

Hemingford Grey Neighbourhood Plan

Planning Policy Context Analysis March 2020



Cambridgeshire ACRE

Company limited by guarantee No. 3690881 • Registered charity No. 1074032 •

• Registered office:

Unit 18, e-space North, 181 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Ely, CB6 1RA

• VAT Registration No. 838 5035 17

About Cambridgeshire ACRE



Cambridgeshire ACRE is an independent charity established in 1924. We are part of a network of 38 Rural Community Councils across England and are a member of ACRE (the national umbrella for RCCs). We are proud to support local communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and nearby where appropriate. We put a lot of effort into getting to know our customers so we can understand what they need from us. This ensures we focus on providing products and services that really make a difference to local people as they work in their own communities.

As part of our work we provide a Neighbourhood Planning service for local communities. We have developed this service by building on our skills, knowledge and competencies gained in other project areas such as rural affordable housing and community-led planning and by working with local planning consultants to broaden our capacity.

Our current partners are:



You can find out more about our team and our work from our Neighbourhood Planning Information Leaflet at <https://wordpress.com/view/camsacrenpservice.wordpress.com>

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Hemingford Grey Neighbourhood Plan: The Planning Policy Context

1.1 This paper sets out the key strategic planning policies that will need to be considered in developing the Hemingford Grey Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 Neighbourhood Planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need.

PART 2 BASIC CONDITIONS

2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must meet a set of basic planning conditions before it can be put to a referendum and be formally adopted. A Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) meets the basic conditions if:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

2.2 The submission Neighbourhood Plan will need to be accompanied by a Basic Conditions Statement.

PART 3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 National planning policy is mainly set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019. It states that planning should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development: economic, social and environment. Paragraph 11 of NPPF 2019 states:

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;

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.”

3.2 NPPF emphasises the link between themes such as climate change and health, provides guidance on the vitality and vibrancy of towns and rural areas including retail, town centres and employment. It provides advice to local authorities on transport, high quality infrastructure, good design and healthy communities, whilst conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment.

3.3 National planning policy requires Local Planning Authorities to significantly boost the supply of housing. Where a local authority does not have a 5 year housing land supply, existing plans are considered out of date and local planning authorities should grant permission unless adverse impacts of doing so would demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

3.4 At March 2019, the council’s annual monitoring report details a 5.59 year housing land supply and allows a 10% buffer. The report states that, ‘Predicted completions over the next 5 years will exceed the target and fully make up the current shortfall. Therefore, the policies for the supply of housing should be considered to be up-to-date.’

3.5 In addition, paragraph 75 of NPPF states that where the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the local planning authority’s housing requirement over the previous three years, the local authority should prepare an action plan. To calculate the HDT measurement for each plan area, the government has divided the number of new homes built (‘delivered’) in the past three financial years by the number of new homes required in the same period. The HDT measurement figure is expressed as a percentage. The HDT results for Huntingdonshire published on 13th February 2020 report a percentage of 110% and therefore no action is required.

3.6 The NPPF now gives a new emphasis to design policies. The written ministerial statement announcing the launch of the revised Framework included, ‘Critically, progress must not be at the expense of quality or design. Houses must be right for communities. So, the planning reforms in the new Framework should result in homes that are locally led, well-designed, and of a consistent and high quality standard.’ Effective engagement with local communities, the use of ‘local design standards or style guides’, and the refusal of permissions for developments of poor design are some of the ways the revised NPPF aims to achieve this objective.

3.7 The NPPF also states that Local Green Space designations through local and neighbourhood plans allow communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them (paragraph 99). The criteria for Local Green Space designation are set out at NPPF (paragraph 100) which states designations should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

PART 4 HUNTINGDONSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan must support the delivery of the strategic policies in the Development Plan and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. The adopted Development Plan for Huntingdonshire comprises Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 adopted on 15th May 2019, made Neighbourhood Plans for St Neots, Godmanchester, Houghton and Wyton, and Huntingdon, together with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan. The development plan is also supported by Supplementary Planning Documents:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire SPD 2014
Developer Contributions SPD 2011
Developer Contributions: updated costs 2019/20
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD 2007

4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.

Huntingdonshire Local Plan states: Strategic policies are those which are essential to the delivery of the Local Plan strategy. These include:

1. All policies in 4 'The Development Strategy' of this Local Plan
2. All policies that allocate land for development in Section D: 'Allocations' as they are required to achieve the strategy as set out in 4 'The Development Strategy'
3. The policies on 'Design Context' and 'Affordable Housing Provision'

4.3 Whilst Neighbourhood Plan policies should align with and support the delivery of those policies, neighbourhood plan policies can provide more distinctiveness, definition or finer grain of detail by applying them to specific sites or relating them specifically to Hemingford Grey. The strategic policies are included in Appendix 1.

