenges for the social sustainability of communities, for health and social provision and provision of appropriate housing options. • Decreasing proportion of the population is of working age raising the proportion of dependants. • Natural change is decreasing and may result in a negative rate of population growth unless in-migration is sufficient to counterbalance falling population numbers • GP surgeries are concentrated in larger settlements necessitating residents of almost all villages to travel for appointments or rely on telephone or other remote forms of consultations • Health indicators suggest that Huntingdonshire's population is typically slightly healthier than that for England on average but deaths from particulate air pollution were higher than average in 2019 although it should be noted that this was prior to the rerouting of the A14 and consequent impact on air quality management areas	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting sufficient growth in all communities to maintain current population levels in order to support existing services • Supporting employment growth with complementary housing provision to attract people of working age to live here • Reducing air pollution to decrease its contribution to respiratory diseases
Income and Deprivation: • Huntingdonshire shows great disparity across the district in terms of income and deprivation • Median weekly pay in Huntingdonshire is in decline potentially creating a less financially stable population	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting employment growth in locations accessible to lower income and more deprived areas • Supporting enhanced skills and diversity of employment opportunities

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems 5

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
Employment and Businesses: • Post-pandemic recovery: addressing the decline in the number of jobs in the district • Supporting and maintaining a stable economy: facilitating growth of key industries by providing appropriate land for development and expansion • Supporting rural enterprises to provide sustainable job opportunities in outside the existing employment clusters • Addressing the post-pandemic decline in the number of enterprises in the district • Facilitating access to higher level occupations where required across the district • Addressing the contribution that Huntingdonshire makes to Knowledge Intensive industries • Providing complementary enterprises to support supply chains and economic growth	SA framework objectives could include: • Supporting employment growth and providing appropriate and attractive sites to facilitate growth and expansion of key industries • Supporting diversity of employment opportunities • Enhancing availability of higher level employment opportunities
Travel and Transport: • Huntingdonshire is well located in terms of the strategic road network creating pressure from logistics businesses for new sites and generating high levels of road based through travel and locally generated car travel • A variety of road and active travel infrastructure improvements are proposed which may reduce congestion, improve journey times and increase the attractiveness of active travel modes for journeys • The district's semi-rural nature means some parts are relatively remote which increases reliance on private vehicles and engenders viability challenges for public transport; the distances involved can make walking and cycling unattractive options for many journeys	SA framework objectives could include: • Reducing reliance on private cars for journeys • Support an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes and public transport provision • Development located in sustainable locations within or near to existing communities
Digital Infrastructure and Communications: • Reducing inequality, economic opportunity and vital access to services via digital infrastructure • Reducing social exclusion by providing improved access to improved online services especially in rural areas • Enabling businesses and rural businesses to thrive through improved broadband and mobile coverage • Decreasing rural isolation through improved broadband and mobile coverage	SA framework objectives could include: • Enhance digital infrastructure (mobile and internet provision) across the district but in particular in rural areas
Retail and Town Centres: • Increase in retail/ town centre use vacancies in key locations that provide accessible sustainable access to leisure, services and retail, impacting on social and economic health of the district • Potential contraction of the high street and detrimental impacts on business viability	SA framework objectives could include: • Promote and support the vitality of the district's market towns • Tackle vacancy rates within town centres • Provide a mix of sustainable uses to support the needs of the local population

5 A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• Perceived safety threats from vacant units and low activity levels potentially creating inhospitable and unsafe neighbourhoods • Ensuring high streets in the district provide easy access to leisure, services and retail	
Tourism and Leisure: • The conservation of wildlife and landscapes are not harmed through tourism and leisure pursuits • Tourism and leisure play an important role in people's health and well being so needs to be accessible to all • Growth places additional demand on existing tourist attractions and leisure facilities • Local tourist attractions and leisure facilities contribute towards the local economy and supports local communities through employment, voluntary opportunities and celebrating local heritage and past times	SA framework objectives could include: • Support existing tourism and leisure across the district • Minimise any harmful impacts of tourism and leisure pursuits on the natural environment and historic environment • Enhance the tourism offer across the district
Community Services and Facilities: • Availability of multi-use community spaces where people can gather • Sustainable access to services and facilities across the district • Retention of and long-term sustainability of community services and facilities	SA framework objectives could include: • Support existing community services and facilities • Promote social cohesion • Promote multi-use community spaces to support their long term vitality • Locate new community services and facilities in sustainable locations
Education: • Ensuring residents have access to a range of educational providers in sustainable locations to meet the growing population • Ensuring education levels and range of qualifications are available for all to facilitate social mobility and job prospects for residents, intern contributing to the economic growth of the district • Providing enough SEND provision as a result of new growth	SA framework objectives could include: • Ensuring that the educational needs of all residents can be met locally • Enhance learning and training opportunities across the district
Heritage: • There are many designated and non-designated structures assets, a small proportion are judged to be at risk • Heritage assets face pressures from future development that may cause harm to them and to their setting • Conservation areas may see a gradual erosion of their special features which may undermine the original reasons for designation	SA framework objectives could include: • Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment • Preserve designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting • Recognition of the importance of archaeological heritage

A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems 5

Sustainability issues and problems	How this could shape the SA framework
• Significant archaeology may yet to be discovered • Climate change and flooding events pose significant risks to the historic environment	

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E

- A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives
- A2: Collecting baseline information
- A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems
- **A4: Developing the SA framework**
- A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

6.1 The purpose of this task is to provide a means by which the environmental performance of the plan or programme and alternatives can be assessed.

The Framework

6.2 The SA framework comprises SA objectives and supporting decision aiding questions, which together provide a means by which the sustainability performance of the plan and alternatives can be assessed. SA objectives are used to help show whether the objectives of the plan are beneficial compared to the effects of alternatives. SA objectives should be informed by the previous tasks as they can often be derived from objectives which are established in law, policy, or other plans or programmes as identified in task 3 'A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies', in task 4 'A2: Collecting baseline information' and in task 5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems'.

6.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework for Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 was last updated in 2013. It was necessary to review this in the light of the updated baseline information and changes to the policy context within which the next local plan will be prepared, as established through the review of plans and programmes at international, national and local level. The SA framework and objectives have been updated to reflect the key sustainability issues for the district identified in task A3; in particular they have been updated to reflect an increased emphasis on responding to the climate emergency.

6.4 The SA framework has been structured using the three groupings of the climate emergency, environmental and socio-economic. This approach is favoured over structuring it by topic because it avoids duplication between objectives and reflects that some topics and hence their objectives are interconnected. Each grouping has a number of SA objectives which are the overall sustainability goals that have been derived from the analysis carried out in stage 5 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems'.

6.5 Each SA objective is accompanied by a series of decision aiding questions which will be used to appraise options for the strategy and its alternatives, site allocations and development management policies. Different decision aiding questions are used for each of the strategy and its alternatives, site allocations and development management policies to allow for a more refined assessment. For the strategy and alternatives (including new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals) the questions are relatively high level and seek to distinguish the broad differences in sustainability between different approaches. For the potential site allocations the questions are more specific with a mixture of qualitative questions and more specific quantifiable questions for some indicators to provide a more detailed comparative assessment. Table 23 sets out in detail the assessment implications to aid interpretation of the sites decision aiding questions. For the development management policies the questions are predominantly qualitative whilst being more specific than those for the strategy and alternatives.

6.6 A scoring system/matrix has been devised in order to score how each option performs against the appropriate decision aiding questions.

Table 20 SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
	Climate emergency			
SA 1	Contribute to achieving the district's ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040.	• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with, or exceeding, nationally or locally set targets? • Promote enhancements to green infrastructure networks to facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants?	• Promote low and zero carbon technologies? • Not contain, and be at least 200m from an air quality management area? • Support the circular economy through the reuse and recycling of existing land, buildings or materials?	• Promote energy efficient design? • Increase the amount of CO_2 captured by plants and trees?
SA 2	Improve adaptability and resilience to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency.	• Concentrate new development in locations that maximise opportunities to adapt and be more resilient to the unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency? • Support habitats in adjusting to the impacts of the climate emergency?	• Is the site located in an area with lower resilience to the predicted impacts of climate change?	• Help protect against the increased extremes of weather anticipated from the climate emergency? • Promote opportunities for adaptation to unavoidable impacts of the climate emergency?
SA 3	Manage Huntingdonshire's water resources in a sustainable manner and reduce the risk from all potential sources of flooding to people, properties and the environment.	• Maintain and where possible improve the quality and availability of water resources? • Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources?	• Be served by existing waste water infrastructure or will it require infrastructure upgrades to facilitate growth? • Use land in flood zone 1 (unless the proposed use is water compatible) taking into account the impact from surface water flood risk?	• Reduce or help prevent water resource pollution from all sources? • Promote efficient use of water resources? • Reduce the risk of flooding from all sources?
	Environmental			

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals)	**Sites**	**Development Management policies**
		Will the approach/ option help to:	**Will allocation of the site:**	**Will the option/ proposed policy:**
SA 4	Make efficient use of land by maximising development on previously developed land where this is not of high biodiversity value and minimising that on the best and most versatile agricultural land.	• Enable the use of land that has previously been developed in preference to greenfield land? • Promote development in locations that are grade 3 agricultural land or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land) in preference to higher grades?	• Prioritise development of previously developed land? • Prioritise development on land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land)?	• Promote the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land? • Promote the use of land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land) in preference to grade 1 or 2 agricultural land?
SA 5	Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible natural green space and enhance the strategic green and blue infrastructure network and links to it.	• Focus development in areas which are either well served by publicly accessible open and natural green space or have the capacity to provide additional such space? • Ensure current strategic blue and green infrastructure networks are not compromised and future extensions or improvements are not prejudiced?	• Promote new development with opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation using publicly accessible natural green space? • Could development contribute towards enhancing or increasing the strategic green or blue infrastructure network or linkages to it?	• Support the provision, retention or enhancement of publicly accessible areas of open and natural green space? • Support the provision or enhancement of the strategic green or blue infrastructure network? • Encourage greater participation in healthy lifestyles through nature based or outdoor leisure activities? • Promote access to natural greenspace?
SA 6	Promote conservation, enhancement, recovery and connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance.	• Protect sites of designated biodiversity or geodiversity significance? • Promote opportunities for the recovery and enhanced connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?	• Impact on a designated site of biodiversity or geodiversity significance? • Ensure current strategic ecological networks are not compromised, and future improvements in strategic habitat connectivity are not prejudiced?	• Support the protection, recovery or enhancement of sites of designated biodiversity or geodiversity significance? • Promote opportunities for enhanced connectivity of sites of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals)	**Sites**	**Development Management policies**
		Will the approach/ option help to:	**Will allocation of the site:**	**Will the option/ proposed policy:**
SA 7	Conserve and enhance the special qualities and integrity of our landscape and townscape character and the local distinctiveness of settlements.	• Promote opportunities to protect and enhance valued landscape and townscape characteristics? • Reinforce local distinctiveness and a sense of place?	• Make efficient use of land whilst also protecting the form and character of the local area?	• Protect or enhance landscape and/ or townscape character? • Promote local distinctiveness?
SA 8	Contribute to the minimisation and reduction of all forms of pollution.	• Promote actions to reduce contributions to air pollution? • Facilitate the minimisation of light, noise and odour pollution, in particular on the rural environment	• Be unlikely to cause or suffer from widespread light, noise, odour or visual pollution?	• Support proposals that contribute to the reduction of air pollution? • Support proposals that minimise or contribute to the reduction of light, noise, odour and visual pollution?
	Socio-economic			
SA 9	All people have access to high quality affordable homes that meet their needs across their lifetime.	• Facilitate the delivery of the district's housing needs in sustainable locations that meet the community's needs?	• Contribute to meeting a wide range of the types, sizes and tenures of housing needed across the district? • Meet the needs of specific housing groups such as gypsies and travellers or older people? • Contribute to diversification of the housing supply by being no more than 1 ha in size?	• Support provision of market and affordable homes to meet identified needs and support the district's economic growth aspirations? • Support construction of accessible, adaptable homes with potential to meet the lifetime needs of occupiers? • Support provision of accommodation to meet specific needs?
SA 10	Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of social and community services and facilities	• Support and enhance the more deprived areas of the district? • Maximise opportunities for access to existing or proposed social and community facilities and services?	• Minimise the distance people need to travel to access town centres and local convenience shops	• Contribute towards promoting community cohesion? • Reduce the potential for social exclusion and isolation particularly

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals)	Sites	Development Management policies
		Will the approach/ option help to:	Will allocation of the site:	Will the option/ proposed policy:
	to promote social inclusion particularly amongst those most at risk of experiencing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.		• Minimise the distance people need to travel to access education facilities? • Minimise the distance people need to travel to access leisure and cultural facilities?	among disadvantaged and protected groups? • Retain or enhance accessibility to retail, education, health, leisure or cultural facilities?
SA 11	Enhance the quality, range and accessibility of economic opportunities for all communities.	• Contribute to regeneration activities? • Enhance and diversify economic opportunities with the district?	• Facilitate access to a range of employment opportunities? • Be in a location with high quality digital infrastructure?	• Contribute towards economic opportunities for local residents? • Improve digital infrastructure provision?
SA 12	Reduce the need to travel by car and promote active travel and public transport infrastructure.	• Support development in locations with good active travel and public transport links and services or provide opportunities for significant improvements?	• Benefit from access to public transport infrastructure? • Benefit from access to active travel infrastructure for practical and social activities?	• Support the provision of infrastructure for public transport? • Support the provision of infrastructure for active travel?
SA 13	Strengthen, modernise and diversify the local economy and promote opportunities for growth of indigenous companies as well as encouraging sustainable inward investment.	• Attract new investment and provide opportunities to improve the resilience of the local economy? • Contribute to a balanced portfolio of employment land in sustainable locations throughout the district? • Support retention and growth of indigenous companies? • Encourage sustainable tourism?	• Provide opportunities for the creation of new businesses beyond supporting people working from home? • Facilitate retention or expansion of existing businesses? • Support provision of tourism facilities or services appropriate to the sustainability of its location?	• Support jobs in high knowledge or skill sectors? • Facilitate retention or expansion of existing businesses? • Retain or create rural or tourism employment opportunities? • Assist in increasing the viability of the agricultural economy?

	SA Objective	Decision aiding questions for use in appraising options for		
		The Strategy and alternatives (inc. new settlement and strategic expansion location proposals)	**Sites**	**Development Management policies**
		Will the approach/ option help to:	**Will allocation of the site:**	**Will the option/ proposed policy:**
SA 14	Support the successful response of town, local and village retail centres to changing shopping and social trends.	• Facilitate modernisation of existing town centres to meet current and anticipated needs?	• Reinforce the role of town, local and village centres in serving their communities?	• Promote enhancement of town centres? • Support the retention or creation of local scale retail or social facilities?
SA 15	Promote high quality design and placemaking that enables attractive, safe and resilient communities.	• Strengthen a local sense of place? • Retain the character of existing settlements?	• Provide high quality development sensitive to the character of the local environment? • Promote sustainable design solutions? • Provide opportunities to incorporate crime reduction measures?	• Contribute to the construction of well designed and sustainably constructed buildings and places? • Promote innovation whilst respecting local character and context? • Facilitate enhancement of the public realm? • Minimise opportunities for crime and help reduce the fear of crime?
SA 16	Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting(s).	• Conserve and where possible enhance sites, features and area of archaeological value throughout the district?	• Impact on any heritage assets or their settings?	• Promote the conservation or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings?

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

6.7 Table 21 below illustrates how the SA objectives address the issues listed in Annex I of the SEA Directive.

Table 21 How SA objectives address the issues listed in annex I of the SEA Directive

Issue from Annex I of the SEA Directive	Responding SA objective(s)
Soil	4
Water	3
Biodiversity (incorporating flora and fauna)	5 and 6
Air	8
Landscape	7
Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	16
Climatic factors	1 and 2
Human health	10 and 12
Population	9 and 11
Material assets	13 and 14

Scoring system/matrix

6.8 Each option will be assessed against the following classification of the potential effect as appropriate for each objective (see Table 22). The scoring matrix will be used to judge each item in the SA Framework to assess the relative performance of each option. This is refined to consider the level of significance of the impact either positively or negatively. A neutral category is included where there may no clear relationship, the outcome is uncertain or it may depend on details on delivery or implementation mechanisms unknown at the time of assessment.

6.9 The supporting commentary to each assessment will consider whether any identified impact is likely to be long or short term and permanent or temporary.

Table 22 Scoring matrix

Score	Effect of the approach
++	Contributes significantly to the achievement of the objective
+	Contributes to the achievement of the objective
N	No clear relationship to achieving the objective, the outcome is uncertain or the outcome may depend on delivery specific factors
	The objective is not relevant to the proposal
-	Detracts from achievement of the objective
--	Significantly detracts from achievement of the objective

6.10 The proposed scoring system/matrix consists of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. How each objective will be assessed are shown in Table 23.

6.11 For objectives SA10 and SA11 measurements will taken from the centre point of the site frontage to calculate the distance from the site on foot by roads and public footpaths to services and facilities. For objectives SA1 and SA6 these will be calculated as the crow flies.

