



Local Development Framework

**Huntingdon West Area Action Plan: Examination**  
**Supplement to the Final SA**



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## 1 Summary of Likely Effects

- 1.1 Changes to four policies are proposed following the examination hearings on the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. These four policies are considered in this supplement which should be read in conjunction with the Final Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.2 The conclusions of the appraisals are that the changes are not significant in terms of sustainability.

### Policy HW4

- 1.3 Policy HW4 has been amended primarily to include figures for the expected amount of retail and employment development. These figures aid certainty for developers. Policy HW4, as at the Proposed Submission stage, still promotes the development of the George St / Ermine St area as a particularly sustainable brownfield location. The conclusion of the appraisal is the same as for the Final SA. There is a changed commentary regarding efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy, which reflects that there is policy provision to allow an appropriate level of additional development in this area and to ensure that plans for Chequers Court will not be jeopardised by any proposals for retail development in this area.

### Policy HW5

- 1.4 Policy HW5 has been amended primarily to delete reference to possible redevelopment on parts of the hospital site. This aids certainty as there are no definitive proposals. The conclusion of the appraisal is the same as for the Final SA as it was already the case at that time that there were no proposals to allocate the land. There is a change to the commentary to reflect this.

### Policy HW9

- 1.5 Policy HW9 has been amended deleting its first three parts which referred to sustainability for example in relation to building practices and renewable energy. These matters are effectively covered by the Core Strategy and it is the Council's intention that they will be covered by the Development Management DPD for the whole district. That DPD has been published including specific policies in this regard. The conclusion of the appraisal is the same as the Final SA. The commentary has been changed to include reference to these other documents in respect of some of the SA objectives.

### Policy HW11

- 1.6 Policy HW11 identifies fewer key phasing requirements than previously. However, as with the Final SA, the conclusion of the appraisal is that whatever mechanisms there are to phase development there is either no direct relationship to sustainability objectives or the effects are neutral.

# 2 Appraisal of Changes to Policy HW4

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## 2 Appraisal of Changes to Policy HW4

### Policy HW 4

Development sites in the George St/ Ermine St area of approx 6ha will be redeveloped according to a masterplan using the concepts set out in Map 6e 'George Street/ Ermine Street - Land Uses' including provision for the following mixed uses:

- a. Retail of approximately 5,350m<sup>2</sup><sup>(1)</sup> that is complementary to the continuing vitality and viability of the town centre and does not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment at Chequers Court;
- b. Approximately 170 to 230 homes (including affordable housing);
- c. Open space;
- d. Employment of approximately 0.57ha<sup>(2)</sup>, such as office (B1a), or alternative town centre uses such as live/work units, restaurants, a hotel and leisure facilities;
- e. An additional public car park to serve the need for long stays in the town centre; and
- f. Related servicing, pedestrian and cycle links, cycle and car parking.

### Changes from Proposed Submission

- 2.1** Policy HW4 is amended to include figures for the expected amount of retail and employment development along with footnotes dealing with proposals in excess of these figures.

### Significance of Changes

- 2.2** The retail figure, which has been arrived at based upon evidence of the amount of additional retailing required in this area compared to the Chequers Court area in the town centre, provides a greater degree of certainty as to how much retail development there will be.
- 2.3** In conjunction with the parts of the policy which indicate that any retail should be complementary to the continuing vitality and viability of the town centre, and not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment at Chequers Court, which are unchanged, the policy protects the town centre.
- 2.4** The employment land figure supports the Core Strategy identification of the Huntingdon West area as an important location for employment and a key part of the achieving the Low Carbon Future model, advocated in the Employment Land Review, which is central to the employment land strategy in policy CS 7. It provides a greater degree of certainty as to how much employment development there will be.
- 2.5** The supporting text explains that recent evidence has quantified a need for almost 20,000 square metres of additional retail floorspace in Huntingdon. Of this, approximately one quarter is allowed for in the AAP area having regard to the capacity within the town centre (specifically in the Chequers Court area). There is, however, the potential that development at Chequers Court may not amount to that currently predicted, which could lead to the provision of additional retail space in the George St/Ermine St area.

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- 1 This figure is an approximate net internal floor area and has been arrived at from a robust residual assessment based upon the submissions made by the Council and principal landowners in the Chequers Court area and evidence of need from the Huntingdonshire Retail Development Advice (Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of HDC, 2010). Any retail development beyond this figure would need to satisfy the policy tests in CS 8 of the Core Strategy, HW 4 of the AAP and demonstrate its acceptability in transport terms.
- 2 Any employment development beyond this figure would need to satisfy the policy tests in CS7 of the Core Strategy, HW4 of the AAP and demonstrate its acceptability in transport terms.