Housing

4.4 The Local Plan allocates sites for residential development across the district to ensure that sufficient land is brought forward to meet at least 20,100 new homes including 7,900 new affordable homes. Between April 2011 and March 2019, 205 dwelling units have been completed in the parish including 76 affordable homes.

4.5 The Plan (policy LP 7) identifies the St Ives Spatial Planning Area that incorporates the parish of St Ives except for the land north of Marley Gap Brook. It also includes parts of the parishes of Hemingford Grey, Houghton and Wyton, Fenstanton, and Holywell-cum-Needingworth where the built-up area of St Ives extends into them and/ or development is allocated in this plan. For Hemingford Grey this includes development along London Road and the Yes Estate. The main built-up areas of the villages, such as Hemingford Grey, associated with these parishes do not form part of the Spatial Planning Area.

4.6 Policy LP 7 sets out the policies for development on un - allocated sites in the St Ives Planning Area. Housing, residential institutions, non- residential institutions, assembly and leisure facilities, business and town centre developments are supported where they are located within the built up area. For business an appropriate location in Established Employment Areas, a town centre or Alconbury Enterprise Zone. The policy is clear that a proposal will be supported where it will not undermine the role of the primary settlement or adversely affect the relationship between the settlement of the Spatial Planning Area. Main town centre uses will be supported subject to the sequential approach. Outside defined town centre a floorspace of 600m² will need an appropriate impact assessment.

4.7 Policy LP 9 identifies Hemingford Grey as a small settlement reflecting its very limited services and facilities. In policy terms, small settlements are less sustainable where a limited amount of development will be allowed to support a thriving rural economy. LP 9 also supports proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.

4.8 There is no policy context or relationship linking St Ives and the settlement of Hemingford Grey. The policies are quite distinct and separate.

4.9 Para 4.85 in the Local Plan and the implementation table provide a local interpretation of what “built up area” means. Potentially, through character assessment work, the built up area can be more clearly identified and where limited development could come forward without adverse impacts etc.

4.10 Para 4.103 of the Local Plan recognises that opportunities for development within the built-up areas of Small Settlements will vary according to the scale and nature of the individual settlement. The acceptable amount of development will be a balanced judgement between the sustainability of the Small Settlement overall, the locational relationship of the proposed development site with local services and the impact of the proposed quantum of development on the character of the immediate locality and of the Small Settlement as a whole.

Housing Requirements

4.11 This assessment of acceptable amount of development can be informed by a housing requirement figure. Huntingdonshire District Council are required to provide a housing figure for the Hemingford Grey Neighbourhood Plan if requested. Paragraph 66 of NPPF states the housing requirement figure for a neighbourhood plan should take into account the latest evidence of local

housing need, the population of the neighbourhood plan area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority. Huntingdonshire District Council comments that the neighbourhood plan dwelling figures are based on the parish dwelling stock so around St Ives figures for Hemingford Grey parish are somewhat distorted by inclusion of developments such as that around London Road, including the Yes development, which are technically in Hemingford Grey but in reality relate more to St Ives.

4.12 The indicative housing requirement for Hemingford Grey is between 151 and 225 dwellings. However, this needs to be tempered by the proportion of development relating more to the St Ives SPA and by physical constraints, particularly flood risk, which may restrict the delivery of housing within the parish. Further discussions with HDC will be required on this issue.

4.13 Policy LP25 requires a mix of home sizes, types and tenures responding to sub regional and local housing assessments¹. Neighbourhood Plans elsewhere, informed by a Housing Needs Assessment, set out a more detailed housing mix policy. Proposals will be supported that meet optional Building Regulation accessibility standards and the Council will work to address identified requirements for self and custom build homes. Policy LP 26 supports self-contained, specialist housing and residential institutions subject to criteria.

4.14 The Housing Strategy identifies four housing priorities for Huntingdonshire:

1. To increase the supply of new affordable housing and encourage sustainable growth
2. To identify housing need and improve health and well being
3. To improve housing conditions in existing housing
4. To work in partnership to improve outcomes

4.15 Policy LP 24 states that developments of 11 homes or more will provide 40% affordable homes, of which 70% are social or affordable rented properties, the balance made up of other affordable tenures, dispersed across small clusters of dwellings and the type of tenure will be determined by local housing needs sources. Neighbourhood Plans provide the opportunity for rural communities to identify sites for affordable housing development, meeting the needs of those with a local connection.

4.16 These policies create the basis for the predominant supply of new affordable homes each year. In the last 3 years, 66% of new affordable homes have been provided as a result of these policies.