Table 23 Site decision aiding questions supporting criteria

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
SA1	Promote provision and use of low and zero carbon technologies?	The scheme is for renewable energy generation or a large site with renewable energy provision that is proposed to meet the majority of the needs of the development.	++
		Clear renewable energy provision/ building standards to contribute to meeting the site's needs/ significantly enhanced building standards; or The site is proposed solely for biodiversity net gain opportunities.	+
		Build to building regulations at the time of development.	N
	Not contain, and be at least 200m from an air quality management area?	Beyond 200m of an AQMA	+
		Within 200m of an AQMA	-
		Within an AQMA	--
	Support the circular economy through the reuse and recycling of existing land, buildings or materials?	The site has significant existing structures with potential for recycling and reuse on site. Change of use of existing building	++
		The site has some existing structures with potential for recycling and reuse on site. Change of use or retention of existing building with some redevelopment	+
		There are no existing structures	-
SA2	Is the site located in an area with lower resilience to the predicted impacts of climate change?	The scheme is for entirely biodiversity net gain, flood mitigation, open space or renewable energy generation	++

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		Or there is no fluvial flood risk with climate change	
		There is risk of fluvial flooding with climate change at 1 in 100 (Design Flood) which is not more than 20% of the site area	+
		Risk of fluvial flooding with climate change at 1 in 100 (Design Flood) is greater than 20% and not more than 50% of the site area	-
		Risk of fluvial flooding with climate change at 1 in 100 (Design Flood) is greater than 50% of the site area	--
SA3	Be served by existing waste water infrastructure or will it require infrastructure upgrades to facilitate growth?	More than 10% of the flow permit for the water recycling centre catchment is remaining after existing committed growth is taken into account.	+
		Development in this location may require an increase in the water recycling centre catchment flow permit and/or upgrades to the treatment process to accommodate further growth.	-
		The water recycling centre catchment has significant constraints in providing upgrades to the WRC to accommodate future growth. or The site is a new settlement and will most likely require a new water recycling centre to serve the population.	--
	Use land in flood zone 1 (unless the proposed use is water compatible) taking into account the impact from surface water flood risk?	100% of the site in flood zone 1 and none or minimal recorded risk of surface water flooding; or Proposal is for water compatible development	++
		50-99% of the site in flood zone 1 and none or minimal risk of surface water; or 100% of the site in flood zone 1 but with significant risk of surface water flooding	+

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		50-99% of the site in Flood zone 1 with significant risk of surface water flooding <50% of the site flood zone 1, mainly flood zone 2 irrespective of surface water flood risk	-
		<50% of the site flood zone 1, mainly flood zone 3 irrespective of surface water flood risk	--
SA4	Prioritise development of previously developed land?	>60% of the site is previously developed land	++
		1-59% of the site is previously developed land	+
		The site is proposed solely for biodiversity net gain opportunities	N
		The site is technically classified at greenfield but includes substantial built structures such as agricultural barns	-
		The site is wholly greenfield land with no existing structures	--
	Prioritise development on land of agricultural land grade 3 or lower (including urban and non-agricultural land)?	The site is classified as urban or non-agricultural land	++
		The site is grades 4 and/or 5	+
		The site is grade 1 but the proposed uses are for greenspace, biodiversity net gain or flood mitigation	N
		The site is predominantly grade 3	-
		The site is predominantly grade 2	--
SA5	Promote new development with opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation using publicly accessible natural green space? Could development contribute towards enhancing or increasing the strategic green or blue infrastructure network or linkages to it?	The site meets at least 3 of the following: • is within 1 km of a 10 ha area of natural green space • is within 300 m of a 2 ha natural green space • is within 200 m of a 0.5 ha area of greenspace • has direct opportunities to link to the strategic green or blue infrastructure network	++

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		the site has capacity for 200 or more new homes or 1,000 sqm or more of non-residential built development with natural green space included within the site	
		The site meets 1 of the above criteria • is within 1 km of a 10 ha area of natural green space • is within 300 m of a 2 ha natural green space • is within 200 m of a 0.5 ha area of greenspace	+
		The site meets none of the above criteria but has some capacity for linkages to the existing strategic green or blue infrastructure network	-
		The site meets none of the above criteria and has no/ very limited capacity for linkages to the existing strategic green or blue infrastructure network	--
SA6	Impact on a designated site of biodiversity or geodiversity significance?	The site meets all of the following: • is more than 2 kms from a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • is more than 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest • is more than 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • is more than 200 m from a Local Geological Site	++
		The site meets at least 2 of the following: • is more than 2 kms from a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • is more than 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest • is more than 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • is more than 200 m from a Local Geological Site	+
		The site meets at least 3 of the following: • contains or is within 2 kms of a Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area • contains or is within 1 km from a Site of Special Scientific Interest	--

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		• contains or is within 200 m from a County Wildlife Site • contains or is within 200 m from a Local Geological Site	
	Ensure current strategic ecological networks are not compromised, and future improvements in strategic habitat connectivity are not prejudiced?	The site is located within one of Natural Cambridgeshire's Priority Landscapes and has potential to contribute to improvements strategically in habitat connectivity.	+
		The site is located outside any of Natural Cambridgeshire's Priority Landscapes and has limited potential to contribute towards improvements strategically in habitat connectivity.	-
SA7	Make efficient use of land whilst also protecting the form and character of the local area?	The scale and/ or location of the site: • relate well to the existing settlement; • the amount of development would contribute to protecting the form and character of the surrounding townscape and landscape; • the density is similar to or slightly higher than surrounding properties.	++
		The scale and/ or location of the site: • relate well to the existing settlement; • the amount of development would contribute to protecting the form and character of the surrounding townscape and landscape; • the proposed density would not make efficient use of land.	+
		The scale and/ or location of the site: • do not relate well to the existing settlement; • the proposed density would make efficient use of land.	-
		The scale and/ or location of the site: • do not relate well to the existing settlement; • would not contribute to protecting the form and character of the surrounding townscape and landscape or could result in coalescence with another settlement(s); • the density would not make efficient use of land.	--
SA8	Be unlikely to cause or suffer from widespread light, noise, odour or visual pollution?	The proposal is distant from major sources of pollution and not of a scale likely to cause substantial pollution	+

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		For residential proposals, the site is located near to the strategic transport network or near to a major employment site. For non-residential proposals, the site is close to major sources of pollution and/or is of a scale likely to cause substantial pollution	-
		The proposal could undermine the Dark Sky Discovery Sites designated at the Great Fen	--
SA9	Contribute to meeting a wide range of the types, sizes and tenures of housing needed across the district? Meet the needs of specific housing groups such as gypsies and travellers or older people? Contribute to diversification of the housing supply by being no more than 1 ha in size?	The site is likely to support over 100 new homes which could include a wide range of types, sizes and tenures, or The site is suitable to meet specialist needs of identified groups, or The site is 1 ha or less and contributes to the government's aspiration to promote sites suitable for SME builders	++
		The site will contribute to meeting the housing needs of the district	+
		The site is for non-residential uses	N
SA10	Minimise the distance people need to travel to access town centres and local convenience shops?	The site is within 5 kms of a town centre	++
		The site is within 800 m of a local convenience shop or 2.5 kms of a freestanding supermarket	+
		The site is proposed solely for biodiversity net gain or renewable energy opportunities	N
		The site is more than 800 m from a local convenience shop or 2.5 kms from a freestanding supermarket	-
	Minimise the distance people need to travel to education facilities?	The site meets at least 1 of the following: • is within 800 m of a town based primary school • is within 800 m of a village primary school • the site has capacity for at least 1,000 dwellings and will include a primary school	++

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		The site does not meet the criteria above but is either within 1.5 kms of a town based primary school or is in a village containing a primary school	+
		The site is either for non-residential use or for residential accommodation specifically targeted at older people.	N
		The site is beyond 1.5 kms of a town based primary school; or Is in a village which does not have a primary school and is of insufficient capacity to provide a school on site.	--
	Minimise the distance people need to travel to leisure and cultural facilities?	The site meets at least 5 of the following, is within 800 m of: • public hall/ meeting place • pub • place of worship • museum • library • cinema • sports centre • playing fields • the site has capacity for at least 1,000 dwellings and will include new leisure and/ or cultural facilities The proposal provides additional leisure and /or cultural facilities.	++
		The site meets at least 3 of the following, is within 800 m of: • public hall/ meeting place • pub • place of worship • museum • library	+

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		• cinema • sports centre • playing fields	
		The site meets at least 1 of the following, is within 800 m of: • public hall/ meeting place • pub • place of worship • museum • library • cinema • sports centre • playing fields Or The site is proposed solely for biodiversity net gain or renewable energy opportunities	**N**
		The site is beyond 800 m of all the following: • public hall/ meeting place • pub • place of worship • museum • library • cinema • sports centre • playing fields	**-**
SA11	Facilitate access to a range of employment opportunities?	The site is within 1.5 kms of multiple concentrations of employment (eg town centre, industrial estate, secondary school) or the site itself will provide over 5 ha of employment land.	**++**

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		The site meets at least 1 of the following: • is within 5 kms of multiple concentrations of employment • is within 1.5 kms of a range of employment sources Will provide over 2 ha of employment	+
		The site is proposed solely for renewable energy opportunities, biodiversity net gain or open space uses	N
		The site meets at least 2 of the following: • is more than 5 kms from multiple concentrations of employment • is more than 1.5 kms from a range of employment sources Will not provide at least 2 ha of employment	-
		The site meets all of the following: • is more than 5 kms from multiple concentrations of employment • is more than 1.5 kms from a range of employment sources Will not provide at least 2 ha of employment	--
	Be in a location with high quality digital infrastructure?	Ultrafast broadband is available in the vicinity	++
		Superfast broadband is available in the vicinity	+
		The site is proposed solely for biodiversity net gain opportunities	N
		Standard or no broadband is available in the vicinity	-

6 A4: Developing the SA framework

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
SA12	Benefit from access to public transport infrastructure?	The site is within 5 kms of a railway station and 800 m of a bus service rated B- or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately every 20 minutes Mon-Sat)	++
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated D+ or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately hourly Mon-Sat)	+
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated F+ or higher on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately 3 per day Mon-Fri)	-
		The site is within 800 m of a bus service rated F or lower on the Place Based Carbon Calculator (approximately 1 per day Mon-Fri) or is beyond 800 m of any bus service	--
	Benefit from access to active travel infrastructure for practical and social activities?	A pavement adjoins the site frontage or is immediately across the road from the site; or A footpath along the site frontage will need to be created to join the site with a nearby footpath; or There is a public right of way/ segregated cycleway within the site.	++
		The site is within 500 m of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	+
		The site is within 1 km of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	-
		The site is more than 1 km of a public right of way and/ or segregated cycleway	--
SA13	Provide opportunities for the creation of new businesses beyond supporting people working from home? Facilitate retention or expansion of existing businesses? Support provision of tourism facilities or services appropriate to the sustainability of its location?	The proposal includes high job density employment use(s) such as offices, or Facilitate the expansion of an existing business(es)	++
		The proposal would support new low job density employment use(s) such as logistics or industrial uses, or Facilitate the retention of an existing business(es), or Supports the retention of existing tourism facilities or services appropriate to the location	+

SA Objective	Site appraisal decision aiding question Will allocation of the site:	Assessment indicators	Scoring matrix
		The proposal does not include employment, commercial or tourism uses	N
		The proposal would result in the loss of employment, commercial or tourism facilities and services	-
SA14	Reinforce the role of town, local and village centres in serving their communities?	The proposal supports provision of additional retail or social facilities within an existing town, local or village centre	++
		The proposal is for the retention, modernisation or expansion of an existing retail or social facility	+
		The proposal does not include retail or social uses so does not apply.	N
		The proposal would result in the loss of retail or social facilities within an existing town, local or village centre	-
SA15	Provide high quality development sensitive to the character of the local environment? Promote sustainable design solutions? Provide opportunities to incorporate crime reduction measures?	The proposal includes the redevelopment of a site that is previously developed and derelict, or Where there is a known issue, the proposal offers opportunities to address crime and /or anti-social behaviour issues.	++
		The site is located such that it can be effectively masterplanned to become part of the existing place and community.	-
		The site is located such that it could not be effectively integrated with the existing community.	-
SA16	Impact on any heritage assets or their settings?	There are no designated heritage assets within the site or in the immediate vicinity of the site	++
		The proposal could enhance a heritage asset where there is currently a negative impact	+
		There are designated heritage assets that could be adversely impacted by the development	-

7 A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA

STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E
• A1: Identifying relevant policies, plans, programmes and objectives • A2: Collecting baseline information • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems • A4: Developing the SA framework • **A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA**				

7.1 The purpose of this task is to ensure that the SA covers the likely significant environmental effects of the plan and to ensure that the SA process is and will be robust and suitably comprehensive in order to support production of the plan.

7.2 Consultation is an important part of producing the Local Plan and the Council is committed to engaging during the process in ways that give people opportunities to get involved. Details of how the Council intends to engage during the production of the Local Plan can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement, which is available on the Council's website.

7.3 The council is required to consult on the scope of the SA with the following three bodies:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

7.4 Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

7.5 Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into a table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report. This table can be found in Appendix 2: 'Comments from Environmental Bodies'.

7.6 The draft scoping report was made available for anyone to make comments between 1 February and 15 March 2023. This was so that the scoping report is as robust as possible and to promote participation in production of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Comments received can be viewed on our consultation portal, a summary of these comments and the changes made to the report can be found in Appendix 3: 'Comments from Public Engagement'.

7.7 Stage A will be completed with the publication of this final scoping report.

8 Next Steps

8.1 Following consultation and amendments to this scoping report, the methodology will be used to complete the SA/SEA process as part of the production of the Local Plan:

8.2 To be produced as part of drawing up the draft Local Plan:

- Testing the plan strategy against the SA framework (B1)
- Developing plan options (B2)
- Predicting the effects of the plan including alternatives (B3)
- Evaluating the effects of the plan including the alternatives (B4)
- Mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects (B5)
- Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan implementation (B6)
- Preparing the sustainability appraisal report (C1)
- Public consultation on the draft plan and the sustainability appraisal report (D1)

8.3 To be produced alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan:

- Appraising significant changes (D2)
- Making decisions and providing information (initial coverage) (D3)
- Developing aims and methods for monitoring (E1)
- Responding to adverse effects (E2)

8.4 To be produced when the Local Plan is adopted:

- Assessing significant changes (if any are made through the submission and examination stages) (D2)
- Making decisions and providing information (additional coverage) (D3)
- Developing aims and methods for monitoring (if required following the submission and examination stages) (E1)
- Responding to adverse effects (if required following the submission and examination stages) (E2)

8.5 For more information about these stages see Table 3 ' Stages B to E in the SA/ SEA process'.

Appendix 1: Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

1.1 This appendix summarises the outcome of a review of international, national regional and sub-regional/county/local plans programmes and strategies. The following tables summarise the aims, objectives, targets and indicators of relevant plans, programmes and strategies which has informed the identification of the ways in which the Local Plan could help to fulfil them or be shaped by them.

1.2 While the review has been comprehensive, it is not an exhaustive list of all plan, programmes and strategies out there, but includes those that have the most direct bearing on the future planning of the district. The list does not provide a definitive account of their contents; however, it is considered that it provides a sufficient review of those relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and identifies any environmental, economic and social implications that should be considered within the SA and plan-making process.

