

# 4.4 Town Centre Support

## Outcome:

Economical, viable and vibrant town centres

## Objectives:

- Increase the number of people using town centres
- Encourage residents and businesses to buy local produce and services
- Increase the retail offer and mix
- Improve the evening economy
- Enhance town centre environments



4.4.1 Huntingdonshire has four market towns; Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey. They are the service centres for the district, acting as hubs and links for their surrounding villages and smaller settlements. Within Cambridgeshire, St Neots is the largest town with a population of almost 30,000 people and, on a sub-regional level Huntingdon is an important administrative centre with the headquarters of the Fire Service, Police, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and the District Council all located in the town.

4.4.2 The towns' distinctiveness lies in their individual characteristics, and the balance of elements for developing their local economies will vary from town to town. However, common to them all is need for sustainable growth, with vibrant town centres meeting the needs of their residents, businesses and visitors. Growth can be better guided by adopting a pro-active approach to marketing each of the towns, and a selective approach used when encouraging preferred new businesses to complement those already established in the town.



4.4.3 This strategy acknowledges the regional requirements not only for delivering the number of homes needed, but matching it with the transport, jobs, social and environmental infrastructure and services to make this growth sustainable. Delivery will rest with a number of agencies and businesses; developing and supporting the right partnerships will ensure engagement with all stakeholders and delivering local interventions for local needs.

4.4.4 Each town has its own natural and built heritage, including rivers, landscapes, architecture, public space and green corridors. The protection, conservation and enhancement of these assets are vital to maintaining their intrinsic value and increasing their sustainable economic contribution to the economy.

4.4.5 Developing facilities for business visitors and residents will be key to building our town centres' vibrancy and growth.

4.4.6 Greater community engagement will strengthen the sense of ownership and civic pride, and is the foundation of high quality sustainable development.