4.17 To accelerate the delivery of affordable homes the council's housing strategy seeks:

Delivery as part of planning permissions

Exceptions sites

Devolution Housing Fund

Use or borrow council money to increase the provision of affordable housing and Temporary Accommodation

¹ NPPF para 61 'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies'

Council offer small non operational land to registered providers for TA and AH
Explore setting up a Housing Company or Joint Venture
Creative use of CIL

4.18 Huntingdonshire Tenancy Strategy sets out registered providers of social housing and they concern the nature and length of tenancies being offered by Registered Providers. It is based upon data from 2011 / 2012 and plans to provide new affordable housing through S106 agreements, without recourse to HCA grant, with most affordable housing being social rent unless development site viability suggests that an alternative tenure is required in order to facilitate the development.

4.19 Where delivery of social rent is found to be unviable, the provision of Affordable rents may be considered. Rents must not be charged in excess of the Local Housing Allowance rate. This tenancy strategy states that it is likely that any properties built on other sites (rural exceptions) could be let at affordable rent levels.

4.20 Policy LP28 supports rural exceptions housing where it includes at least 60% affordable housing for people with a local connection on a site well related to a built up area. Mechanism will be put in place to ensure the affordable housing is delivered and remains affordable in perpetuity.

Major Development Sites

4.21 Section 11 of the Local Plan sets out the allocations for development within the St Ives Spatial Area. Policy SI 1 St Ives West identifies 54 hectare of land south of Houghton Road for mixed used development including approximately 400 homes and social and community needs. The site lies immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the Hemingford Grey Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

4.22 There are no current major development proposals within the Parish. The most notable development in the last decade is the development of 191 dwellings on the former Jewson, Lordgate, LEL sites approved in October 2010. Additionally, the Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre has seen an appeal allowed in 2013 for a Wakeboard Cable.

4.23 The majority of development proposals within the parish are for small residential developments including the demolition and replacement of dwellings or the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings.

Employment and Retail

4.24 The Local Plan makes provision for 14,400 additional jobs across the district and employment sites have been allocated to meet this demand. B Class Employment and uses compatible with the employment area will be supported on or adjacent to established employment areas (LP19).

4.25 Other employment development (class B) will only be supported in or adjacent to Established Employment Areas, involves the reuse of land last use for business or involves the reuse or replacement of an existing rural building. Expansion of existing businesses will be supported subject to safeguarding criteria.

4.26 Town centres are defined on policy maps in the Local Plan – no policy designation is made for Hemingford Grey centre and there are no policy allocations for employment development within the parish.

Open Spaces, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

4.27 Proposals are expected to support and incorporate green infrastructure (LP 3); protecting and enhancing linkages between green infrastructure priority areas (potential to consolidate less important habitats and facilitate access improvements) and the Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network, improve accessibility and connectivity to green spaces, provide replacement provision where it harms or results in the loss of existing green infrastructure where it provides a net benefit (Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy).

4.28 The policies map to the Local Plan details Hemingford Grey Conservation Area, Cambridgeshire Wildlife Site Areas and a Green Infrastructure Priority Area which washes over the Parish of Hemingford Grey. Biodiversity and geodiversity will ensure no net loss, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar site, SSSI, National Nature Reserve, Protected Species, Priority Habitat, and Sites of Local or Regional Importance (Policy LP 30). Regard is to be had to the Natural Cambridgeshire publication 'Developing with Nature Toolkit'. Policy LP 31 seeks to conserve trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows.

4.29 LP 32 seeks to minimise the loss of open space of public value. However, the open spaces are not defined. The strongest form of protection for important green spaces within or close to the settlement available within the NPPF is a Local Green Space. A Local Green Space may be designated in a Neighbourhood Development Plan where it accords with the NPPF (para 100). Development on a local green space will only be supported in very special circumstances. Alternatively, other local policy designations for open space can be identified. These are sometimes described in policy as Protected Village Amenity Areas, Important Countryside Frontages or visually important gaps.

Protecting Village Character

4.30 A Design Context policy encourages development to respond positively to the SPD design guides, town assessments and conservation area statements (LP11). Para 5.7 states 'when seeking to understand the surroundings, a proposal should have regard to resources that detail the quality or character of the surroundings, including, but not limited to, neighbourhood plans, village design statements and parish plans'. Policy LP 12 provides an extensive list of generic criteria against which planning applications are judged. More details are provided in the Design Guide SPD. Para 5.18 sets out parking provision and vehicle movement design and Policy LP13 sets out the need for a Master plan and design code for large scale development.

4.31 Hemingford Grey is located within National Character Area 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands. At a more local level, the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (June 2007) defines Landscape Character Area 4 – Ouse Valley and Hemingford Grey stands within Area 4: Ouse Valley, of the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991).