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

International level

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
United Nations: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015)	The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The 17 goals are: 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	These goals are set at a high level. The National Planning Policy Framework now references these goals, as such the principles and essence of these goals and their contribution to sustainable development must be embedded into the new Local Plan.	All
United Nations Climate Change Conference: Glasgow Climate Pact (UN, 2021)	The Glasgow Climate Pact is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. COP26 finalised the Paris 'rulebook', resolving the key outstanding political decisions needed for Parties to begin implementing the Paris Agreement. On 13 November 2021, COP26 concluded in Glasgow with all countries agreeing the Glasgow Climate Pact to keep 1.5C alive and finalise the outstanding elements of the Paris Agreement. Climate negotiators ended two weeks of talks with consensus on urgently accelerating climate action.	This is a high level agreement which the United Kingdom has signed up to in order to address the outstanding elements of the Paris Agreement. Huntingdonshire must play its part in	Climate Emissions and Targets

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	• Mitigation - reducing emissions • Adaptation - helping those already impacted by climate change • Finance - enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals • Collaboration - working together to deliver even greater action	reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	
United Nations: Paris Agreement (UN, 2015)	The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century reaching a level whereby greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are at the same levels that trees, soil and oceans can absorb naturally (net zero) between 2050 and 2100. Also, each country to set its own emission-reduction targets, reviewed every five years and rich countries are to help poorer nations by providing funding, known as climate finance, to adapt to climate change and switch to renewable energy.	Huntingdonshire must play its part in reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	Climate Emissions and Targets
Aarhus Convention 1998: The UN Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	Establishes the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by the public sector. The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making. The right to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting these rights. This led to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.	Evidence used to underpin the new Local Plan must be publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, signed by UK in 2006 and introduced March 2007)	Promotes landscape protection, management and planning and European co-operation on landscape issues. The Framework set out in the Convention is being implemented through Action Plans created by Natural England, English Heritage and DEFRA with input from other partners e.g. Forestry Commission and Local Authorities to review policies on Landscape.	Huntingdonshire's landscape is varied with urbanised towns and rural areas. There are several designated nature sites and the Fens important for wildlife and agricultural production.	Landscape Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Valletta Convention (European Convention on the protection of	Recognises importance of and clarifies definition of archaeological heritage. The emphasis is on protection of sites for future study, the reporting of chance finds the control of excavations and the use of metal detectors. Signatories (including the UK) promise to allow the input of expert archaeologists into the making of planning policies and planning decisions.	Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage including many scheduled monuments. There is potential that sites of archaeological significance are yet to be	Heritage

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Archaeological Heritage) 1992		discovered, therefore the new Local Plan will reinforce a positive strategy towards heritage and archaeology building on existing knowledge and evidence bases.	
European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985) (Granada Convention)	The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "European co-ordination of conservation policies" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.	Huntingdonshire has a wealth of heritage: many listed structures, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens. The new Local Plan will reinforce a positive strategy towards the conservation of landscapes, heritage and archaeology building on existing knowledge and evidence bases.	Heritage

1.3 European Directives that have been transposed into UK legislation:

- **European SEA Directive (2001/42/EEC)** > The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)
- **European Directive 97/11/EC (amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment known as the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive)** > The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
- **European Air Quality Framework Directive (2008/50/EEC)** > The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010
- **European Directive Nitrates (91/676/EEC)** > The Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2009 (Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2008)
- **European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings 2002/91/EC** > Building Regulations 2010 (as amended); and The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012
- **European Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)** > Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- **Landfill of Waste (Landfill Directive) (99/31/EC)** > Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- **European Waste Framework Directive (2006/12/EC)** > Waste Minimisation Act 1998; and Household Waste Recycling Act 2003
- **Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)** > Water Act 2014; and Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- **European Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)** > The Flood Risk Regulations 2009
- **EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive, 1992)** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

- **Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) (Ramsar Convention)** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- **Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds: Directive 2009/147/EC** > The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- **European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979)** > Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended)

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

National level

Legislation

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Human Rights Act 1998	Primary legislation covering human rights which sets out basic civil and political rights of individuals. It includes the right to peaceful enjoyment of a dwelling, to privacy and protection of privacy by law and freedom of opinion and expression.	Legal requirement that human rights of individuals are not compromised within the plan making process.	All
Freedom of Information Act 2000	Establishes the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by the public sector. The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making. The right to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting these rights	Evidence to support the new Local Plan will be made publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
Environmental Information Regulations 2004	The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 is a UK Statutory Instrument that provides a statutory right of access to environmental information held by UK public authorities.	Evidence to support the new Local Plan will be made publicly available. Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework.	Procedural
Equality Act 2010	The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.	Legal requirement that those with a protected characteristic are treated equally and are not compromised within the plan making process. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan.	Procedural
The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)	Requires assessment of the effect of projects on the environment.	The impacts of the new Local Plan on the environment be assessed and compiled into a Sustainability Appraisal.	Procedural
The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)	Requires assessment of the effect of projects on the environment (EIA). An Environmental Impact Assessment applies to development which is given planning permission under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.	The Local Plan will undertake a sustainability appraisal to assess the impacts of policies and proposals on the environment.	Procedural

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Regulations 2017 (as amended)			
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)	It is a central part of English planning law in that it concerns town and country planning in the United Kingdom and is now also complemented by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	Legal framework for the planning system.	Procedural
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)	The Act updates elements of 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. In chapter 5, it introduces the system of development plan documents as part of the Local Development Framework. Introduces regional spatial strategies as replacements for structure plans and regional planning guidance. It also reforms to the development control and compulsory purchase and compensation systems and removes crown immunity form planning controls.	Legal framework for the planning system.	Procedural
Localism Act 2011	There are four key aspects of the Localism Act, it provided new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals (including the introduction of neighbourhood plans); reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective; and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally	The Local Plan will meet these requirements.	Procedural
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)	Prescribe the general form and content of local plans and adopted policies maps and what additional matters local planning authorities must have regard to when drafting their local plans.	The Local Plan will meet these requirements.	Procedural
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012	The Regulations set out the procedure for the designation of neighbourhood areas and neighbourhood forums and for the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and neighbourhood development orders (including community right to build orders).	Huntingdonshire has several made neighbourhood plans and some in production. More may follow. They have to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.	All
Planning Act 2008 (as amended)	Introduces the system for nationally significant infrastructure planning alongside further reforms to the Town and Country Planning System including the addition of a duty on councils to take action on climate change in their development plan documents and the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 allows local planning authorities to set energy efficiency standards in their development plan policies that exceed the energy efficiency requirements of the building regulations.	Huntingdonshire has several major transport projects ongoing (A428, A141) and potentially others in East-West Rail. Huntingdonshire is a CIL charging authority. A transport study will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan's preparation. Additionally, the Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to	Travel and Transport Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	
Planning and Energy Act 2008	Builds on policies and provisions in Climate Change Programme. Allows local authorities to include policies and proposals that will secure energy efficiency improvements in excess of Part L Building Regulations including: A proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable sources; A proportion of energy used in development in their area to be low carbon; and Development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building requirements.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Environment Act 2021	This Act will set clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water and waste, and includes an important new target to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. It sets in law new tools that Natural England and others can use to help meet those targets towards a Nature-positive 2030 such as biodiversity metrics and calculators to assess biodiversity net gain. DEFRA have released the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) in 2021.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	Sets targets for SSSIs and Regulation 48 requires screening of projects with respect to the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).	The new Local Plan is required to undertake a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on internationally designated sites.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended)	The Convention aims to ensure conservation of wild flora and fauna species and their habitats and prevent loss of flora and fauna by making it illegal to intentionally damage wild plants and animals or their habitats. Special attention is given to endangered and vulnerable species, including endangered and vulnerable migratory species.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended)	Provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest.	The Local Plan should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)	Recognises importance of and clarifies definition of archaeological heritage. The emphasis is on protection of sites for future study, the reporting of chance finds the control of excavations and the use of metal detectors. Signatories (including the UK) promise to allow the input of expert archaeologists into the making of planning policies and planning decisions.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage
Housing and Planning Act 2016	The Act introduced a number of measures: • Extending the Right to Buy discounts to housing association tenants. Placing a duty on local planning authorities to promote the development of Starter Homes. • Requiring local authorities to prepare, maintain and publish local registers of land. • Supporting a doubling of the number of custom-built and self-built homes to 20,000 by 2020. • Ensuring every area has a local plan. • Reforming compulsory purchase. • Simplifying and speeding up neighbourhood planning. • Requiring social tenants on higher incomes to pay fairer rents. • Placing a duty on local authorities to consider selling higher-value housing assets when they become vacant. • Giving local authorities more powers to tackle rogue landlords. • Improving local information on the private rented sector. • Reducing regulatory controls for private registered providers of housing. • Enabling lead enforcement authority for estate agents.	The Local Plan will seek opportunities to integrate self and custom build products. The Local Plan will also include policies on affordable housing provision and recommended tenure splits to meet need.	Housing
Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016)	Self-build and custom housebuilding covers a wide spectrum, from projects where individuals are involved in building or managing the construction of their home from beginning to end, to projects where individuals commission their home, making key design and layout decisions, but the home is built ready for occupation ('turnkey'). The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) provides a legal definition of self-build and custom housebuilding. The Act does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding and provides that both are where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals.	The Council is required to keep a Self and Custom build register and permit enough plots to meet the identified need within 3 years of the base period. The Local Plan will seek opportunities to integrate self and custom build products.	Housing
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	It places duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. These include: (a) an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and (b) a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.	The proposed growth within the Local Plan must meet identified needs. These will be integrated into policies and allocations and supported by appropriate evidence.	Housing

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010	Avoid, prevent or reduce concentrations of harmful air pollutants and limit values and/or alert thresholds set for ambient air pollution levels. Sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)	Sets out a hierarchy for the avoidance, prevention and reduction in adverse effects associated with environmental noise, including noise generated by road and rail vehicles, infrastructure, aircraft and outdoor, industrial and mobile machinery. It focuses on three action areas: the determination of exposure to environmental noise; ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public; and preventing and reducing environmental noise where necessary and preserving environmental noise quality where it is good.	The impact of noise on residential amenity, public health and the environment from proposals in the Local Plan will be considered, particularly in respect of the location of development and the type of development proposed.	Pollution
The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2007	These Regulations introduce a new system of environmental permitting in England and Wales. They carry into effect in England and Wales Community legislation in the field of pollution prevention and control.	The Local Plan will undertake a sustainability appraisal to assess the impacts of policies and proposals on the environment.	Pollution
Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Amendment) Regulations 2016	Puts in place measures to reduce water pollution caused by nitrates. The Environment Agency identifies Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and establishes and implements an action programme with this aim. NVZs are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. They include about 55% of land in England. Defra reviews NVZs every 4 years to account for changes in nitrate concentrations. The last review was in December 2020.	The sustainability appraisal for the Local Plan should consider impacts of development upon any identified nitrate sensitive areas. Environmentally sensitive agricultural practice could also be considered as part of policies in combination with work underway in the Great Fen .	Land, Soils and Agriculture
Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended)	Long term binding framework to tackle climate change. Sets out a new approach to tackling climate change including: Setting ambitious, legally binding targets; Taking powers to help meet those targets; Strengthening the institutional framework; Enhancing the UK's ability to adapt to the impact of climate change; and Establishing clear and regular accountability to UK Parliament. Key aim of the Act is to improve carbon management helping the transition towards a low-carbon economy through the setting of carbon emission targets. In 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act to commit the UK to achieving net zero by 2050, compared to the previous target of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 from the 1990 baseline.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Building Regulations 2010 (as amended)	Building regulations are minimum standards for design, construction and alterations to virtually every building. The Building Regulations 2010 cover the construction and extension of buildings and these regulations are supported by Approved Documents. Baseline is set for the conservation of fuel and power in new and existing dwellings by Part L of Building Regulations with Part G addressing sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency. An uplift to parts L (Conservation of fuel and power) and F (Ventilation) came into effect on 15 June 2022 to improve the energy efficiency	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	of new builds. Part O addressing overheating and Part S addressing infrastructure for charging electric vehicles were also added to the approved documents on 15 June 2022.	the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	
The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012	The 2012 regulations aim to implement the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and in doing so improve the energy efficiency of buildings, thus reducing CO2 emissions and lessening the impact of climate change. It does this through a number of measures which introduced structured assessment and reporting of aspects the buildings which have a bearing on their use of energy such as the construction style, the fabric used, insulation measures, the predicted performance of fixed building services for lighting, heating and cooling. Additionally, the reports contain recommendations which provide owners with optional actions and investments that they may make to increase the energy efficiency of their building.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended)	To provide for measures, procedures and guidance to prevent or reduce effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, ground water, soil and air, and on the global environment, including the greenhouse effect, as well as any resulting risk to human health, from landfilling of waste, during the whole life-cycle of the landfill.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Waste Minimisation Act 1998	The prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness by; the development of technologies more sparing in their use of resources: the use of products designed so as to make no or the smallest possible contribution, by the nature of their manufacture, use or disposal, to increase the amount or harmfulness of waste and pollution hazards; the development of appropriate techniques for the final disposal of dangerous substances contained in waste destined for recovery; and the recovery of waste by means of recycling, reuse or reclamation with a view to extracting raw materials; or the use of waste as a source of energy.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Household Waste Recycling Act 2003	The prevention or reduction of waste production and its harmfulness by; the development of technologies more sparing in their use of resources: the use of products designed so as to make no or the smallest possible contribution, by the nature of their manufacture, use or disposal, to increase the amount or harmfulness of waste and pollution hazards; the development of appropriate techniques for the final disposal of dangerous substances contained in waste destined for recovery; and the recovery of waste by means of recycling, reuse or reclamation with a view to extracting raw materials; or the use of waste as a source of energy.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Water Act 2014	This Act brings about a reform of legislation concerning the water industry and management and conservation of water resources and related environmental matters in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the Act is to: reform the water industry to make it more innovative and responsive to customers and to increase the resilience of water supplies to natural hazards such as drought and floods to bring forward measures to address the availability and affordability of insurance for those	The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	households at high flood risk and ensure a smooth transition to the free market over the longer term.		
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	The purpose of the Directive is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater by preventing further deterioration and protects and enhances the status of aquatic ecosystems; promoting sustainable water use; enhancing protection and improvement of the aquatic environment; progressively reducing pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution; and contributing towards mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.	The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations.	Flooding and Water
The Flood Risk Regulations 2009	A framework for the assessment and management of flood risk, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. It requires an assessment of all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. The Directive also reinforces the rights of the public to access this information and to have a say in the planning process.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	Its aim is to improve public access to the countryside and registered common land while recognising the legitimate interests of the owners or managers of the land concerned. It implements the 'right to roam' in certain areas of cultivated land and upland in England and Wales. The Act lists restrictions on the public when on this land, including not damaging hedges, fences, walls.	Assess the impact of policies and allocations on public rights of way.	Travel and Transport
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	The act created Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities and, amongst other measures, it extended the biodiversity duty set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Its principal aims are to ensure that all communities, people and businesses have better access to support, advice and services; and to better protect the countryside and open space through a more coherent approach to managing and conserving the natural environment	Assess the impact of policies and allocations on public rights of way. Huntingdonshire has a large rural area, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport in these areas and connections to more urban areas.	Travel and Transport
Children and Families Act 2014	The Children and Families Act (2014) aims to ensure that all children, young people and their families are able to access the right support and provision to meet their needs. The Act outlines the Code of Practice for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).	This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Childcare Act 2016	The Childcare Act (2016) extends the entitlement in the Childcare Act (2006) to 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for three- and four-year-olds in families where all parents are working. The Act places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient and suitable quality early education and childcare places to enable parents to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment.	This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Education Act 1996 Education and Inspections Act 2006 Education and Skills Act 2008	Section 14 of The Education Act (1996) places LAs under a general duty to provide a school place for every child living in their area of responsibility who is of statutory school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state-funded sector. The Education and Inspections Act (2006) places additional duties on LAs to ensure fair access to educational opportunity, to promote choice for parents and to secure diversity in the provision of schools. In addition to this, the Act places an explicit duty on LAs for the first time to respond formally to parents seeking changes to the provision of schools in their area, including new schools. The Education and Skills Act (2008) increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for school places, new settlement and urban extensions may be of a scale to provide their own primary and secondary schools. The requirement to provide schools places inline with growth will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (2022)	The Bill will make it easier to amend or remove outdated 'retained EU law' - legacy EU law kept on the statute book after Brexit as a bridging measure – and will accompany a major cross-government drive to reform, repeal and replace outdated EU law.	The Local Plan and supporting evidence will meet all legal requirements and follow best practice in their production.	All
Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill and Policy Paper (2022)	The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill was published in May 2022. It proposes fundamental changes to the planning system including local plan timetables. The details of the Bills are complex and wide ranging and set out in a Government Policy Paper with the Local Government Association publishing a summary of key changes.	The timetable and methods of bringing the proposals in the Bill forward may impact impact the process by which the Local Plan is prepared and its scale and scope.	All

National level policies and strategies

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2021)	The revised National Planning Policy Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It includes the following topic areas: • Achieving sustainable development • Plan-making • Decision-making • Delivering a sufficient supply of homes • Building a strong, competitive economy • Ensuring the vitality of town centres • Promoting healthy and safe communities • Promoting sustainable transport • Supporting high quality communications • Making effective use of land • Achieving well-designed places • Protecting Green Belt land • Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change • Conserving and enhancing the natural environment • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment • Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	The NPPF provides the national policies for planning and how these should be applied in the plan-making process. The Local Plan will need to be in conformity with the NPPF. Chapter 3 sets out the framework and criteria that the Local Plan must fulfil to be found sound.	All
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (MHCLG/DLUHC)	To accompany the NPPF, a series of planning practice guidance have been produced to assist in the implementation and application of National policy. The guidance is updated fairly regularly.	The various topics covered within the NPPG provide additional detail on how national policy is to be applied including in plan-making which the Local Plan will reflect.	All
National Model Design Guide and Design Code (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2021)	The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.	Well designed places that create a sense of place is essential to sustainable and resilient communities and development. The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts using localised evidence such as Huntingdonshire's Design Guide and Landscape and Townscape SPD.	All