## Commentary in Relation to SA Objectives

- 2.6** Objective 18 is to 'improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy'. The commentary in the final sustainability appraisal advises of a positive effect in that the policy seeks to ensure that the local economy is not adversely affected by stating that retail must be complementary to the vitality and viability of the existing town centre and not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment at Chequers Court.
- 2.7** Policy HW4 now identifies the approximate amount of further retail development, based on the expected need for Huntingdon as a whole minus the amount proposed for development at Chequers Court. Also included is a figure for employment land. These figures give greater certainty to the quantum of development that is expected to take place.
- 2.8** A change to the commentary is required as follows: 'The policy will help to improve the local economy as additional development will be attracted to Huntingdon. Mixed use development, including retail, will help to make Huntingdon a more attractive place to live, shop and work. The inclusion of figures for the amount of retail and employment development envisaged, based on evidence of need, will ensure that an appropriate level of economic development results in relation to the existing town centre. Plans for Chequers Court must be taken into account, and retail proposals must not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment in that part of the town centre. The specific type of retail development must be complementary to the town centre, and reference to proposals reflecting development in the town centre is made in order to achieve this'.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 2.9** Only one part of the commentary in the Final SA requires change, and it is not necessary to change the impact assessment for this Objective 18, which is positive. As a result the change is not considered significant in terms of sustainability. Consequently there are no recommendations for further change.

# 3 Appraisal of Changes to HW5

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## 3 Appraisal of Changes to HW5

### Policy HW 5

Sites west of the railway and in the Hinchingsbrooke area will be developed in accordance with a masterplan using the concepts in Map 7d 'Hinchingsbrooke Community Campus - Land Use Proposals' for the following uses:

- a. 1.1ha of land between the site of the proposed Huntingdonshire Regional College and Views Common will be redeveloped for office uses (B1a).
- b. 1.9ha of land west of the Railway will be redeveloped for office uses (B1a). Noise mitigation measures will be incorporated recognising the location adjacent to the railway line.
- c. Land that currently has permission for the relocation of Huntingdonshire Regional College and the permission for the Water Tower conversion will be considered for employment uses (B1a and/or B1b) or non-residential institutional uses (D1) should alternative uses be sought instead of implementing these permissions.

Proposals must be set in landscaped grounds that reflect the context provided by Views Common, the historic parkland setting of Hinchingsbrooke House and the aims of enhancing the 'community campus' identity.

### Changes from Proposed Submission

- 3.1** Policy HW5 is amended to delete item 'd' concerned with the hospital site. This means that there will no longer be a policy to guide consideration of proposals for redevelopment at the hospital site. There is also a minor amendment to item 'c' to ensure that the policy will be taken into account in any circumstances of alternative uses being sought, not just following a lapse of the extant consents.

### Significance of Changes

- 3.2** This policy was amended for the Proposed Submission stage so that it did not identify development of land at the hospital as had been proposed in the Preferred Approach. This change reflected consultation with hospital management who had made it clear that there were no definitive plans for parts of the Hospital to become surplus to requirements. That change was in part considered significant because it meant that there was no longer provision for additional housing in the Hinchingsbrooke area. The policy as a whole was considered more sustainable as it better dealt with landscape and design issues.
- 3.3** The proposed changes now entirely delete reference to the hospital from the policy although supporting text remains to indicate the position with the hospital. The policy is simplified in that there is no longer any implication that the land should be allocated. It is noted that the other areas identified on the policy are all to be shown as allocations following the hearings.

### Commentary in Relation to SA Objectives

- 3.4** Objective 14 is to 'improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities (including health and education)'. The commentary in the final sustainability appraisal indicates an uncertain effect in that mention is made in the policy of the potential for redevelopment on the hospital site but only if it is not required for hospital use.
- 3.5** The proposed changes do not result in any changed assessment on this point as there is still uncertainty about the future of the hospital site. A change to the commentary is required as follows: 'The policy supports improving services and facilities through additional employment uses. Alternative non-residential uses will also help improve the range of services available. The policy envisages development which

# Appraisal of Changes to HW5 3

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enhances the community campus identity of the area which is focussed on health and education. However, it is recognised that the planned Huntingdonshire Regional College may not go ahead and the Hospital is being restructured at present which may lead to changes in the provision of these services’.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 3.6** Only one part of the commentary in the Final SA requires change, and it is not necessary to change the uncertain impact assessment for this Objective 14. As a result the change is not considered significant in terms of sustainability. Consequently there are no recommendations for further change.