4.32 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (June 2007) identifies key issues for St Ives. It states the Historic Centre and the relationship with the river are fundamental to the character of the town and the protection and enhancement of historic buildings, open spaces and river views should be a key conservation priority. Conservation and improvement strategies should seek to conserve the river setting and retain its function as a natural edge and buffer between St Ives and Hemingford Grey. This report also notes the variety of building materials, and the Dutch gables on the Georgian houses in the foreground, indicating considerable prosperity in Hemingford Grey. It also notes extensive public access to the river edge notably at The Waits, The Quay and to the Hemingford and Wilhorn Meadows.

4.33 The Plan gives weight to the protection of the historic environment (LP34 protects heritage assets and their settings, conservation areas, archaeology). LP35 supports low carbon energy generating schemes (except wind); LP36 requires air quality assessments.

Flood Risk

4.34 Hemingford Grey is within Flood Zone 3, the settlement lying with 'Areas benefiting from flood defences'. Parts of the settlement as defined within Flood Zone 2. Areas beyond the settlement are Flood Zone 3A. Detailed guidance on strategic planning policies and dealing with planning applications is provided in paragraphs 155-165 of the NPPF.

4.35 The Local Plan identifies Flood Risk as a significant issue within the Great Ouse Valley and low lying Fen areas. Policy LP5 states that proposals will only be supported where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences have been addressed including reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document. This includes: the application of the sequential test; exception test; need to reduce overall flood risk; the integrity of existing flood defences and the requirements of the SPD. The policy sets out its approach to previously developed land in defended areas, managing flood water and the need for a site specific flood risk assessment.

4.36 Safety risks will be determined with reference to the Defra guidance on flood risk safety FD2320 or successor guidance, on the basis that development should be 'safe for all' for a 1:100 annual probability flood event, for the lifetime of the development, with appropriate climate change allowances.

4.37 Where a proposal would occupy functional flood plain (Flood Zone 3b), the developer must ensure that it does not impact upon the ability of the floodplain to store or convey water, and seek opportunities to provide floodplain betterment. Development will only be supported where it results in no loss of floodplain performance within the undefended floodplain.

Infrastructure and Services

4.38 Policy LP 16 supports sustainable travel, seeks to ensure that transport impacts are assessed, and any strategic road network impacts are addressed with Highways England. Policy LP 17 requires justification for parking and vehicle movement space.

4.39 Policy LP 22 seeks to support proposals for and to protect local service and community facilities and sets out criteria on which assessments will be based including marketing of the premises without success.

4.40 The Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016 -2021 highlights Hemingford Sports Pavilion (squash) as a jewel in the crown. It notes a project to upgrade changing room to meet Step 7 requirements for football.

4.41 The Council’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan schedule 2017 (IDP), updated by December 2017, does not identify any projects that are required to support the local plan in Hemingford Grey settlement.

4.42 Table 35 in the IDP Schedule identifies proposals for the St Ives Spatial Policy Area. The total funding required is approximately £11 million with identified funding of approximately £650,000.

Critical Intervention St Ives SPA (near HG)	Project Status	Funding Mechanisms	Contribution / Funding Gap
Highways: There are currently high levels of congestion around Huntingdon and St Ives during peak periods. Improvements to the A14 and A428 have been identified as critical priority schemes.	Project identified	Both of these have obtained full funding from the Department for Transport / Highways England and are scheduled to start in 2017 and 2020 respectively	
Bus Network: There is a deficit of bus service provision, particularly within St Neots, St Ives, and rural areas, which suffer from long journey times. Extending the busway service is a critical priority scheme; there are plans to provide a new service connecting St Ives, Huntingdon, Alconbury Weald and Peterborough.	Project Identified but not in scope	CIL/ S106	
GP Surgeries: There is an overall capacity deficit for GP surgeries at a District level, particularly affecting St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon. There are no schemes of critical priority. However, additional GP provision is required at each of the towns (on average 5 new Full Time Equivalent (FTE) GPs per spatial area). This provision is deemed to be of ‘essential’ priority	Project Identified but not in scope	NHS England /CIL/ S106	

Critical Intervention St Ives SPA (near HG)	Project Status	Funding Mechanisms	Contribution / Funding Gap
<p>Huntingdon and St Ives Surface Water Management Plans / Phase 1 Capital Delivery: This is an additional study identified through consultation with CCC as part of the preparation of this IDP up-date. The scheme will look at risks and options in Huntingdon and St Ives. The need for this study has emerged since the June 2017 IDP Schedule, but is not related to the change in the housing allocations. The study will cost £265,000 and is likely to be implemented between 2018 and 2023.</p>	<p>Project identified but not yet scoped</p>	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council / developer contribution (CIL and S106 / basic needs allowance)</p>	
<p>A1096 Harrison Way/Low Road Improvements Road junction mitigation measure to enhance junction performance</p>	<p>Project identified but not yet scoped</p>	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council / developer contribution (CIL and S106 / basic needs allowance)</p>	<p>£642,950</p>
<p>A1096/A14 Junction 26 Improvements Road junction mitigation measure to enhance junction performance.</p>	<p>Project identified but not yet scoped</p>	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council / developer contribution (CIL and S106 / basic needs allowance)</p>	<p>£140,600</p>