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Manual for Streets (DCLG/DfT 2007)	Sets out principles for good street design covering: streets in context; the design process - from policy to implementation; layout and connectivity; quality places; Street users needs; street geometry; Parking; traffic signs and markings; street furniture and street lighting; and materials, adoption and maintenance.	Well designed places are a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts using localised evidence such as Huntingdonshire's Design Guide and Landscape and Townscape SPD.	All
Waste Management Plan for England 2021 (Defra, 2021)	The Waste Management Plan for England is an analysis of the current waste management situation in England. The plan does not introduce new policies or change how waste is managed in England. Its aim is to bring current waste management policies together under one national plan.	Policies within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan apply to Huntingdonshire, any designations within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be taken into account when considering policies and locations for growth. The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2014)	This document sets out detailed waste planning policies. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Waste Management Plan for England and national policy statements for waste water and hazardous waste, or any successor documents. All local planning authorities should have regard to its policies when discharging their responsibilities to the extent that they are appropriate to waste management.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards waste minimisation for example through policies that support a circular economy.	Waste and Recycling
Planning for the Future White Paper (MHCLG/ DLUHC, 2020)	On 6 August 2020 (then MHCLG) launched the Planning for the Future consultation which proposes for long-term fundamental structural changes to England's planning system. The Government's intention of such reforms is to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed.	May impact the process by which the Local Plan is prepared and its scale and scope.	All
Levelling up White Paper (DLUHC, February 2022)	The Levelling Up White Paper sets out how the Government proposes to spread opportunity more equally across the UK. It sets out 12 missions to level up by 2030 across a variety of focus areas: living standards, research & development, transport infrastructure, digital connectivity, educations, skills, health, wellbeing, pride in place, housing, crime and local leadership.	Inequalities within Huntingdonshire will be reviewed and where possible will shape policies within the Local Plan to address them.	Income and Deprivation
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (Department for	This strategy sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet the country's net zero target by 2050. It includes policies like by 2035 the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity; by 2035 no new gas boilers will be sold; further funding for the Social	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning	Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, October 2021)	Housing Decarbonisation Scheme and Home Upgrade Grants; and a greener, faster and more efficient transport network.	policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, December 2020)	The energy white paper builds on the Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. The white paper addresses the transformation of the UK energy system, promoting high-skilled jobs and clean, resilient economic growth to deliver net-zero emissions by 2050.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
British Energy Security Strategy (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, April 2022)	The 'British energy security strategy' builds on the 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'. The Government plans to reduce the UK's reliance on oil and gas by building up eight new nuclear reactors. The Government aims to reform planning laws to speed up approvals for new offshore wind farms. For onshore wind farms it wants to develop partnerships with "supportive communities" who want to host turbines in exchange for guaranteed cheaper energy bills. Targets for hydrogen production are being doubled to help provide cleaner energy for industry as well as for power, transport and potentially heating. The Government will consider reforming rules for installing solar panels on homes and commercial buildings to help increase the current solar capacity by up to five times by 2035. For oil and gas, there will be a new licensing round for North Sea projects is being launched in the summer on the basis that producing gas in the UK has a lower carbon footprint than doing so abroad. There will be a £30m "heat pump investment accelerator competition" to make British heat pumps which reduce demand for gas.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Heat and Buildings Strategy (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, October 2021)	This strategy sets out how the UK will decarbonise homes, and commercial, industrial and public sector buildings, as part of setting a path to net zero by 2050. It works alongside the 'Ten point plan for a green industrial revolution', and the 'Net zero strategy'.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions, resilient to the	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		impacts of climate change and are carbon neutral. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	
Future Buildings Standard - Government consultation response (MHCLG/ DLUHC, December 2020)	The Future Buildings Standard provides a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future by increasing the thresholds within Building Regulations. A full technical consultation on the Future Buildings Standard is expected in 2023 with implementation from 2025.	The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This may also include retrofitting of existing buildings.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Natural England Green Infrastructure standards (2023)	Details Natural England's standards for green infrastructure, a set of benchmarks that should be used to ensure new and existing residential development has access to nature.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 (Public Health England, 2019)	The PHE Strategy 2020 to 2025 sets out how Public Health England will work to protect and improve the public's health and reduce health inequalities over the next 5 years. It outlines PHE's role within the public health system, 10 priorities where PHE will focus particular effort and the areas where PHE will build capability within the organisation to support delivery of its strategic objectives and wider activities.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
Sports England Strategic outcomes planning and leisure delivery guidance (Sports England, May 2021)	The LSDG is a walkthrough of the different facility management options available to local authorities. It aims to help local authorities adopt a strategic approach to investment in sport to deliver desired local outcomes in a financially sustainable way.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health
Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (England) (Fields on Trust, November 2020)	The Fields in Trust policy framework seeks the protection, provision and improvement of outdoor spaces for sport and play as part of the provision of sustainable communities. It sets out guidance for provision of outdoor sports and play facilities and recommended threshold provision.	A healthy and active population is a key component to sustainable development. The Local Plan will seek to integrate this into policies and allocations supported by appropriate infrastructure assessments.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space Population and Health

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Defra, 2018)	This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. Alongside the plan, are 3 detailed technical annexes and the Outcome Indicator Framework for this plan, which is also available as an interactive dashboard. The first annual progress report in May 2019. The Plan sits alongside two other government strategies: our Industrial Strategy and our Clean Growth strategy.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Safeguarding our Soils – A Strategy for England (Defra, 2009)	The Strategy's vision is that by 2030, all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England's soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations. Soil is a fundamental and essentially non-renewable natural resource, providing the essential link between the components that make up our environment. Soils vary hugely from region to region and even from field to field. They all perform a number of valuable functions or ecosystem services for society including: nutrient cycling, water regulation, carbon storage, support for biodiversity and wildlife, and providing a platform for food and fibre production and infrastructure.	Agriculture and farming places an important role to the local and national economy and to the conservation of habitats and carbon capture. An appropriate strategy towards protecting high quality soils should be included in the Local Plan.	Land, Soils and Agriculture Green Infrastructure
England Peat Action Plan (Defra, 2021)	The England Peat Action Plan sets out the government's long-term vision for the management, protection and restoration of peatlands, so that they provide a wide range of benefits to wildlife, people and the planet. To implement this vision, the plan includes: the announcement of the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme through the Nature for Climate Fund a commitment to end the use of peat in the amateur horticulture sector a new spatial map of England's peatlands The Plan commitments to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025. The action plan is part of a series of announcements on nature and climate and sits alongside the England Trees Action Plan. It also supports the 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.	Agriculture and farming places an important role to the local and national economy and to the conservation of habitats and carbon capture. The Council is a partner in the Great Fen project. The ambitions of the project should be supported in the new Local Plan.	Land, Soils and Agriculture Green Infrastructure
The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994 and updates) and UK Biodiversity Action Plan	A detailed plan for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity resources. Seeks to increase public awareness of, and involvement in, conserving biodiversity and to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity on a European and global scale.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
The Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP039) (Defra, 2021)	Biodiversity Metric 3.0 is a biodiversity accounting tool that can be used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain. It includes GIS support to apply the metric and also a test version of a Small Sites Metric – a simplified version of the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 for use on small development sites.	The Local Plan will be supported by appropriate assessments on the environment including a Habitats Regulation Assessment to assess the impact of policies and allocations on the environment, habitats an wildlife. Collaboration with partners on how biodiversity net gain can be achieved will also take place.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (MHCLG, 2015)	This document sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. It identifies that Local authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning.	The proposed growth within the Local Plan must meet the identified needs. These will be integrated into policies and allocations and supported by appropriate evidence.	Housing
Planning for Schools Development: Statement (2011)	The Government wants to enable new schools to open, good schools to expand and all schools to adapt and improve their facilities. This will allow for more provision and greater diversity in the state-funded school sector to meet both demographic needs and the drive for increased choice and higher standards. It is the Government's view that the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and that planning decision-makers can and should support that objective, in a manner consistent with their statutory obligations. We expect all parties to work together proactively from an early stage to help plan for state-school development and to shape strong planning applications.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for school places, new settlement and urban extensions may be of a scale to provide their own primary and secondary schools.	Education
Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth (DfE, 2021)	The White Paper sets out reforms to post-16 technical education and training to support people to develop the skills needed to get good jobs and improve national productivity.	Proposed development within Huntingdonshire will create increased demand for skills training and post-16 further education demand. A population with skills and technical training supports the local economy and improve employment prospects.	Education
Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (2021)	This plan sets out the government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK. It includes the: • pathway to net zero transport in the UK • wider benefits net zero transport can deliver • principles that underpin our approach to delivering net zero transport	Huntingdonshire has vast networks of strategic transport connections as well as local routes. The Local Plan should work with partners to help decarbonise the transport network, support a modal shift away from car usage, encourage	Travel and Transport Carbon Emissions and Targets

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
		sustainable modes of transport and increase the infrastructure of electric vehicle charging points.	
Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy (DfT, 2019)	The 'Future of mobility: urban strategy' outlines the government's approach to maximising the benefits from transport innovation in cities and towns. It sets out the principles that will guide government's response to emerging transport technologies and business models. The strategy also contains details of the next steps for the government's Future of mobility grand challenge. Alongside the strategy, the Department for Transport (DfT) has published the summary of responses to its Future of mobility call for evidence.	Huntingdonshire has a large rural area and some more urbanised areas, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport and mobility across the district.	Travel and Transport
Future of Transport: Rural Strategy – call for evidence responses (DfT, 2021)	This call for evidence seeks views and evidence from all those with an interest in rural transport. Following the Future of mobility: urban strategy published in March 2019, the Department for Transport (DfT), sought views and evidence on what could be incorporated into a Future of Transport: rural strategy. The consultation ran between 23 November 2020 and 16 February 2021) and includes: • the context of the Future of Transport: rural strategy assessment of the mobility trends in rural areas, and the emerging opportunities for rural environments that we are witnessing in transport innovation • consideration of the approach that the government could take to help shape these opportunities to benefit rural areas. The DfT anticipates a draft Rural Transport Strategy to be published by the end of 2022.	Huntingdonshire has a large rural area, the Local Plan should work with partners to improve transport in these areas and connections to more urban areas.	Travel and Transport
The Heritage Statement (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, 2017)	The Government's vision and strategy for Heritage and the historic environment including how the government will support the heritage sector and help it to protect and care for our heritage and historic environment in the coming years, in order to maximise the economic and social impact of heritage and to ensure that everyone can enjoy and benefit from it.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage
Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (HM Government, 2017)	This sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. The strategy sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future – how we will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs with investment in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future. It aims to boost productivity and earning power across the country by focusing on 5 foundations: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places. In December 2018, progress made by the Industrial Strategy in Forging our Future: Industrial Strategy – the story so far was published.	A positive strategy towards economic activity and employment is essential in the Local Plan using appropriate evidence. Having a good understanding on the potential for a green economy and green jobs will need to be considered.	Employment and Business Carbon Emissions and Targets
The Clean Growth Strategy: Leading the way to a low carbon	This strategy sets out our proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy through the 2020s. It explains how the whole country can benefit from low carbon opportunities, while meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change.	A positive strategy towards economic activity and employment is essential in the Local Plan using appropriate evidence. Having a good understanding on the potential for a green economy	Employment and Business Carbon Emissions and Targets

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
future (HM Government, 2017)		and green jobs will need to be considered.	
The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (EA, 2017)	It contains position statements which provide information about the Environment Agency's approach to managing and protecting groundwater. They detail how the Environment Agency delivers government policy for groundwater and adopts a risk-based approach where legislation allows.	Policies that support the EA's goals and objectives on managing an protecting groundwater should be included in the Local Plan.	Flooding and Water
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy for England (EA, 2021)	The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the Environment Agency to develop a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England. This strategy describes what needs to be done by all risk management authorities (RMAs) involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management for the benefit of people and places.	The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Clean Air Strategy 2019 (HM Government)	This strategy sets out the actions required across all parts of government and society to improve air quality. The strategy sets out how the Government will: protect the nation's health; protect the environment; secure clean growth and innovation; and reduce emissions from transport, homes, farming and industry monitor our progress. It complements three other UK government strategies: the Industrial Strategy, the Clean Growth Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in UK (Defra, 2017)	Statutory air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO2), setting out how the UK will be reducing roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations. These documents and zone plans set out our comprehensive approach to meeting the statutory limits for nitrogen dioxide, and the policy background. The technical report details the modelling techniques and assumptions used when developing the plan.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution

Regional level

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
UKCP18 Climate Projections (UKCIP, 2018)	Comprehensive climate projections for the UK split into regions.	Huntingdonshire must play its part in reducing carbon emissions and the impacts of climate change on people and the environment. The new Local Plan will play an important part in implementing policies that provide carbon neutral, green and climate resilient development.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Planning for sustainable growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc: spatial framework (MHCLG/DLUHC, 2021) , Local Natural Capital Plan and Ox-Cam Integrated Water Management Framework	The Government has renewed its support for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which Huntingdonshire is located within. In February 2021, a Spatial Framework for the Arc was published setting out the rationale and timelines to deliver the Spatial Framework. This is a long-term strategic plan to help coordinate the infrastructure, environment and new developments in the area. An indicative time for a draft Framework to be published is Autumn 2022. Once finalised, the Spatial Framework will sit alongside the NPPF as national policy. A consultation on creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc was launched in July 2021 alongside a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the data used within it has been placed into an interactive map. The Local Natural Capital Plan for the Arc is a first step to ensure a natural capital baseline and framework is provided that helps to monitor environmental change and de-risk growth as part of the Ox-Cam Arc. The Ox-Cam Integrated Water Management Framework will explore how to draw together current and ongoing water, flood, natural capital, and land use planning work to create a shared understanding of issues and pressures and fully interconnected water and flood risk evidence base, and test and trial new approaches across the range of water functions. This will be used to consider water systems strategically and allow a holistic approach to decision making, solution planning for water management and wider spatial planning policy.	Huntingdonshire is located within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The Council has actively engaged with the Government on developing the Spatial Framework as stakeholders. To realise the potential of the Arc and if it is continued, the Local Plan should sustainably integrate infrastructure, growth and environmental priorities.	All
East of England Route Strategy (Highways England, March 2017)	This Route Strategy provides a statement on the current performance of, and perceived pressures on, the East of England route to inform the planning of future investment. The SRN supports national and local economic prosperity by: • linking together major cities • connecting with extensive local road network • providing links to major ports, airports, and rail terminals • enabling good access to regions and cross-border routes between the nations of the United Kingdom The East of England route is formed of the A11, A12, A47 and A120	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
East-West Rail	East West Rail is a major infrastructure project which is proposed to deliver these much-needed connections. Linking people with job opportunities, new homes and major economic hubs both locally and across the UK. It is a key transport project within the Ox-Cam Arc. The section between Oxford and Bicester has been constructed with Bicester to Bletchley under construction. Later phases such as Bletchley to Bedford is in the detailed planning phase while the Bedford to Cambridge section is in the early planning phase. There is likely to be a new railway station to the south of St Neots, it is not clear whether this will be nearer to St Neots or Tempsford at this stage.	A key project to support the delivery of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, an East West Rail route within Huntingdonshire and potentially a new station will have impact on the spatial distribution of new development. The delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs within this corridor will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road improvement scheme Development Consent Order	The proposal is to upgrade the A428 between A1/A421 Black Cat Junction and A428/A1198 Caxton Gibbet Junction to high quality dual carriageway. Construction will include 19km of new Dual Carriageway, and Grade separated junctions. The DCO was granted on 18 August 2022.	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
A47 North Tuddenham to Easton improvement scheme Development Consent Order	Dualling of the single carriageway section of the A47 between Norwich and Dereham, linking together two existing sections of dual carriageway. The scheme will provide a new route to the south of Hockering and to the north of Honningham and include new junctions with locations yet to be determined. The DCO was granted on 12 August 2022.	Huntingdonshire and many of its settlements are well placed in relation to the strategic road network. Improvements to existing routes and the delivery of infrastructure, housing and jobs nearby will need to be appropriately assessed.	Travel and Transport
East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans (2014)	Published April 2014, the East Inshore and East Offshore Marine Plans provide guidance for sustainable development from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. Marine plans address the key issues for the area, setting a vision and objectives. Detailed policies set out how these will be achieved and how issues will be managed or mitigated. The policies inform decision-making for any activity or development which is in or impacts on a marine area.	The River Great Ouse and River Nene flow through the district, they both drain into the North Sea.	Flooding and Water
Water for people and the environment: Water resources strategy Regional action plan for the Anglian Region (Environment Agency, 2009)	Sets out the EA's strategic approach to water management within the Anglian region. It considers local pressures and priorities, and reflects the measures n River Basin Management Plans and the EA's corporate strategy. The regional action plan and its strategy link to a number of other strategies and plans for England and Wales.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be properly assessed.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Emerging Water Resources East Regional Plan (January 2022)	Consultation on the draft Water Resources East Regional Plan was undertaken between January and March 2022. The Plan is anticipated to be completed in 2023. The aim of our Regional Plan is to ensure sustainable and resilient water resources to 2050 and beyond.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be properly assessed.	Flooding and Water
Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (forthcoming in May 2023)	The Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) is a collaborative long-term strategic plan highlighting the known and expected future risks to drainage and identifying solution strategies to mitigate.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be properly assessed.	Flooding and Water
Future Fens Integrated Adaptation manifesto (November 2021) and Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report (2020)	Sets out an approach for landscape scale adaptation to climate change. Aims are to protect and enhance the environment, maintain food security, develop new water resources, alleviate risks from drought and floods, to lock carbon into natural systems and enable investment. The Environment Agency's 'Flood Risk Management for the Fens' project considers what the future flood risk management choices for the Great Ouse Fens might look like.	The rivers Great Ouse and Nene are key to the catchment area feeding the Fens and cut through Huntingdonshire. The integrated approach connects changes to the water environment with agriculture and the impacts on peat soils which cover much of northern Huntingdonshire.	Flooding and Water Land, Soils and Agriculture Carbon Emissions and Targets Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment.
Catchment Abstraction Management Plans: Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse abstraction licensing strategy (2017), Old Bedford including Middle Level abstraction licensing strategy (2017)	Details how the Environment Agency manages water resources and sets out the EA's approach to managing new and existing abstraction and impoundment within thein the Old Bedford catchment and the Upper Ouse and Bedford Ouse catchment.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water
Anglian Water's Long Term Water Recycling Plan (WRLTP)	The plan considers risk from growth, climate change, severe drought, and customer behaviours. It promotes sustainable solutions for maintaining reliable and affordable levels of service, and facilitates working in partnership to mitigate flood risk. It complements the Anglian Water Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP).	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Anglian Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) 2020-2045	Sets out how Anglian Water will manage the water supplies in the region to meet current and future needs over a minimum of 25 years. The current Plan, published in 2019, covers the period from 2020-2045. The Plan identifies that the Anglian region faces four key challenges: climate change, environmental protection, population growth and the risk of drought. The Plan seeks to address as the area may move from a strong position of a surplus of 150 million litres of water daily to a deficit of 30 million litres daily by 2025. To tackle this, there is a focus on the demand side first and reduce the amount of water used by installing smart meters, reducing leakage and investing in water efficiency and also invest in the supply-side to increase the amount of water available.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water
Anglian River Basin District River Basin Management Plan (2015)	This document sets out the current state of the water environment; pressures affecting the water environment; environmental objectives for protecting and improving the waters; programme of measures, actions needed to achieve the objectives; and progress since the 2009 plan. It also informs decisions on land-use planning because water and land resources are closely linked.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. Huntingdonshire is home to England's third largest reservoir, Grafham Water. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed with .	Flooding and Water
Cambridge Water Resource Management Plan 2020-2045	The plan covers a 25 year period to 2045. This plan sets out, in detail, how Cambridge Water will provide high-quality, sustainable and reliable water supplies over the next 25 years. It also takes into account things like climate change, population growth and the need to protect the environment. It describes how Cambridge Water will manage water resources and maintain the balance between the water available to supply to and the demand for that water.	Huntingdonshire lies within the East of England, a region prone to water stress. The impact of future growth on water supply will need to be assessed.	Flooding and Water