# 4 Appraisal of Changes to HW9

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## 4 Appraisal of Changes to HW9

### Policy HW 9

In areas allocated for development, proposals must demonstrate a high standard of design and show how an attractive environment has been created. Proposals must also provide evidence as to how the principles contained within the relevant design guidance documents and plans contained in this document have been adhered to, and in particular how any proposal has:

1. Protected the area's heritage by having regard to Conservation Area status and the setting of any listed buildings
2. Created a sense of coherence and distinctiveness to the area
3. Respected the topography and scale of neighbouring developments
4. Used appropriate materials
5. Retained existing mature trees and promoted biodiversity
6. Utilised Sustainable Drainage techniques
7. Enabled ease of movement through the area, particularly by walking and cycling

### Changes from Proposed Submission

- 4.1** Policy HW9 is amended to delete its first three items which referred to sustainable principles; the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM; and renewable energy.

### Significance of Changes

- 4.2** These three parts of Policy HW9 were suggested for deletion by the Council following queries raised by the Inspector prior to the hearing sessions. While Item 1 of the policy was intended to tie back to the vision of the AAP, it is the Council's view that this part of the policy did not particularly contribute to local policy as it is effectively covered in Core Strategy policy CS 1. Items 2 and 3 were intended to elaborate on Core Strategy Policy CS 1, but will be more effectively covered (subject to examination) by policy C1 in the published Development Management DPD.

### Commentary in Relation to SA Objectives

- 4.3** Objective 5 is 'creation of an attractive environment through high quality design and use of sustainable construction methods'. A positive impact assessment was given for this, with reference in the commentary to the first and second items of the policy. There is no need to change the impact assessment but change to the commentary is required as follows: 'The creation of an attractive environment and the need to demonstrate a high standard of design is required in the first part of the policy. While there is no specific reference to sustainable construction methods, it is intended that this will be covered by Policy C1 of the Development Management DPD'.
- 4.4** Objective 10 is 'maximise the use of renewable energy sources and technologies'. Reference was made to the third part of the policy in the commentary and there was a positive impact assessment. There is no need to change the impact assessment but a change to the commentary is required as follows: 'There is no specific reference to renewable energy sources and technologies but it is intended that this will be covered by Policies C1 and C2 of the Development Management DPD. It is part of the vision for Huntingdon West that there will be buildings designed to showcase emerging technologies in renewable energy production.'

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.5** Two parts of the commentary in the Final SA require change, but it is not necessary to change the impact assessments. As a result the changes are not considered significant in terms of sustainability. Consequently there are no recommendations for further change.

# 5 Appraisal of Changes to HW11

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## 5 Appraisal of Changes to HW11

### Policy HW 11

The timing of the development in the George St/ Ermine St area will be determined by the completion of the link road, the demolition of redundant buildings and treatment of contamination.

Retail development in the George St/ Ermine St area will be dependent on proposals being complementary to the plans for the town centre in terms of the mix of retail activity and that the selected sites are appropriate in urban design terms and can demonstrate that they are well connected to the town centre.

Where proposed in advance of completion, a transport assessment will be required to demonstrate that there will be 'minimal impact' or 'nil detriment' to traffic flows on the A14.

Further detail on phasing is set out in Appendix 2 'Potential Phasing'.

### Changes from Proposed Submission

- 5.1** Policy HW11 is amended to delete reference to the A14 and to additional transport measures in the Hinchingsbrooke area. In addition the requirement for a sequential analysis has been deleted in favour of tests relating to identifying the mix of retail activity, urban design and connectivity to the town centre.

### Significance of Changes

- 5.2** This policy is simplified to indicate that the factors influencing the phasing and implementation of the AAP are principally the completion of the West of Town Centre Link Road and, in the case of retail development, plans for the town centre.

### Commentary in Relation to SA Objectives

- 5.3** As with the Final SA, the assessment indicates that how development is phased either does not have any direct relationship to sustainability objectives or the effects are neutral. No change to the commentary is required.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.4** There are no changes to the Final SA as a result of the changes to HW11.