PART 5 KEY POLICY ISSUES FOR THE WORKSHOP

5.1 The Local Plan and the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents provides a district wide approach to several spatial policy areas. A Neighbourhood Plan could add a more distinctive and locally appropriate layer and provide policy advice to positively influence and guide new development. In addition, a broad range of issues will emerge through early consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider. The policy context raises several issues that the Neighbourhood Plan could consider:

- Hemingford Grey Natural and Historic Character
 - Retention of the village’s natural, historic and important design characteristics and style particularly those that should be included in new developments
 - Identify, protect and enhance the best of what you have by identifying positive planning designations and safeguarding policies such as Important Countryside Frontage, public open space, local green spaces or other amenity areas
 - Identify, protect and enhance areas of wildlife, ecology, local green spaces and the permeability between those spaces
 - Local response to climate change

- Settlement Services
 - Identify and safeguard the health and vitality of retail and service offer
 - Safeguard specific village facilities and fill gaps in existing service offer
 - Maximise the potential of village community facilities located together
 - Define the type and location of business development needs, opportunities to support employment locally including home working

- Housing
 - Define the housing requirement for the settlement
 - The detailed design, mix, tenure of new development
 - Meeting specific demand or delivery of types of affordable housing
 - Local definition of the built up area

- Infrastructure
 - Detailed Flood Risk interpretation to guide development propositions
 - Positive response to ‘connection’ related issues between St Ives (YES estate) and Hemingford Grey – cyclepaths, footpaths, permeability, crossings
 - Identify more precisely the location, type, design and intervention of new infrastructure services and facilities to meet the demand for the parish



Appendix 1: Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036 – Strategic Policies

The Local Plan states: Strategic policies are those which are essential to the delivery of the Local Plan strategy.

1. All policies in 4 'The Development Strategy' of this Local Plan
2. All policies that allocate land for development in Section D: 'Allocations' as they are required to achieve the strategy as set out in 4 'The Development Strategy'
3. The policies on 'Design Context' and 'Affordable Housing Provision'.

Legislation sets out 'basic conditions' which Neighbourhood Plans (and Neighbourhood Development Orders) must satisfy. To meet the basic conditions, Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the Local Plan as set out above.

This is considered to be compliant with the distinction made in the NPPF between policies of a strategic nature and those that are not.'

LP 1

Amount of development

In Huntingdonshire in the period 2011-2036 provision will be made for: at least 20,100 new homes (both market and affordable), and approximately 14,400 additional jobs.

LP 2

Strategy for Development

The development strategy for Huntingdonshire is to:

- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities;
- Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities;
- Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes;
- Support a thriving rural economy;
- Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and
- Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation.

Distribution of growth

Four spatial planning areas are designated reflecting their status as the district's traditional market towns and most sustainable centres. These are centred around:

- Huntingdon including Brampton and Godmanchester and the strategic expansion location of Alconbury Weald
- St Neots including Little Paxton and the strategic expansion location of St Neots East
- St Ives
- Ramsey including Bury

Approximately three quarters of the objectively assessed need for housing and the majority of employment and retail growth will be focused in the spatial planning areas.

Seven key service centres are designated reflecting the concentration of services and facilities in these locations and their role in providing services to residents of other nearby communities.

These are:

- Buckden
- Fenstanton
- Kimbolton
- Sawtry
- Somersham
- Warboys
- Yaxley.

All other settlements with a single built up area of 30 dwellings or more are defined as Small Settlements as set out in 'Definition of Small Settlements'.

Approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing, together with a limited amount of employment growth, will be permitted on sites dispersed across the key service centres and small settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply.

In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies of this plan providing further flexibility in the housing supply.

LP 3

Green Infrastructure

A proposal will be expected to support green infrastructure and will therefore be supported where it demonstrates that it:

- a. incorporates open/ green space in accordance with the Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (SPD), or successor documents;
- b. protects and where possible enhances existing green infrastructure, concentrating efforts on protecting, enhancing or creating links within, to and between green infrastructure priority areas and the Cambridgeshire Strategic Green Infrastructure Network;
- c. is consistent with the objectives of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) or successor documents;

- d. improves the accessibility, naturalness and connectivity of green spaces, assisting in achieving Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt);
- e. provides replacement provision where the proposal would result in harm to or loss of existing green infrastructure, where the replacement provides a net benefit, judged in terms of the factors set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011);
- f. maintains and where appropriate enhances the rights of way network; and
- g. contributes to the re-naturalisation of water bodies such as rivers and lakes, where possible.