Sub-regional, County and Local level

Sub-regional level documents

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal (HM Government, 2017)	This Devolution Deal marked the transfer of resources, powers and accountability from central Government to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In return for this level of devolution and local control Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will establish a Combined Authority, with a directly elected Mayor in place from May 2017. The ambitions of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is to: • double the size of the local economy • accelerate house building rates to meet local and UK need • deliver outstanding and much needed connectivity in terms of transport and digital links • provide the UK's most technically skilled workforce • transform public service delivery to be much more seamless and responsive to local need • grow international recognition for our knowledge based economy improve the quality of life by tackling areas suffering from deprivation	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	All
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Housing Strategy (CPCA, September, 2018)	The delivery of at least 100,000 more homes, and especially new affordable homes, is one of the key objectives of the CPCA. The CPCA's targets for housing delivery include at least 100,000 additional new homes (including at least 40% new affordable homes) by 2036; and short term delivery targets of at least 2,000 new affordable homes by 2022, region wide, using £100 million of government grant, plus 500 new Council homes in a government grant ring-fenced for Cambridge City Council.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Housing
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) (September, 2018)	This independent review highlights the importance of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area to the national economy and its industrial future. It makes 14 key recommendations and 13 subsidiary recommendations to sustain its own economy, and support the UK economy, while providing a better and more fulfilling way of life for the people who live and work in this area.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy (July 2019)	This Local Industrial Strategy sets out an industrial blueprint to deliver Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's vision of being a leading place in the world to live, learn, work, and do business. It supports the aims of the National Industrial Strategy by boosting productivity in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This strategy is one of a family of four linked strategies covering the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, with the other strategies covering Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the South East Midlands. While responding to the wider economic context of the Arc, the specific objectives for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area are:	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	• Working together collaboratively across all of the foundations of productivity to ensure that the implementation of the four Local Industrial Strategies maximises the economic potential of the wider Arc region. • Harnessing the collective strength of the Arc's research base – driving greater collaboration on science and research; developing a network of 'living labs' to trial and commercialise new technologies; and growing the role of the Arc as a global research and innovation hub. • Bringing employers and skills providers together to understand the current and future skills needs, and planning provision to meet them. • Maximising the economic benefits of new transport, energy and digital infrastructure within the Arc. • Developing an improved business support and finance programme for high growth companies, a shared approach to commercial premises and an Internationalisation Delivery Plan to encourage greater trade and inward investment in the Arc		
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) (March, 2021)	The Combined Authority's goal is to make a leading contribution both to the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and to its future global success. This strategy sets out how the CA will accelerate the recovery, rebound and renewal of its economy, helping people effected and achieving the ambition to double GVA by 2042 in a digitally enabled, greener, healthier and more inclusive way.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate (CPICC) (October 2021)	The Commission's mission is to provide independent advice to local government, the broader public sector and business on setting and meeting carbon reduction targets for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and on preparing for climate change. It identifies that within the CPCA area, emissions are almost 25% higher per person than the UK average, excluding the emissions from peat. It identifies that in the CPCA area there are over 350,000 existing homes that will need to be converted to low carbon heating, and every new build must be net zero. All the cars in the region (more than 500,000 currently) will need to be zero emissions by 2050. In respect of green infrastructure, it is estimated a requirement of around £700m annually through the 2020s in the CPCA area will be needed to deliver the decarbonisation of electricity systems, industries, transport and homes.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Carbon Emissions and Targets Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Transport Plan (CPCA, 2020)	This is the first transport plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough together and establishes a vision, goals, objectives and policies to respond to the Combined Authority's strategic approach to growth to 2050 and to address current challenges and opportunities. There are three goals: deliver economic growth and opportunity for all our communities; provide an accessible transport system to ensure everyone can thrive and be healthy; and preserve and enhance our built, natural and historic environment and implement measures to achieve net zero carbon.	Huntingdonshire is part of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards achieving the ambitions of the Combined Authority.	Travel and Transport

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Mapping natural capital and opportunities for habitat creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd for Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership, May, 2019)	This report has produced detailed habitat base maps for the whole of Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough), to examine habitat change over 80 years, and to identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity.	Report includes habitats within Huntingdonshire. The impact of local plan policies and any site allocations will be assessed for their impact on the environment via a habitats regulations assessment.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050'	The vision is to double nature, including land managed for nature, in Cambridgeshire by 2050. Within this, it aims to create living landscapes, promote good practice for local food and farming, create better places to live, create sustainable jobs, healthy communities and promote heritage, culture and leisure.	The natural environment and biodiversity net gain will be embedded in to the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan (2020)	As part of the 'Doubling Nature – A Natural Vision', there is a commitment to prepare a Cambridgeshire-wide natural capital investment plan, now termed the Doubling Nature Investment Plan (DNIP), to 'inform strategic and economic decision making in order to maximise opportunities for enhancing the area's natural environment. This scoping report explores mechanisms in which to deliver this.	The natural environment and biodiversity net gain will be embedded in to the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2021-2025 (Connecting Cambridgeshire, 2021)	It targets different aspects of digital connectivity from broadband, mobile, 'Smart' technology and public access Wi-Fi to ensure that the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area has the leading digital connectivity infrastructure required to ensure that: • All businesses have access to the leading-edge digital connectivity needed to help them succeed and to deliver sustainable growth. • Communities, particularly in rural areas, are digitally connected and able to access education, jobs, health, social care and other public services. • Digital connectivity supports home working and remote training alongside other agile working practises, which can contribute to reduced commuting, less traffic congestion and more flexible and more inclusive job opportunities. • 'Smart' technology, including 'Internet of Things' based connectivity helps to provide ready access to real-time transport information and environmental monitoring, leading to increased	Connecting Cambridgeshire includes Huntingdonshire. Where possible, the Local Plan will work towards improving digital infrastructure.	Digital Infrastructure and Communications

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	use of sustainable transport solutions, reducing private car usage and contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and meeting climate change targets. • As a key part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, businesses, communities and public services in our area are able to harness digital connectivity and advanced technology to support sustainable growth, good quality of life and a strong local economy with no communities left behind.		
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (CCC, adopted July 2021)	The Minerals and Waste Local Plan sets the framework for all minerals and waste developments until 2036. It sets out policies to guide mineral and waste management development and will: ensure a steady supply of minerals (construction materials e.g. sand and gravel) to supply the growth that is planned for the area; and enable CCC to have new modern waste management facilities, to manage our waste in a much better way than landfill. The Local Plan makes strategic allocations for long-term mineral and waste management development at Block Fen/Langwood Fen near Mepal. Designations such as Mineral Safeguarding Areas are also made within the Local Plan and shown on the Policies Map. This will ensure, for example, that consultation takes place between the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority and district/city councils when development is proposed on mineral bearing land. The aim is to avoid the county's finite mineral resource being unknowingly or unnecessarily sterilised.	Policies within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan apply to Huntingdonshire, any designations within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be taken into account when considering policies and locations for growth.	Waste and Recycling
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2024 (CCC, 2020)	The health and wellbeing strategy has four priorities: 1. places that support health and wellbeing; 2. helping children achieve the best start in life; 3. staying healthy throughout life; and 4. quality health and social care.	Health and wellbeing should be embedded in the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives and to create and support resilient communities.	Population and Health

County level documents

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) – Final Report: Finance, Delivery and Engagement (Camco for Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2012)	Aims including; to serve as an evidence base for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy by identifying the renewable energy Infrastructure needed to meet low-carbon development aims, allowing the collection of developer contributions as part of the funding solution for such projects; informing ongoing development of development plans alongside other evidence based work, with the aim of creating the policy platform for renewable energy infrastructure investment; informing the proposed Community Energy Fund (CEF), identifying opportunities for more flexible sources of low carbon infrastructure investment and to complement the Low Carbon Development Initiative (LCDI), which is bringing forward and reducing the risk of renewable energy projects to enable investment.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions where possible and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan (CCC, 2020)	Following Cambridgeshire County Council's declaration of a Climate and Environment Emergency, it has approved a Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2020-2025), Carbon Footprint for 2018/19 and our Action Plan. These set out plans to reduce the County Council's the County's carbon footprint, and to support others in their efforts. There are 15 priority areas split within three themes (mitigation, adaptation and natural capital). The vision is to deliver net-zero carbon emission for Cambridgeshire by 2050 whilst supporting our communities and Cambridgeshire's biodiversity and environmental assets to adapt and flourish as our climate changes.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Cambridgeshire Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2020	Mitigation and adaptation to climate change of CCC estate and elements they can influence. Conservation and enhancement of natural capital and priority areas for this in Cambridgeshire.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (CCC, 1991)	Vision: a countryside which is diverse, reflecting local character and a sense of place, consciously thought about and managed and which acknowledges our affinity with nature and our need for recreation and visual enjoyment. Sets out the following objectives to achieve the vision: increase people's awareness of landscape quality; mobilise care and action amongst the main bodies who play the most active role in generating tomorrow's landscapes; improve overall visual quality and strengthen the contrasts between landscapes in the County; integrate wildlife conservation into	This guidance has been incorporated into the Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022), the new Local Plan will consider the impact of growth on the landscape.	Landscape

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	landscape action at all scales; protect and enhance historic features; and conserve existing features and create landmarks and 'personality' in the landscape.		
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plans (CCC, Various dates)	The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Group has reviewed our Local Priority Species (formerly Local Species Action Plans). Over 200 UK Priority Species are found in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	By Cambridgeshire County Council which includes Huntingdonshire authority area	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment
Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2016)	This document provides an update to the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) adopted in 2006 in line with the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2002. This update summarises the progress made since the ROWIP was adopted in 2006 and sets out future challenges for rights of way and countryside access to 2031 in the form of updated Statements of Action.	By Cambridgeshire County Council which includes Huntingdonshire authority area	Travel and transport
Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027 (2022)	The strategy's main focus is on flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, such as streams and ditches. Although the risk of flooding from rivers remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency, this strategy looks at the interaction between all forms of flood risk.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Surface Water Management Plan for Cambridgeshire (CCC, 2014)	Tool to manage surface water flood risk on a local basis by improving and optimising coordination between relevant stakeholders. SWMPs build on 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessments' and provide the vehicle for local organisations to develop a shared understanding of local flood risk and establish an action plan, including setting out priorities for action, maintenance needs and links into development framework and emergency plans. Also to be used as evidence when formulating general planning policies relating to surface water flooding such as use of SuDS. Identifies St Neots, Huntingdon, St Ives, Sawtry and Godmanchester as wetspots and St Neots for additional modelling work. The objectives of the 2014 SWMP Countywide Update are to: • Collate and review additional flood incident records from 2011 to 2014 made available by the SWMP stakeholders to identify that the initial wetspot list remains appropriate; • Revise the MCA methodology to make use of the updated national surface water flood risk mapping available from the EA; and • Produce a revised list of wetspot prioritisation to assist CCC and partners in taking action and allocating resources for future investigation.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Cambridgeshire 2021-2027 (CCC, 2022)	The strategy has been developed together with the members of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood and Water Partnership alongside the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. It encompasses the predicted and historical flooding issues in and around Cambridgeshire, focusing on how efficiencies and effectiveness of local solutions can be funded within communities to adapt and be more resilient to flood risk. Future adaptation will be key for the whole water environment as pressures are already being felt on water supply as well as flooding. Some work is already underway to provide greater support to communities as a part of the Community Flood Action Programme.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)	This SPD provides guidance that applies all Cambridgeshire authorities providing a consistent approach to flooding and drainage matters in determining planning applications. It also provides detailed guidance on undertaking the sequential test and incorporating sustainable drainage measures.	Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns are located within the Great Ouse valley (Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives) and Ramsey within the low lying Fen, therefore flooding is a significant issue for the District, anticipated to worsen with climate change. The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
Surface Water Planning Guidance (CCC, June 2021)	This guidance has been prepared to support developers and their consultants in the preparation of surface water documents to support planning applications. It has been prepared with input from an advice group made up of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), house builders and consultants/engineers to ensure it is as relevant and up-to-date as possible. This document is 'live' and will therefore be reviewed annually and updated should new guidance or legislation be introduced.	The Local Plan will need to provide proactive policies to mitigate against flood risk form all its forms and be supported by a strategic flood risk assessment.	Flooding and Water
RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (CCC, 2012)	The RECAP Waste Management Design Guide provides advice on the design and provision of waste management infrastructure as part of residential and commercial developments including the following: • internal/external storage capacity - the amount of space required within homes and for the storage of bins to serve residential and commercial developments	The Local Plan should set out policies and allocations towards design that incorporate appropriate waste management.	Waste and Recycling

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	• location of waste storage - issues to be considered in relation to the location of bins waste storage infrastructure - a minimum specification for the storage of waste in residential and commercial developments • highway design - ensuring that waste collection vehicles can serve new developments effectively additional waste management measures - complementary measures which can be introduced to support the effective management of waste • developer contributions - how developers will contribute to the provision of waste infrastructure including the provision of waste storage containers, Household Recycling Centres and Bring Sites • the RECAP Waste Management Guide also includes a toolkit to be used by developers to demonstrate how they have addressed the waste management infrastructure requirements set out above as part of their proposals		
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	The strategy is designed to assist in shaping and coordinating the delivery of green infrastructure in the county, to provide social, environmental and economic benefits now and in the future. Within the strategic green infrastructure network identified by the strategy it is important to ensure that development proposals contribute to the strategy's vision and objectives, particularly the opportunity to improve the network of green spaces where they are needed to achieve the objectives of: reversing the decline of biodiversity; mitigating and adapting to climate change; promoting sustainable growth and economic development; and supporting healthy living and wellbeing.	Growth within the Local Plan will need to be complemented with appropriate green infrastructure provision in accessible locations.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and data sets	The purpose of Cambridgeshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is to identify local needs and views to support local strategy development and service planning. In order to understand whether we are achieving good health and care outcomes locally, it is useful to benchmark outcomes in Cambridgeshire against the national average and look at trends over time. It highlights key findings based on the information and evidence collected and informs the local Health and Wellbeing Board as to the content of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	Health and wellbeing should be embedded in the Local Plan as part of sustainable development objectives and to create and support resilient communities.	Population and Health
Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk: Housing Needs of Specific Groups (GL Hearn, October 2021)	This includes commentary on the local housing market and provides guidance at district level on affordable housing needs and the preferred housing mix for new developments enabling local authorities to think about the nature and influence of housing markets in their area; provide robust evidence to inform the policies aiming to get the right mix of housing across the whole housing market; and provide evidence to inform policies about the level and sizes of affordable housing	To ensure that the needs of various groups are met across Huntingdonshire, the outcomes and recommendations of this assessment will shape policies relating to housing in the Local Plan.	Housing
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2016)	The GTAA 2016 sought to understand the accommodation needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople across Cambridgeshire (excluding Fenland), West Suffolk, Peterborough and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. It was shaped by the Planning Policy for Travellers (2015) and the revised definitions contained therein. A replacement study was commisioned to also include other caravan dwellers and boat dwellers but survey challenges arising from the pandemic led to its abandonment. An updated assessment will be required.	To ensure that the needs of Gypsy and Travellers are met, the outcomes of this assessment and the proposed replacement will shape policies relating to pitches in the Local Plan.	Housing

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Cambridgeshire's 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-2022 (CCC)	This sets out the duties of Cambridge County Council to the sufficiency, diversity and planning of places for early years, school-aged children (including special schools) and post-16 education and training provision. It identifies the provision across all Cambridgeshire authorities, the current pressures in each authority and requirements of growth.	Collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council on education matters will be undertaken as part of the new Local Plan to understand need going forward and the impact of growth. This will be reflected in infrastructure studies and delivery plans.	Education
Huntingdonshire Transport Strategy (CCC, 2023) and Active Travel Strategy (CCC, 2023)	This provides a strategy and an action plan of schemes to address the transport challenges facing those districts, whilst also looking at sustainable access to services and a safe and healthy environment. The Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel the 'go to' option for local journeys.	The Local Plan should have a positive strategy towards encouraging increased public and active travel modes to support a healthy population, reduce social exclusiveness and reduces greenhouse gases emissions arising from transport.	Travel and Transport

Local level documents (Huntingdonshire)