Green Infrastructure Priority Areas

Several Green Infrastructure Priority Areas have been identified, as indicated on 'The Key Diagram' and shown on the Policies Map. They have potential to consolidate and link important habitats and facilitate access improvements. A proposal within a priority area will be supported where the requirements for that area will be achieved.

The Great Fen

Within the Great Fen a proposal will only be supported where it is clearly demonstrated that it will make a positive contribution towards the implementation of the Great Fen Masterplan (2010) or successor documents.

A proposal that lies outside the designated Great Fen area, but within its Landscape and Visual Setting will be expected to demonstrate consideration of the landscape and visual impacts that the proposal could have on the Great Fen, such as how the proposal might affect the aims of the Great Fen project to establish an area where the experience gained by visitors will be one of a tranquil area of countryside unaffected by urban encroachment.

Great Ouse Valley

A proposal within the Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area, defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document will be supported where it contributes to the landscape, wildlife, cultural and historical value of the area.

A proposal at Paxton Pits will be supported where it helps to deliver the objectives of the Nature Reserve Management Plan (2017) and/ or the objectives of the Reserve Management Strategy for the planned extension to Paxton Pits Nature Reserve (2007) or successor documents.

Nene Valley

Within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the objectives of the NIA and where possible enables identified habitat opportunities to be realised.

Grafham Water

A proposal within the Grafham Water Landscape Character Area, defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, will be supported where it

enhances or creates ecological or landscape linkages between Grafham Water and woodland in the vicinity. Enhanced access will also be supported subject to compatibility with the landscape and biodiversity.

A proposal will be supported where involves the role, function and continued operation or enhancement of Grafham Water Reservoir, its Treatment Works and associated networks.

Associated facilities

A proposal to provide facilities associated with strategic green infrastructure in the countryside will be supported where a countryside location is justified, the use is compatible with the green infrastructure in question and adverse effects are avoided.

LP 4

Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery

Community Infrastructure Levy

Applicable developments will be liable to pay the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or subsequent local infrastructure tax, as set out in the Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (2012) or subsequent revisions.

Planning Obligations

In addition to the CIL, contributions towards the provision of infrastructure, and of meeting economic, social and environmental requirements may be necessary to make a proposal acceptable in planning terms. Contributions that may be required include the following:

- a. Affordable housing;
- b. Recreation (including leisure and sports facilities);
- c. Green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement/ mitigation;
- d. Transport;
- e. Community facilities;
- f. Education, health and social care and community safety;
- g. Utilities infrastructure and energy;
- h. Emergency and essential services;
- i. Environmental improvements;
- j. Drainage and flood prevention and protection;
- k. Waste recycling facilities; and
- l. Public art, heritage and archaeology.

Such contributions will be calculated as set out in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) (SPD) or successor documents and will be sought through a planning obligation. The nature and scale of planning obligations sought will depend on the form of development and the impact it is considered to have upon the surrounding area on the basis of documentary evidence. Requirements may be provided on or off site as set out in the SPD. The timing of provision will be carefully considered in order to ensure that adequate infrastructure, support and facilities are in place before development is occupied or comes into use.

All considerations and negotiations will be undertaken in a positive manner in order to come to the most appropriate solution and will, subject to such evidence being submitted, take viability and other material considerations including specific site conditions into account.

Where particular requirements of sites allocated for development are known they are identified in the applicable allocation policy.

Subdivision of allocated sites in order to avoid liability for contributions will not be accepted. Contributions will be calculated on the complete developable area and apportioned appropriately.

The delivery of development may need to be phased, and review mechanisms used, to ensure necessary infrastructure is provided to meet needs. Conditions or a planning obligation may be used to secure this.

LP 5

Flood Risk

Location of development

A proposal will only be supported where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences or other defence failures, have been addressed, as detailed in the National Planning Practice Guidance and with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), such that:

- a. the sequential approach and sequential test are applied and passed, having regard to actual and residual flood risk and including consideration of the impact of climate change;
- b. if necessary the exception test is applied and passed;
- c. development has been sequentially located within the site to avoid flood risk;
- d. all reasonable opportunities to reduce overall flood risk have been considered and where possible taken;
- e. the integrity of existing flood defences is not adversely affected and any necessary flood mitigation and compensation measures have been agreed with relevant bodies and the Council; and
- f. the requirements relating to flood risk set out in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD have been applied.