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Huntingdonshire Council Corporate Plan and monitoring reports	The Corporate Plan provides direction for what the Council is doing and why. It sets out what HDC aims to achieve in addition to the provision of core statutory services and also provides the framework for evaluating the Council's performance. The Corporate Plan is reviewed annually to ensure that the key activities and measures are still relevant and that we are continuing to achieve the targets we set ourselves.	The Local Plan will where possible work towards achieving the ambitions of the Corporate Plan.	All
Community Transition Strategy 2021-2023 (HDC, 2021)	In response, to the uncertainties and changing way of working and integrating with one another, the Council have set out a Community Transition Strategy detailing how community teams will approach to work with its community, community organisations and other local partners to deliver positive outcomes for our residents. In the longer term this will help to develop a longer-term Community Strategy.	Consultation throughout the development of the Local Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the legal framework and seek to engage with residents, businesses in as many ways as possible.	Procedural
Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036(adopted 15 May 2019) and Annual Monitoring Reports	The Local Plan to 2036 sets out the planning policy for Huntingdonshire. It includes the strategy for spatial development of Huntingdonshire up to 2036; the Council's policies for managing development in the district; and sites for achieving the development requirements.	A review of the existing Local Plan policies and their performance will be undertaken as part of the preparations for the new Local Plan.	All

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Developer Contributions: Updated Costs 2019/20	The SPD sets out the council's policy for securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning permission. The SPD should be considered alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The Council expects all eligible types and sizes of new development in Huntingdonshire to contribute to site related and broader infrastructure through a combination of the following mechanisms including: • Planning conditions (development and project specific) • Planning obligations e.g. Section 106 Agreements (development and project specific) • Community Infrastructure Levy (District wide)	Sets out the Council's approach for securing developer contributions from new developments that require planning permission. It should be considered alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.	Travel and Transport Community Services and Facilities Green Infrastructure and Open Space Education Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling
Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule	The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local planning authorities to raise funds from new development. HDC's charging schedule for CIL is based on the size and type of development. This should be read alongside the Council's Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and Developer Contributions: Updated Costs 2019/20.	The money raised is used to fund district-wide and local infrastructure projects that benefit local communities.	Community Services and Facilities
Huntingdonshire Environment Principles (adopted December 2021) and Huntingdonshire's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan	The environmental principles proposed for the District Council and its activities: • To target net zero carbon at a district level by 2040 • To protect, enhance and restore, existing nature areas (green space) and create new ones (where it is viable to do so). • To pursue the ambitions of 'A green Future: Our 25 year Plan to Improve the Environment' and that new development should be designed with a view to minimising and mitigating the effects of Climate Change. • Ensuring existing and new communities see real benefits in their well-being from living in Huntingdonshire. • Using natural resources wisely. The Climate Strategy sets out our priorities and actions which have been informed through comprehensive consultation in our Climate Conversation with our communities and businesses.	Huntingdonshire are preparing their own Environment and Climate Change Strategy. The Local Plan will recognise and respond to the risks of climate change for the district and develop planning policies that ensure that new development contributes to reductions in carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Carbon Emissions and Targets
Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy	This is a strategy that will shape a vision for the future of the district by incorporating People, Place, the Economy and Environment. The strategy articulates Huntingdonshire's aspirations and ambitions, and maps out plans for place, people, economy, and the environment. It will also guide future strategy and policy developments as well as investment decisions made by the council and its partners to enable better outcomes for residents, communities, and businesses.	Aspirations of the strategy may be ones that can be reflected in the new Local Plan.	All

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Great Fen Master Plan 2010 and Fens for the Future Strategic Plan (2012)	The Master Plan contains detailed advice on preferred proposals within the area that balance tourism and nature conservation requirements. The primary aim of the Landscape and Visual Setting is to protect the tranquillity of the Great Fen itself, particularly from visual intrusion (including obtrusive light) and noise intrusion from major structures such as wind turbines, telecommunications masts and any other development located in the landscape and visual setting. Beyond this boundary major structures, although potentially visible from the Great Fen area, are less likely to impact on the setting of the Great Fen. The Great Fen is part of a wider Fens for the Future project; its vision is to promote connectivity in the Fens between sites, for example between the Great Fen and Wicken Fen along the Rothschild Way. The Fens for the Future Strategic Plan 2012 will help to deliver these aspirations.	This is a strategy green infrastructure project, the ambitions of the project should be supported in the new Local Plan.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2020-2030 and 10 year action plan (HDC, 2020)	Provides an up to date overview of open space provision across Huntingdonshire. The Strategy aims to balance three key elements: the places (parks, open spaces, play areas), the people (those who use and enjoy these spaces), and management (how these parks are maintained and managed). The actions identified within the 10 year action plan include creating a network for different Friends groups across the district to interact with one another, identifying different infrastructure investment programs, all with the aim of helping local people utilise their parks and open spaces to live healthier lives, improve mental health and wellbeing, contribute to the fight against climate change and address social isolation.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2020-2025 (HDC 2020)	This Strategy has three overarching themes: 1. New homes to meet the needs of Huntingdonshire now and in the future 2. Homes to enable people in Huntingdonshire to live independent and healthy lives 3. Working in Partnership to achieve shared objectives	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Housing
Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-2021 (HDC 2016) (an updated strategy is underway)	The purpose of the Strategy is to provide an overview of sports facilities in the district, as well as establishing a clear framework for the prioritisation, provision and enhancement of sports facilities. The aims of strategy are to update audit of current formal sports and leisure facilities provision; provide a shared vision for the future of the district's sports facilities; promote the role of sports and leisure facilities in health improvement, active lifestyles and contribution to the local economy; make the case for funding opportunities; ensure sport is recognised within the planning context in particular in relation to new housing developments; seek to protect and improve locally important sports and leisure facilities; and increase public awareness of the district's sports and leisure facilities.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies and allocations.	Tourism and Leisure Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)	This revised and expanded landscape and townscape assessment of Huntingdonshire has two key aims: 1. guiding the preparation and consideration of planning applications to enhance the quality of new development within Huntingdonshire and 2. providing a methodology for neighbourhood planning groups to produce their own landscape and townscape assessments to support policies within neighbourhood plans. Provides	The Local Plan should set out policies relating to landscape and design matters by using the information within the SPD.	Landscape Heritage

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
	understanding of character and composition of built and natural environment to guide development proposals.		
Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017) and Compatibility Statement (2021)	Sets out key design principles and requirements to help improve the quality and sustainability of new development within Huntingdonshire. To ensure that the Huntingdonshire's Design Guide SPD 2017 meets the new criteria set out in the NPPF 2021, the Council undertook a compatibility check of the SPD against the requirements set out in the National Model Design Guide and National Model Design Code's, both of which incorporate 10 characteristics for a well-designed place.	The Local Plan should set out policies towards design and placemaking so that future developments respond to their contexts.	All
Huntingdonshire Conservation Area Character Statements and Assessments and Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record	These statements provide detailed assessment of the history, features and character of Huntingdonshire's conservation areas. Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) is the most comprehensive source of information on undesignated heritage assets, archaeological sites and finds in Cambridgeshire. It forms part of a network of Historic Environment Records across the UK.	The Local should include a positive strategy towards heritage assets.	Heritage
Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD (2014)	Part 1 of the guidance seeks to: • provide information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of the district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines; indicate criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of this type; • and provide guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate. Part 2 of the guidance seeks to: • evaluate the current cumulative landscape and visual impacts of wind turbine developments in the district • provide guidance on criteria for the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual impacts of wind turbine developments	The Local Plan should set out policies relating to renewable energy opportunities to contribute towards the reducing carbon emissions.	Landscape Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy (2020-2030) and 10 year Action Plan	The Huntingdonshire Tree Strategy 2020 – 2030 sets out our how HDC will manage and protect trees across the district to 2030. A 10-year Action Plan has been developed which sets out key projects and tasks to be completed between 2020 and 2030. These set out how we can meet the key aims of Tree Strategy and work towards its vision.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies.	Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 and Invest in Huntingdonshire webpage	The Economic Growth Strategy sets out the council's economic priorities to 2025. The strategy document is accompanied by the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2020-2025 which contains further context and detail. The key themes and priorities are focused on: inward investment; conditions for growth; fuelling our economy; maximising our skills; vibrant town centres; and supporting our business sectors.	The Local Plan will support the aims of this strategy and provide policies that support Huntingdonshire's economy and provide businesses with the opportunity to adapt to changing economic contexts.	Employment and Businesses Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure
Employment Land Study and appendices 1-6 (AECOM for HDC 2014)	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The study provides an economic and employment land study for the district of Huntingdonshire. It involves an overall assessment of the employment and economic environment within Huntingdonshire, as well as an analysis of employment land and premises demand, supply and need across the district to 2036. The Study is primarily concerned with employment land uses included within the Planning Use Class B: B1 (business, offices / light industrial); B2 (general industrial); B8 (storage and distribution) and appropriate sui generis uses including recycling and the environmental industry.	A new study will likely be required to support the policies and any employment allocations within the new Local Plan.	Employment and Businesses
Huntingdonshire Retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment (Nexus Planning for HDC, February 2017)	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The assessment includes a review of the national planning policy position and an appraisal of economic, retail and leisure trends at a national and regional level; analysis of the four market towns (including their town centre, edge/ out of town retail and commercial leisure provision; calculation of anticipated residual expenditure availability for convenience retailing, comparison retailing and commercial leisure activities at 2026, 2031 and 2036, reflecting anticipated growth in the Draft Local Plan to 2036; and a quantitative assessment of the potential change in floorspace requirements with recommendations on the nature and timing of the delivery of any future convenience retail, comparison retail and commercial leisure floorspace requirements and the appropriate future mix of uses within each market town centre to increase resilience.	A new study will likely be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Retail and Town Centres
Huntingdonshire Market Town's Economic prospectuses and programmes for growth and draft masterplans for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey	There are Prospectus for Growth documents for Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey. St Neots has pursued Future High Streets Funding for regenerating projects. These documents have been commissioned by HDC and funded by the CPCA. The 'Prospectus for Growth' documents establishes a vision, and will be instrumental in securing funding to deliver these initiatives, each of which are seen as crucial to the growth and prosperity of Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey as well its wider economy. Draft masterplans for these towns are now being consulted on and proposals being shaped.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this work to support the continued vitality and vibrancy of Huntingdonshire's market towns.	Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Employment and Businesses
St Neots Future High Streets Fund	Funding has been secured for an ambitious £12.8 million investment in St Neots town centre. The investment will deliver six projects, transforming the market town for the benefit of local people, businesses, and visitors.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this work to support the continued vitality and vibrancy of Huntingdonshire's market towns.	Retail and Town Centres Tourism and Leisure Employment and Businesses

1 Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and appendices A-G (JBA Consulting for HDC, June 2017)	The SFRA provides up to date information and guidance on flood risk for Huntingdonshire, taking into account the latest flood risk information and the current state of national planning policy. It also determines the variations in risk from all sources of flooding in Huntingdonshire, identifies the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments, determines the acceptability of flood risk in relation to emergency planning capability and considers the opportunities to reduce flood risk to existing communities and development.	A new study will be required to support the policies and site allocations in the new Local Plan.	Flooding and Water
Stage 2; Detailed Water Cycle Study Update (URS for HDC, December 2014)	The evidence base document supports the Local Plan to 2036. Information has been used to determine how the water cycle constraints may relate to potential development sites within the settlements, if and how the constraints can be resolved and how they may impact on phasing of development over the plan period to 2036. It also provides a detailed suggested approach to the management and use of water which demonstrates ways to ensure that the sustainability of the water environment in the study area is not compromised by growth.	A new study will be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Flooding and Water
Strategic Transport Study Baseline Report (May 2017) and Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Development Scenario Comparative Assessment (May 2017) Huntingdonshire Strategic Transport Study - Development Scenario Addendum (December 2017)	Supports the Local Plan to 2036. The purpose of this Study is to provide an evidence base of the baseline transport conditions in the area which will: • Identify and test the transport implications of committed development and four potential • development scenarios • Recommend the most sustainable development scenario in transport terms for delivering the • 21,000+ homes required • Highlight where there are opportunities for increasing the usage of sustainable transport • modes • Identify and cost where amended or additional transport infrastructure is required to mitigate • the predicted impacts of each potential development scenario • Form the basis of a district-wide transport strategy that mitigates the transport implications of • the chosen development scenario	A new study will be required to support the policies within the new Local Plan.	Travel and Transport
CPCA A141 and St Ives transport improvement projects	A141 and St Ives transport infrastructure plans are ongoing with both projects now combined into one business case. Public consultation undertaken in 2021 on 6 options for each. January 2022 board progressed detailed assessment of several options.	These are key strategic transport projects within Huntingdonshire. The Local Plan will need to consider the timelines for their delivery and the impact this may have on potential allocations.	Travel and Transport
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (June 2017) and Infrastructure Delivery	The supports the Local Plan to 2036. The purpose of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is to assess the suitability of existing infrastructure provision and identify the infrastructure investment required to support growth.	An update infrastructure delivery plan will be required to support the policies	Travel and Transport

Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed 1

Plans, Programmes and Strategies	Key Aims, Objectives, and Targets/ Indicators	How this will shape the new Local Plan	Related baseline topics
Plan - Infrastructure Schedule (June 2017) Infrastructure Delivery Plan - Addendum (December 2017).		and delivery of allocations within the new Local Plan.	Community Services and Infrastructure Green Infrastructure and Open Space Education Flooding and Water Waste and Recycling
Air Quality Annual Status Report for the year 2021	Monitors progress made on the objectives set to improve air quality particularly within Air Quality Management Areas. It concluded that there have been no recorded exceedances of objectives outside the AQMAs.	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Joint Air Quality Action Plan for the Cambridgeshire Growth Area (HDC, SCDC & Cambridge City Council, 2009)	Reviewed all of the existing air quality information across the region, identified the key causes in each management area and assessed the necessary actions needed to improve pollutant levels in those areas	The Local Plan should ensure that through its policies and allocations that harmful effects on air quality are avoided.	Pollution
Huntingdonshire's Litter Minimisation Strategy 2021-2025 and Litter Minimisation Action Plan (HDC, 2020)	Develops the framework for minimising waste within Huntingdonshire and developing a more circular economy.	The Local Plan will where possible support the aims of this strategy through its policies.	Waste and Recycling
Made Neighbourhood Plans within Huntingdonshire	The made neighbourhood plans set a localised vision for sustainable development. They typically identify local green spaces, settlement boundaries and address localised issues such as design, heritage, local services and infrastructure. While setting a localised focus, they are in conformity with the strategic polices of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.	By Parish and Town Councils. They become part of the development plan once made and have to be in conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan.	All

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Appendix 2: Comments from Environmental Bodies

2.1 Consultation with environmental bodies ran between 20 October and 30 November 2022.

2.2 Comments on a draft of the scoping report were received from all three environmental bodies. Their comments have been compiled into the following table alongside the Council's response to them highlighting where amendments have been made to this report.

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Water Resources and Waste Water** We note that the report has combined 'Flooding and Water' into one scoping report topic. While we understand the need to limit the breadth of SA objectives, the challenges surrounding water resources and waste water have become a more significant issue for Huntingdonshire and should be addressed as a distinct sustainability issue. In the 'A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems' section of the report, the 'How this could shape the SA framework' column for 'Flooding and Water' identifies spatial locational objectives for flood risk but not for water resources or waste water. Specifically, one flooding objective is to 'locate development in areas that are not in an area at risk of flooding', whereas the issue of water resources is simply addressed by an objective to 'ensure there is sufficient water supply to service growth' and 'use water sustainably'. We do not consider this a strong enough stance given the significance of the issue, as Anglian Water will not necessarily have a sustainable means of supplying water in the short-medium term without a risk of deterioration to Water Framework Directive waterbodies. We will know more once the draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024 has been published for consultation (December 2022) and our national response to it has been issued (by April 2023) Local Planning Authorities have a duty to have regard to River Basin Management Plans in their plan-making and decision taking. The SA therefore needs to recognise that it may be necessary to phase or delay development in line with the arrival of new water resource infrastructure. It can no longer be assumed that water companies will be able to provide adequate and sustainable water resources until we know the outcomes from the WRMP process. The SA must consider the broader picture of whether water can be supplied across the neighbouring authorities within the Anglian Water network and take into account the cumulative impact of growth on water bodies in the area. Water supply (and waste water) are strategic matters for Local Plans and also a strategic cross-boundary issue. Locating development in areas of sufficient capacity for waste water may be essential (taking into account climate change and limits to avoid Water Framework Directive (WFD) deterioration) for waste water recycling centres and the associated network. The risk of not assessing cross-boundary impacts or identifying and implementing suitable mitigation in the form of locational objectives for waste water and water resources is that we would find the plan unsound.	To address these comments, some additional information have been added to the 'Flooding and Water' topic covering waste water. Also, an additional reflection how the key sustainability issues and problems identified for flooding and water may shape the SA framework has been added, this is: 'Locate development where there is waste water capacity or where it can be made available'. The SA and next Local Plan will be informed by the evidence in in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change and that there is infrastructure capable of supporting development needs. We will continue to discuss water issues as a strategic cross boundary matter with neighbouring authorities.