Any reliance on emergency services to make a proposal safe will not be acceptable. Safety risks will be determined with reference to the Defra guidance on flood risk safety FD2320 or successor guidance, on the basis that development should be 'safe for all' for a 1:1000 annual probability flood event, for the lifetime of the development. , with appropriate climate change allowances.

Previously developed land in defended areas

Where a proposal for redevelopment of Previously Developed Land (as defined in the 'Glossary') which benefits from flood defences is deemed appropriate following application of the sequential test and exception test it will be supported where:

- g. breach modelling has been completed to determine the residual risk in all instances for new vulnerable development; and
- h. safe access and egress can be provided with approval from the emergency planning authority that there is no additional reliance on their services as a result of the development.

Managing flood water

Where a proposal is considered to be acceptable within the 1% annual probability flood extent (flood zone 3), including an allowance for climate change for the lifetime of the development, the development must not result in a loss of flood storage capacity, reduced flow performance, increase the rate of flooding onset or result in an unsustainable form of flood storage requiring on-going silt removal, maintenance or renewal.

Where a proposal would occupy functional flood plain (flood zone 3b), the developer must ensure that it does not impact upon the ability of the floodplain to store or convey water, and seek opportunities to provide floodplain betterment. Development will only be support where it results in no loss of floodplain performance within the undefended floodplain.

Where ground levels are proposed to be raised to bring the development out of the floodplain compensatory floodplain storage within areas that currently lie outside the floodplain must be provided to ensure that the total volume and performance of floodplain storage is not reduced or vulnerability to climate change impacts increased.

Site-specific flood risk assessments

On a site that is at risk of flooding from any form, where there are critical drainage problems or on sites of 1 hectare or more the proposal will only be supported where a site-specific flood risk assessment has been produced, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and risks involved, including consideration of the impact of climate change, and is agreed with relevant bodies. Such assessments will need to demonstrate that they comply with the requirements set out:

- i. in the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD or successor documents;
- j. by any applicable responsible authority, including but not limited to the Environment Agency and Cambridgeshire County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority; and
- k. by the Middle Level Commissioners or internal drainage boards, as may be applicable.

LP 6

Waste Water Management

Sewer Network

A proposal for major scale development that would:

- a. require a new connection to the sewer network;
- b. involve significant increases to flows entering the sewer network; or
- c. involve development of a site identified by the Huntingdonshire Stage 2 Detailed Water Cycle Study or updated, successor or equivalent documents, to have potentially limited sewer network capacity (Amber or Red assessment);

will only be supported where a sustainable foul/ used water strategy has been prepared and agreed with Anglian Water as the sewerage undertaker to establish whether any upgrades are necessary so that flows from the proposal can be accommodated. If upgrades are necessary the proposal will need to include an agreed plan for delivery, including phasing of development as necessary.

Water Treatment Capacity

A proposal for any scale of development will be supported if:

- d. Anglian Water Services do not raise concerns relating to the ability of waste water infrastructure to accommodate waste water flows from the proposal;
- e. the Environment Agency and Natural England or another responsible authority do not raise concerns that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive could be compromised; and
- f. the Middle Level Commissioners or other internal drainage board do not object on the basis of flood risk in the system they manage, as may be applicable.

To achieve these requirements for proposals that would involve waste water flows to Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) with constrained capacity, as currently identified in the Huntingdonshire Stage 2 Detailed Water Cycle Study, interim treatment measures are likely to be required until an acceptable permanent solution is put in place. Where temporary measures are not available or would be insufficient it may be necessary for development to be phased. If acceptable permanent solutions are not possible proposals will not be supported.

LP7 Spatial Planning Areas

Each Spatial Planning Area to which this policy applies is defined above.

Development Proposals on Unallocated Sites

A proposal for development on a site which is additional to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it fulfils the following requirements and is in accordance with other policies:

Residential Development

A proposal for housing development (class 'C3') or for a residential institution use (class 'C2') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement.

Business Development

A proposal for business development (class 'B') will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement. An appropriate location will include an Established Employment Area, defined in policy LP 19 'Established Employment Areas'; a town centre, defined in policy LP 22 'Town Centre Vitality and Viability' or the Alconbury Enterprise Zone.

Main Town Centre Uses

A proposal for a main town centre use, as defined in the 'Glossary', will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement. An appropriate location will be determined through the application of the sequential approach as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Outside a defined town centre a proposal including more than 600m² of net internal retail floorspace will need to be accompanied by a proportionate and locally appropriate impact assessment as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. A proposal will not be supported where it is likely to have a significant adverse impact.

Other uses

A proposal for a non-residential institutional use (class 'D1') or an assembly and leisure facility (class 'D2') other than those defined as a main town centre use will be supported where it is appropriately located within the built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement.

Mixed use development

A proposal which includes a mix of uses will be supported where each use accords with the applicable requirements detailed above.

Relationship of settlements within a Spatial Planning Area

A proposal will be supported where it will not undermine the role of the primary settlement within the Spatial Planning Area or adversely affect the relationship between the settlements of the Spatial Planning Area whether this is through its scale or other impacts.

LP 8

Key Service Centres

Each Key Service Centre to which this policy applies is defined above.

Development Proposals within the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on a site which is additional to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it is located within a built-up area of a Key Service Centre.

Development Proposals on Land well-related to the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.

LP 9

Small Settlements

Each Small Settlement to which this policy applies is defined above.

Development Proposals within the Built-up Area

A proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the:

- a. level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;
- b. opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;
- c. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

Development Proposals on Land well-related to the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.

LP 10

The Countryside

Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan.

All development in the countryside must:

- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i: avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii: avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
- b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and

c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

LP 11

Design Context

A proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, to help create distinctive, high quality and well-designed places. In order to achieve this a proposal will need to have applied the guidance contained in the Council's Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD (2007) or successor documents and applicable conservation area character statements. A proposal should also have had regard to relevant advice or guidance that promotes high quality design, details the quality or character of the area or describes how the area should develop in the future.

LP 24

Affordable Housing Provision

In order to assist in meeting the identified local need for additional affordable homes, a proposal which includes housing development will be required to provide a range of affordable housing types, sizes and tenures. These should be appropriate to meet the requirements of the local community taking into account the latest evidence from the Housing Register, the Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other local sources. The affordable housing provision may include specialist or supported housing where an identified need exists. A proposal will be supported where:

- a. it delivers a target of 40% affordable housing on a site where 11 homes or 1,001m² residential floorspace (gross internal area) or more are proposed(12);
- b. it provides approximately 70% of the new affordable housing units as social or affordable rented properties with the balance made up of other affordable tenures;
- c. affordable housing is dispersed across the development in small clusters of dwellings; and
- d. it ensures that the appearance of affordable housing units is externally indistinguishable from that of open market housing.

Where it can be demonstrated that the target is not viable due to specific site conditions or other material considerations affecting development of the site an alternative dwelling or tenure mix or a lower level of provision may be supported. Preference will be given to amending the tenure mix; only if this is still demonstrated not to be viable will consideration be given to reducing the affordable housing requirement. A development viability assessment may be required to support an alternative mix or level of affordable housing provision.

In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to accept off-site provision and/or commuted payments where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.

SI 1 St Ives West

54ha of land south of Houghton Road (A1123) to the west of St Ives, including land within the parish of Houghton and Wyton, is allocated for a mix of uses to comprise:

1. approximately 23ha of green space
2. approximately 400 homes
3. social and community facilities to meet needs arising from the development

Successful development of the site will require:

- a. completion of a detailed master planning exercise to be agreed with the Council
- b. design codes or conceptual appearance of development proposals
- c. phasing of development, including the provision of green space
- d. appropriate access via the Houghton Road/ Garner Drive junction and Knights Way
- e. assessment of the surrounding road network and measures to address identified inadequacies that would come about as a consequence of development of this site
- f. a sustainable transport network for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles across the site to be integrated with the wider network
- g. a landscape scheme design recognising vistas, boundaries and the surrounding green infrastructure network, to be particularly focused on restoring the tree lined approach on the south side of the A1123 and maintaining a sense of separation between developments at Houghton Grange and The Spires
- h. social and community facilities appropriate to the scale of development
- i. sustainable drainage systems
- j. enhancement and provision for habitats in accordance with an ecological strategy
- k. production of a management plan for all areas of green space
- l. safeguarding and enhancing the character, appearance and setting of the conservation areas and the grade II listed Houghton Grange and the two lodges

Once developed, parts of this site that comply with the 'Built-up Areas definition' will form part of the built-up areas of St Ives or Houghton and Wyton as appropriate and considered as part of such for the purposes of determining planning applications.

SI 2 St Ives Football Club

1.4ha of land at St Ives Football Club is allocated for development of approximately 30 homes.

Successful development of the site will require:

- a. alternative, improved provision of the recreational facility
- b. provision of appropriate access
- c. substantial landscaping on the western boundaries

SI 3 Giffords Farm St Ives

5.6ha of land at Giffords Farm, east of Somersham Road (B1040) is allocated for employment development to comprise any class 'B' uses except 'B1a' offices and 'B8' storage and distribution.

Successful development of the site will require:

- a. detailed flood risk assessment and flood mitigation works as appropriate
- b. suitable access