Comments from Environmental Bodies 2

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Water quality and the Water Framework Directive** We are pleased that the report identifies "Ensuring new development does not adversely impact on the ecological and biological status of water bodies" as a sustainability issue in A3. Paragraph 4.42 in the 'A2: Collecting baseline information' section also details the ecological and chemical status for surface and ground waters in the Anglian River Basin District. However, we would like to see this considered more widely across the SA. Many of the internationally and nationally designated sites listed in Tables 12 and 13 of the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' section of A2 are linked to waterbodies, meaning water quality is a key issue. It would therefore seem appropriate for rivers to also be included under the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' heading and for this section to consider the impact of water quality and the Water Framework Directive on local biodiversity and habitats. This should also include any chalk streams as these are internally recognised habitats. We also note that the 'Green Infrastructure and Open Space' section includes multiple references to blue infrastructure such as rivers and lakes, underlining the importance of water quality as a key issue. The 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' section should also give some consideration to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which is currently lacking. The SA may need to draw upon Local Nature Recovery Strategies, when these become available, even where in draft, for evidence towards BNG objectives.	Additional text has been added to the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' on rivers. There are no chalk streams within the district, there are several major rivers and tributaries, these are The River Great Ouse, Nene, Kym and Alconbury Brook. Biodiversity net gain has been mentioned in this section. The Council is aware of the Natural Capital mapping and is exploring with partners how biodiversity net gain and ecological enhancement can be brought forward.
Environment Agency	**Surface Water** Flooding While the SA 3 section of the SA framework (Table 20 in 'A4: Developing the SA framework') highlights the need to 'reduce the risk of all potential sources of flooding' as an SA objective, the table only asks whether site allocation will 'use land in flood zone 1'. As Environment Agency flood zones only refer to flood risk from rivers and the sea, it should be specified that site allocation must also take surface water flooding into account. As stated in Paragraph 161 of the 2021 update of the National Planning Policy Framework, "All plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development – taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change – so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property." The interaction between surface water and fluvial flooding is an important consideration and will be addressed in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies. The SA will need to be informed by the evidence in this study as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change, and has robust SA objectives to test the plan.	To address the Environment Agency's point about additional information on waste water, objective SA 3 has been amended to include surface water flooding into consideration so that the second decision aiding questions for sites now reads 'Use land in flood zone 1 taking into account the impact from surface water flood risk and an allowance for climate change?' The SA and next Local Plan will be informed by the evidence in in the upcoming Huntingdonshire Integrated Water Management Studies as it progresses to ensure it has captured the key characteristics of flooding for Huntingdonshire, including climate change and that there is infrastructure capable of supporting development needs.

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Environment Agency	**Groundwater** We note that the 'Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed' section highlights the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as a relevant document that could shape the new Local Plan in the aim of "progressively reducing pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution". This will be achieved as "The Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and strategic flood risk assessment to shape policies and allocations". However, the SA should also consider the risks of contamination to groundwater from polluting past land uses of development sites. This is particularly pertinent due to the plan's stated key aim to "Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land." This could also draw upon guidance in the Environment Agency's Groundwater Protection Position Statements .	Have added a reference to the Groundwater Protection Position Statements to the 'Flooding and Water' section.
Environment Agency	**Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed** We acknowledge that the Local Plan will be supported by an updated Water Cycle Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in the form of an Integrated Water Management Strategy. The SA will also need to consider draft outputs from the Environment Agency's Ox-Cam Arc Integrated Water Management Framework – a high level study looking at how water can be managed in an integrated way across the Arc. We note that the Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020 is referenced in paragraph 4.33 but that the report is not listed in 'Appendix 1: Plans, Programmes and Strategies Reviewed'. We recommend adding this report to the list of relevant plans. We also recommend the Great Ouse Strategic Flood Risk Interventions Study as a resource for considering how strategic interventions could manage existing and future flood risk. Currently in phase 2, a high level screening phase, it's a partnership project between the Environment Agency as lead partner and Lead Local Flood Authorities, Local Planning Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, Anglian Water Services, Mineral Products Association, Natural England, Nature After Minerals, National Farming Union, River Trusts, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and Water Resources East. As previously mentioned, the upcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy should also be considered as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.	The following document has been added to the list of plans and programmes in Appendix 1 and Table 4: • Future Fens Flood Risk Management Baseline Report 2020 The other recommended inclusions are not yet published and will be reviewed upon their completion. At this time they have not been added to the list of plans and programmes in the scoping report: • Environment Agency's Ox-Cam Arc Integrated Water Management Framework • Local Nature Recovery Strategy • the Great Ouse Strategic Flood Risk Interventions Study
Historic England	**Key Plans and Programmes**	Noted with thanks. As there are no UNESCO World Heritage sites within the district or within 15km of the district boundary, this Convention has not been included within the relevant plans and programmes list as it will not directly relate to the objectives and policies of the Local Plan.

Comments from Environmental Bodies 2

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Para 3.17, page 24, Table 4 and Appendix 1 We welcome the inclusion of many of the Plans and programmes that we would expect to see in the review. When considering key plans and programmes, we recommend that you also include the following: **International/European** • UNESCO World Heritage Convention **Local** • Historic Environment Record • Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans • Listed building Heritage Partnership Agreements	The plans and programmes section includes Conservation Area Statements/Appraisals, alongside this entry reference to the Cambridgeshire Historic Environmental Record has been added to this entry in Appendix 1 and Table 4. The Council does not have any listed building heritage partnership agreements currently in place.
Historic England	**Baseline** All **designated heritage assets** (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens) within the area should be identified.	The number of each designated heritage asset found across the district are provided within the scoping report, however they are not all individually named due to how many there are. A full list can be found on Historic England's website.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome paragraphs 4.209 – 4.217. We recommend that you also include mapping of these assets to provide a greater indication of their distribution and highlights sensitive areas. However, we would stress that assessing the potential impact of development on the significance of heritage assets requires more than a simple mapping of the location of those assets and identification of those assets on or in proximity to potential sites. Our Historic England Advice Note 3 sets out a sequential approach to assessing the impact on significance.	It is noted that a map would help to spatially show the distribution of heritage assets across the district, however it is difficult to produce a map at a good enough quality to properly show these. A map of listed buildings and conservation areas across the district is available on the District Council's website as well as on the Council's policies map. A link to these maps have been provided within the scoping report so that readers can cross refer to these visual aids. Reference to Historic England Advice Note 3 has been added to the heritage topic.
Historic England	**Baseline** We also would expect **non-designated heritage assets** to be identified. These include, but are not confined to, locally listed buildings. We welcome the reference to the HER and local listing project in paragraph 4.218.	Noted with thanks. The local listing project is underway, once the project outputs are more advanced it may be possible to include further information on the distribution of non-designated heritage assets.

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	In addition to the above, we would expect reference to currently **unknown heritage assets**, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest. The unidentified heritage assets of the area should be acknowledged and outlined in this section.	Within the 'Key sustainability issues and problems' section, the potential for significant archaeology yet to be found has been highlighted.
Historic England	**Baseline** We also suggest that you use the word **setting** in relation to heritage assets.	Harm to heritage assets and to their setting are referenced within the 'Key Sustainability Issues' section.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome the reference to Heritage at Risk. Identification and mapping of designated and non-designated **heritage assets at risk** can provide an indication of clusters and themes. For Heritage at Risk, Historic England's National Heritage at Risk Register includes Grade II listed places of worship provided that they are used six or more times a year for worship.	A list is contained on Historic England's website alongside a map showing their location, a link is available within the scoping report to this resource.
Historic England	**Baseline** Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 1 contains advice on other relevant sources of evidence. These include Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Local Lists, Historic Characterisation assessments and any other in-house and local knowledge. We recommend that these other sources of evidence are considered as part of the SA process.	Reference to Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 1 has been added to the heritage topic.
Historic England	**Baseline** We welcome the reference to **Landscape Character Assessment** on page 49.	Noted with thanks.
Historic England	**Baseline** We suggest that you also refer to **Historic Landscape Characterisation** data in your assessment. We refer you to our website which includes some helpful guidance in this regard and sets out some of the differences between this and Landscape Character Areas. https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation/historic-landscape-characterisation/ It is our view that Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) provides exactly the sort of landscape-scale information which should assist an SEA; giving perspective on the relative character of the wider area into which alterations to the character of any particular part might be weighed.	Historic Landscape Characterisation is an interesting and potentially useful exercise. However, for this stage, it is a level of detail not necessary to undertake. As part of the Local Plan evidence base it may be worth exploring this idea further in consultation with the Council's Conservation Team. In the meantime Huntingdonshire's Landscape and Townscape SPD provides some historic landscape assessment.

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	HLC is an inherently comprehensive and generalising approach, all about providing context to the understanding of the particular and about the management of change everywhere. We consider that the HLC approach is applicable and highly relevant to informing SEA. In fact, all of the commissioned County-level HLCs were designed to inform strategic level planning. (It should also be noted that HLC can be undertaken at any scale, including coarser or finer grained work - HLC is also a principled approach which can be, and is being, undertaken at a range of scales).	
Historic England	**SEA Framework** **Key Sustainability Issues** We note the key sustainability issues for landscape and the historic environment on page 52 and page 109, 112 and 117. We would suggest that the following Key Sustainability Issues for the Historic Environment should also be included: • Conserving and enhancing designated and non-designated heritage assets and the contribution made to their significance by their settings • Heritage assets at risk from neglect, decay, or development pressures; • Areas where there is likely to be further significant loss or erosion of landscape/seascape/townscape character or quality, or where development has had or is likely to have significant impact (direct and or indirect) upon the historic environment and/or people's enjoyment of it • Traffic congestion, air quality, noise pollution and other problems affecting the historic environment	Thank you for providing additional suggestions for additional key sustainability issues for our consideration on the historic environment. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional issues are all in essence already reflected within the scoping report.
Historic England	**SEA Objectives** The objectives and questions identified on page 121 (SA7) and 124 (SA16) provide a useful starting point for the historic environment. Whilst recognising that the number of objectives needs to be manageable, we recommend the objectives below: Environmental Objectives • Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of landscapes/seascapes/townscapes, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place • Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality • Achieve high quality sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm Social Objectives • Improve and broaden access to the local historic environment • Provide better opportunities for people to understand local heritage and participate in cultural and leisure activities	Noted with thanks. Thank you for providing additional objectives for our consideration. We have tried to keep the number of objectives manageable, to add nine on just the historic environment to the proposed sixteen would distort the balance of the objectives across the three strands of sustainability. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional objectives are all in essence already reflected within the proposed sustainability appraisal framework.

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Economic Objectives • Foster heritage-led regeneration and address heritage at risk • Optimise the use of previously developed land, buildings and existing infrastructure • Promote heritage–led sustainable tourism • Support the sustainable use of historic farmsteads	
Historic England	**Decision making criteria/Questions** Table 23 on page 126 sets out site decision aiding questions supporting criteria. However, there do not appear to be any questions for SA7 and SA16. Is there a particular reason for this? With regard to decision making criteria/questions, we would recommend the following examples of appropriate criteria: Environmental: will the policy or proposal • Conserve and/or enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment? • Contribute to the better management of heritage assets and tackle heritage at risk? • Improve the quality and condition of the historic environment? • Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness? • Promote high quality design? • Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into the historic environment sensitively? • Alter the hydrological conditions of water-dependent heritage assets, including organic remains? Social: will the policy or proposal • Increase the social benefit (e.g. education, participation, citizenship, health and well-being) derived from the historic environment? • Improve the satisfaction of people with their neighbourhoods as places to live? • Engage communities in identifying culturally important features and areas? • Provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment? • Provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment? • Provide new leisure, recreational, or cultural activities? • Support and widen community uses through shared facilities? Economic: will the policy or proposal • Increase the economic benefit derived from the historic environment? • Promote heritage-led regeneration? • Lead to the repair and adaptive re-use of a heritage asset and encourage high quality design?	Table 23 of the sustainability scoping report provides measurable criteria for several of the sustainability appraisal objectives. Objectives that are not covered within Table 23 do not have quantifiable criteria so are not included. It is intended that a qualitative assessment will be made for these objectives. Additional text to the scoring system/matrix section on page 125 has been provided to make this clearer. Thank you for providing additional decision-making criteria/questions for our consideration. Upon comparing these with those within the scoping report, it is considered that the additional criteria are very detailed and in essence already reflected within the proposed sustainability appraisal framework.

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	• Make the best use of existing buildings and physical infrastructure? • Promote heritage based sustainable tourism? • Ensure that repair and maintenance is sympathetic to local character? • Help to reduce the number of vacant buildings through adaptive re-use?	
Historic England	**Assessment Criteria** In developing assessment criteria, we would advise against a purely distance based approach. The impact of proposals on the significance of heritage assets should be taken into consideration at an early stage. In terms of projects, this should be based on more than just measuring the proximity of a potential allocation to heritage assets. Impacts on significance are not just based on distance or visual impacts, and assessment requires a careful judgment based on site visits and the available evidence base. This is preferred to the application of a standard proximity test (e.g. is the site within a set distance of a heritage asset) as it avoids misleading results (Our Historic England Advice Note 3 sets out a sequential approach to	The proposed scoring system/matrix consists of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. The quantitative measures are shown in Table 23. The SA Objectives related to heritage and landscape consist of a qualitative measure reflecting the fact that the assessment of impacts on heritage assets and to their settings vary greatly depending on the assets themself, their context and the proposal. This qualitative assessment will also include site visits where necessary as part of the assessment of site's promoted to the Council and specialist input from Conservation colleagues will be sought for sites with particular heritage constraints. For clarification a distance based approach is not proposed. We consider this is an appropriate response and in line with the sentiments of Historic England here.
Historic England	**Consideration of Opportunities** We would expect to see consideration of opportunities. It is considered that the historic environment can make a significant contribution to the success of development and there may be opportunities for the enhancement of the historic environment which comes from sustainable development proposals. It is considered that the IIA should highlight these opportunities. Example opportunities for the historic environment to include within the IIA can be found in our guidance notes in the links above.	The decision-making criteria/questions for SA7 and SA16 seek the conservation and where possible the enhancement of areas and heritage assets. Thus, recognising there may be opportunities relating to the historic environment. As part of the site identification and site assessment process, opportunities for particular heritage regeneration or opportunities may also be identified which could shape future planning policy.
Historic England	**Method for Generation of Alternatives** The historic environment should be a factor when considering a method for the generation of alternative proposals.	Heritage forms part of the SA framework and there are decision-making criteria/questions for assessing the strategy, sites and development management policy options and their alternatives.
Historic England	**Archaeology** Scoping and evaluation of archaeological and landscape impacts needs to be an iterative process where existing sources (HER's cartographic etc. and research frameworks e.g.	As part of the site identification process and methodology for assessing sites for their suitability for potential development, constraints relating to heritage will be used. This will be used alongside a sustainability appraisal of the site using the SA objectives and decision-making criteria/questions provided within the scoping report.

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/researchframeworks/eastmidlands/wiki/) are consulted, work is done to explore those questions and new questions asked (including lidar, aerial survey, geophysical survey, field walking, deposit modelling see our new guidance https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/deposit-modelling-and-archaeology/heag272-deposit-modelling-and-archaeology/ , trial trenching). These techniques should be used to model risk and build a robust approach to understanding that through any project so the greater heritage and project delivery risks are targeted first so they can inform minimisation and timely mitigation)	
Historic England	**Other Assessment methodologies** Finally, we would add that whilst this assessment process is a vital part of the assessment, more detailed assessment of particular aspects may be necessary going forward for particular sites/schemes. For example, Historic England would expect to see the completion of a **Heritage Impact Assessment** as part of the evidence base for certain sites/proposals likely to have an impact on the significance of heritage assets (including development within the setting of the heritage assets). We would be happy to provide further advice in this regard if and where this may be necessary as part of the evidence base for transport proposals.	See response above. Additional assessments and information may be required for particular sites where there are heritage constraints which can be overcome as part of a potential development. Specialists input from Conservation colleagues will be sought if this is the case.
Historic England	**Conclusion** We would remind you that the National Planning Policy Framework (para 32) is very clear that, in terms of sustainable development, harm to the historic environment should be avoided in the first instance and wherever possible alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. *NPPF Para 32: Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains).* ***Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued.*** *Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).* Historic England strongly advises that the local authority conservation teams and archaeological advisors are closely involved throughout the preparation of the assessment of this evidence. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER- formerly Sites and Monuments Record); how the proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.	Noted with thanks. Huntingdonshire's Conservation Team will be involved in the development of heritage and conservation policies and any supporting evidence relating to heritage for the next Local Plan.

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
Natural England	Natural England has undertaken a brief review of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report 2022. We are satisfied that the SA, including sustainability objectives, framework and assessment methodology, is being progressed in general accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations. The proposed approach to the SA is seeking to assess the effects of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan on key aspects of the natural environment including designated sites, biodiversity, landscape, green infrastructure, best and most versatile land, water and air quality and climate change. We welcome that a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is being prepared, the findings and recommendations of which should inform the SA.	Noted with thanks.
Natural England	Natural England has not reviewed the relevant plans, programmes and strategies listed; however, we advise that the following types of plans relating to the natural environment should be considered where applicable to your plan area: • Cambridgeshire Green infrastructure Strategy (Cambridge Horizons, 2011) - relevant objectives and projects • Biodiversity plans • Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan. • River basin management plans • Relevant landscape plans and strategies • Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) available through Magic; • The Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership's Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire [37]; • Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan; • Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Non-Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework; • Natural England's Cambridgeshire Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace 2010.	Several of these are already listed in the relevant plans and programmes, there are some that are not, ones that have been added to Appendix 1 and Table 4 are: • Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan • Combined Authority Doubling Nature Investment Plan The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Non-Statutory Strategic Spatial Framework has only ever been published in draft form for a consultation, so this has not been added to the list of plans and programmes. Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) is available through Magic Map, a link has been provided to this resource into the 'Biodiversity, Habitats and the Natural Environment' topic as it is not a plan or programme.
Natural England	Our advice is that the Local Plan should be underpinned by ecological network mapping, based on the Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire report, referenced above, to develop a framework of environmental enhancement opportunities, for delivery through Plan policies.	The Council is aware of the Natural Capital mapping and is exploring with partners how biodiversity net gain and ecological enhancement can be brought forward.
Natural England	We support SA Objectives (Table 20) SA4, SA5, SA6 and SA7 and have no further comment to make. In terms of the Assessment indicators for these objectives (Table 23) we have the following suggestions: SA4 – 'Prioritise development of previously developed land **where this is not of high biodiversity value**'	Noted with thanks.

37 Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd., May 2019), prepared for the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership.

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	SA4 – 'Prioritise development on land of Grade 3**b**or lower etc.' and split indicators into 'Predominantly grade 3**a**' and 'Predominantly grade 2 **and 3b**' to be in line with BMV categorisations. (sic) SA5 – the indicators should align with green infrastructure standards set out in Natural England's emerging Green Infrastructure Framework: Standards and Principles, due for publication January 2023. SA6 – Natural England's Impact Risk Zones (IRZs), available to view at https://magic.defra.gov.uk/, should be used to determine potential effects on designated biodiversity / geodiversity sites, rather than a standard distance. SA7 – assessment indicators need to be provided.	SA 4 – have amended the objective as per suggestion as this complies with paragraph 119 and footnote 47 of the NPPF. SA 4 – detailed mapping of 3a and 3b suitable for use at a site specific level is not currently available. For larger scale sites, we will endeavour to explore agricultural land classification with the site promoters. SA 5 – we will review the emerging green infrastructure standards and principles prior to finalisation of SA 5. SA 6 – the assessment indicators for this objective require a site meets all of the described distances for a variety of designated sites. As part of the assessment of sites promoted to the Council assessment utilising qualitative and site visit information on the impact of proposed development to identified constraints such as nature designations will also be made. This will be in addition to the assessment contained within the sustainability appraisal. SA 7 – quantitative scoring has not been provided for SA7, instead it is intended that a qualitative assessment will be undertaken to assess the strategy, sites and development management policy options and alternatives against this objective. HDC consider this to provide a more appropriate way to score this objective.
Natural England	**Annex A – Natural England further advice** **Designated Sites**	Thank you for providing this further advice and these resources. The Council is aware of the active biodiversity agenda at the moment and will continue to work with

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Natural England welcomes consideration of the hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites within the report, and objectives to protect, recover and enhance Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) alongside non-designated sites and habitat of local nature conservation value. We welcome proposed consideration of potential issues for designated sites including development, recreational pressure and climate change. Natural England would welcome a more strategic approach to addressing the effects of recreational pressure on the many sensitive designated sites including SSSIs and local wildlife sites through the Local Plan. As a minimum we would expect robust policy requirements for relevant allocations to contribute to the delivery of suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGS), identified through the Local Plan ecological opportunity mapping evidence. Consideration should be given to land that may be 'functionally linked' [(38)] to the internationally designated Ouse Washes and Nene Washes SPA and Ramsar sites. Suitable foraging habitat beyond the designated sites' boundaries may be important for maintaining the sites' qualifying bird populations, particularly swans. The potential for development to adversely affect the internationally designated sites, through loss of functionally linked land and/or disturbance and displacement of qualifying bird species, will need to be appropriately considered. **Green Infrastructure and Open Space** The NPPF defines Green Infrastructure as "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". A cohesive Sustainability Appraisal should outline the relevant environmental objectives of a Local Plan in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) which specifically refers to the promotion, protection and creation of accessible open space and green infrastructure. We welcome that relevant guidance has been followed to ensure future environmental impact and monitoring has been identified to demonstrate the policies within the Local Plan are supported by the most up to date evidence at the time of publication, including reference to important frameworks as the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011), the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) and Natural Cambridgeshire's 'Doubling Nature – A Vision for the Natural Future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2050'. Natural England is pleased that priority areas including the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds, Great Fen, Nene and the Great Ouse Valleys have been identified within the Plan as strategic Green Infrastructure areas. These areas are important habitat corridors for an array of species and have many multifunctional benefits, which would assist in the delivery of a range of SA topic areas, e.g. biodiversity, landscape, health and wellbeing and climate change. Consideration should be given to Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Standards and Principles, due to be published in January 2023.	partners to establish baseline information and develop future ambitions. The HRA will be used to explore and inform policy and site proposals which may impact on internationally designated sites. We will review the emerging green infrastructure standards and principles prior to finalisation of the sustainability appraisal framework. Detailed mapping of 3a and 3b suitable for use at a site specific level is not currently available. For larger scale sites, we will endeavour to explore agricultural land classification with the site promoters.

38 Natural England's Goose and Swan Functional Land Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) is available to view via https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	Wider Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain In addition to designated sites, discussed above, we welcome that consideration has been given to the conservation of existing tree cover and additional tree planting as outlined in the objectives of The Environment Act (2021) which aims to increase tree cover significantly by 2050. Biodiversity net gain is a key tool to help nature's recovery. Biodiversity is also fundamental to health and wellbeing as well as creating attractive and sustainable places to live and work in. The NPPF highlights the role of 'policies and decision making to minimise impacts and secure measurable net gains for biodiversity' (para 170). Natural England welcomes a proposed commitment for Local Plan policies and proposals to deliver a minimum 10% BNG. We suggest that this is listed as an objective in **A3: Identifying Sustainability Issues and Problems**. We feel it should be incorporated as it represents an important part of decision-making within the context of the Local Plan in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 174d, 179b and 180d. **Nature Recovery** The Nature Recovery Network is a major commitment in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. The NRN is an expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats. Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) will become a mandatory requirement under the Environment Act and will inform future Local Plans therefore consideration should be given during the development of the Local Plan as LNRS will most certainly shape local planning policy and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery. Further reference can be made to the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment The Sustainability Appraisal should aim to ensure that the Local Plan is underpinned by ecological opportunity mapping to help deliver mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery Network requirements of the Environment Act (2021). National Habitats Network mapping is available to view at https://magic.defra.gov.uk/ . Existing information is available to inform this including Mapping Natural Capital and Opportunities for Habitat Creation in Cambridgeshire (Natural Capital Solutions Ltd., May 2019) prepared for the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership. **Landscape**	

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	We welcome that the Local Plan identifies key landscape issues through its objectives to protect, enhance and maintain the various landscapes and their key characteristics, promote landscape protection, management and planning. It coherently identifies that landscapes are vulnerable to change through the impacts of climate change and that it will be paramount to the Local Plan's success that it is able to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and minimise human impact. **Soils** The conservation and sustainable management of soils is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in paragraph 174. The Local Plan should give appropriate weight to the roles performed by the area's soils. These should be valued as a finite multi-functional resource which underpin our wellbeing and prosperity. Decisions about development should take full account of the impact on soils, their intrinsic character and the sustainability of the many ecosystem services they deliver. Particular care over planned changes to the most potentially productive soil is needed, for the ecosystem services it supports including its role in agriculture and food production. Plan policies should therefore take account of the impact on land and soil resources and the wide range of vital functions (ecosystem services) they provide in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF. The objectives within the Soils section highlight important issues such as the need to conserve the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, support sustainable agricultural practices, prioritise the re-use of previously developed land (brownfield land) over greenfield land, and enhance biodiversity, natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. As part of the avoidance of BMV development as well as utilising brownfield sites, it would be useful to make clear that development is not appropriate if the brownfield land is of high environmental value. Some brownfield sites are important for wildlife, particularly invertebrate diversity. Reference can be made to Open Mosaic Habitat Inventory as starting point for assessing environmental value: Open Mosaic Habitat (Draft) - data.gov.uk. We welcome that conservation and restoration of peatland has been identified as an objective. The SA and Local Plan policies should reflect the importance of the district's peat soils as a significant carbon store, in helping to improve air quality and mitigate against climate change. The policy should seek to protect this and ensure relevant development contributes towards enhancement of degraded peat to deliver a wide range of environmental services including biodiversity, open space, flood risk and drainage benefits, in addition to helping to mitigate climate change. To assist in understanding agricultural land quality within the plan area and to safeguard BMV agricultural land in line with the NPPF, strategic scale ALC Maps are available. Natural England also has an archive of more detailed ALC surveys for selected locations. Both these types of data can be supplied digitally free of charge by contacting Natural England. Some of this data is also available on the magic website. The planning authority should ensure that sufficient site specific ALC survey data is available to inform decision making. For example, where no reliable or sufficiently detailed information is available, it would be reasonable to expect developers to commission a new ALC survey, for any sites they wish to put forward for consideration in the Local Plan.	

2 Comments from Environmental Bodies

Comment by	Comment	HDC response and changes made
	General mapped information on soil types is available as ‘Soilscapes’ on the magic website. Additional information regarding obtaining soil data can be found on the LandIS.	

Appendix 3: Comments from Public Engagement

3.1 The draft scoping report was made available for anyone to make comments between 1 February and 15 March 2023. This was so that the scoping report is as robust as possible and to promote participation in production of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

3.2 Comments received can be viewed on our consultation portal, a summary of these comments and the changes made to the report have been provided below.

3.3 In total, 91 comments were made by 18 persons/organisations. The comments were wide ranging but have been summarised in the following table:

Table 24 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Main Issues Raised	Council Response / How the Council has taken this into account
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report - General	
• General comment on need to work with neighbouring authorities as part of Duty to Cooperate. • General comments on the need to provide new homes in sustainable locations using a revised settlement hierarchy that meet local needs. • Concern over the usage of the term 'climate emergency' rather than climate change.	• The Council is working with neighbouring authorities and other Duty to Cooperate bodies. No changes required. • Acknowledged, a new settlement hierarchy will be prepared using a revised methodology which will inform a future development strategy. It is not for the scoping report to set out a settlement hierarchy or spatial approach. No changes required. • The term climate emergency is consistent with HDC's Climate Strategy, no changes required.
1 - Introduction	
• No comments were made.	• No action required.
2 - Sustainability Appraisal Methodology	
• General request that a new settlement hierarchy and scoring mechanism for settlements be introduced.	• Acknowledged, a new settlement hierarchy will be prepared using a revised methodology. No changes required.
3 - A1: Identifying relevant plans, programmes and strategies	
• Request to add further plans, programmes and strategies to the list of those already reviewed.	• Several additional plans, programmes and strategies have been reviewed and added.

3 Comments from Public Engagement

Main Issues Raised	Council Response / How the Council has taken this into account
4 - A2: Collecting baseline information	
• Request for distinction between grade 3a and grade 3b agricultural land. • Request for further data on climate emissions and power usage across the district. • Request for clarity on when climate impacts may occur. • Request for Council to amend organic waste collection process. • Request for additional text relating to water based development and resilient buildings in areas of flood risk, support for reference to water based tourism activities. • General comments on additional sources of detailed population and health data. • Request for additional text relating to demand for sustainable logistics development and the green economy.	• Clarification provided that mapping data is not available at a site specific level • Further climate information not available comprehensively for the district. • Clarification added. • Outside of the scope of the SA and Local Plan. • Support noted, no changes required to comply with national policy on flood risk. • Sufficient baseline information has been provided in the scoping report. Detailed discussion on population and health issues will be explored through the Issues Engagement Paper, no changes required. • Logistics and green economy are issues that will be explored in greater detail in the Issues Engagement paper.
5 - A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems	
• Request for additional detailed issues to be identified in the climate emergency and natural environment topics. • Observation that flooding and water should be separated into two topics rather than covered together.	• Suggestions are too detailed and not practical for the SA framework, no changes required. • Noted, due to the interconnectedness of these topics it was considered appropriate to combine them. Further discussion will be undertaken through the Issues Engagement paper, no changes required.
6 - A4: Developing the SA framework	
• General support for the objectives identified. • Request for further refinement of the framework to identify decision aiding questions for varying scales of sites. • Request for amendments to the distances provided in several scoring options such as distance to services. • Request for amendments to SA9 to provide greater distinction between scoring options for residential development. • Not clear whether all objectives apply to all proposals. • Request for additional safeguarding for ecological networks and habitat connectivity.	• Support acknowledged. • The framework already refines the decision aiding questions across the strategy (which includes new settlements and strategic expansion locations), other sites and policies, renamed heading in Table 20 for clarity. • Distances used are inline with existing national guidance. • Amended SA9 scoring + option to 100 homes threshold to make a greater distinction in scoring proposals. • Added a second line to the 'N' (no clear relationship' scoring option) to say that the objective is not relevant to the policy or proposal. Also added to SA5 clarity on scale of proposals that apply to scoring options.

Comments from Public Engagement 3

Main Issues Raised	Council Response / How the Council has taken this into account
	• Additional decision aiding question for SA6 to not compromise strategic scale ecological networks and that future improvements in strategic habitat connectivity are not prejudiced.
7 - A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA	
• No comments were made.	• No action required.
8 - Next steps	
• No comments were made.	• No action required.
Appendices	
• Request to add further plans, programmes and strategies to the list of those already reviewed.	• Several additional plans, programmes and strategies have been reviewed and added to relevant tables.
Glossary	
• No comments were made.	• No action required.

3.4 The comments have been taken into account and changes have been incorporated into this Scoping Report.

Glossary

Accessibility

The ability of people to move around an area and reach places and facilities, including older and disabled people, those with young children and those carrying luggage or shopping.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

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 or veteran tree

Tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

Document produced each year to report on progress on housing supply and performance against the indicators of the Local Plan.

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architecture

The style in which a building is designed and constructed particularly with reference to specific time period or place.

Best and most versatile agricultural land

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

Biodiversity

Glossary

All aspects of biological diversity.

Brownfield

See Previously Developed Land (PDL).

Climate change adaptation

Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate 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

Facilities available for use by the community that provide for the health, welfare, social, educational, leisure, recreational and cultural needs of the community. Examples include village halls, doctors' surgeries, pubs, churches, museums, libraries and children's play areas. It may also include areas of informal open space and sports facilities.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Conservation (for heritage)

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

Conservation Area

An area "of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

Decentralised energy

Local renewable and local low carbon energy sources.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, is the UK Government department for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy.

Density

The amount of development on a given piece of land.

Design code

A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Design Guide

A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice, often produced by a local authority.

Development Plan

Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Economic development

Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

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.

Glossary

Examination

Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft development plan document, chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Geodiversity

The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green corridor

Uninterrupted network of natural features within an urban area that acts as a linkage for wildlife, and potentially for people.

Green infrastructure

The network of green spaces such as parks, playing fields, allotments and cemeteries; these may have public access or be private spaces. Traditionally including water features such as rivers and lakes these are increasingly referred to as blue infrastructure.

Green space

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

Green space buffer

An area of vegetation or open space that provides visual and/ or physical enclosure or creates a distinct break between contrasting land use areas.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTNA)

This assesses the need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in any local authority area.

Habitat

The natural home or environment of a plant or animal.

Habitat site

Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

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

Heritage assets

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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

This is a single measure of deprivation and contains seven individual indices. The indices are used widely to analyse patterns of deprivation, identify areas that would benefit from special initiatives or programmes and as a tool to determine eligibility for specific funding streams. The indices relate to income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

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.

Land use

The broad functions land is used for such as industrial, residential or commercial.

Landmarks

Glossary

Significant buildings or physical features usually including churches, memorials, squares and individual buildings of particular architectural or historic importance.

Landscape

The character and appearance of land including its shape, form, natural features, biodiversity and colours and the way these components are combined.

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.

One that is registered on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
Local housing need

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 61 of this Framework).

Local Nature Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

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 include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local plan

A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Materials

The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials and how they are used.

Memorable areas

Areas of well defined character and a clear sense of place often including historic centres, market squares, parks and river landscapes.

Mitigation measures

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

Mix

The range of uses present within a given piece of land.

Neighbourhood plans

A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Nodes

Distinct points within the structure of a settlement usually forming a junction or crossing point for paths, roads and/ or rivers or places of particular physical importance.

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 or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to 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.

Glossary

People with disabilities

People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

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 2015.

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 was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as 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.

Primary routes

The main roads and railway lines running through and around the town or village.

Public rights of way

The network of footpaths on which access on foot is legally protected and bridleways to which access on foot, cycle and horseback is legally protected.

Priority habitats

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 Park and Garden

A site included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in England.

Registered Social Landlords

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 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. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Scheduled Monument

A scheduled monument means any monument which is for the time being included in the schedule [compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport].

Secondary routes

The network of minor roads, streets and lanes running through and around the town or village.

Setting

The context in which something sits.

Glossary

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.

Spatial planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.

Special Areas of Conservation

Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.

Special Protection Areas

Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment

A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment

Strategic Green Space

These are areas of green space that serve a wider population than just the district, for example Paxton Pits and the Great Fen.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

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. See also HELAA.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

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 (SPDs)

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development 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 development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

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

Glossary

Area defined on the local authority's policies 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 the development plan, 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 measures 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 measures that will be needed 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 from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

An order made and confirmed by a local planning authority to protect trees from lopping, topping or felling without prior written consent.

Urban green space

An area of open land within the settlement usually used as a park, cemetery, playing field or amenity land.

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.

Vernacular

The typical way in which buildings or structures are made in a particular place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials.

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.

Wildlife corridor

Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Zero carbon building

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