

Huntingdonshire District Council

Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023



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Foreword

Huntingdonshire: 'Going for Growth'

Huntingdonshire is a great place to live, work and invest. By 2023 it will be one of the best places to live in England. Huntingdonshire will 'go for growth'.



Jason Ablewhite
Executive Leader
Huntingdonshire District Council

I look forward to working with our partners, residents and business community to make this District an exemplary place to live, work and to invest. Together, let's 'go for growth!'

In the last 10 years, 8,000 new jobs have been created in Huntingdonshire across a range of different industries. The house building industry remains healthy, with more homes being built in Huntingdonshire than in all other areas in Cambridgeshire. New business accommodation has also been built, in the context of a very difficult development market.

Our well educated workforce lives and works locally and also travels further afield to Cambridge, Peterborough and London.

Our strong, stable economy has rallied the recession. However, we know we have more work to do. We want Huntingdonshire to be one of the most attractive places to live, work and invest in the South East of England and to do that we need a vision for economic growth.

We have worked hard throughout 2012 to prepare our plan, which sets out our vision:

"By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live, work and invest in England."

This Economic Growth Plan is about ambition. It is about working to a common goal and a shared purpose. Huntingdonshire has a clear plan for the future. I am pleased to present the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan.

A strong, growing economy, which is also stable is needed to achieve our vision. The Huntingdonshire economy must be supported by skilled people, strong sectors, vibrant service centres and strategic development sites, which together will support the growth and development of the economy in the next decade and beyond.

The only way we can achieve our vision is by working together. I look forward to working with our partners, residents and business community to make this District an exemplary place to live, work and to invest. Together, let's 'go for growth!'

July 2013

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The UK economy has experienced a deep, long recession. The fabric of the UK economy has changed as a result. There are fewer private sector investors in the marketplace and less public money available to stimulate economic growth. The government's austerity programme has reduced the amount of public funding available for economic development and the result is an increasingly competitive global market.

However, Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire is:

- An attractive place to live, with a strong and relatively affordable housing market;
- Well connected, with excellent road and rail links and significant plans for improving highways and rail infrastructure further;
- Economically stable, with a strong small business sector and many well established companies;
- Home to a well educated, highly skilled population, with a high proportion of residents in managerial and professional occupations;
- Well placed to create new jobs and deliver economic growth, with key growth opportunities, such as Alconbury Weald and new development continuing apace in strategic locations such as St Neots; and
- Continuing to deliver housing growth ahead of schedule.

Huntingdonshire has a number of strategic opportunities that can facilitate economic growth. However, there are a number of structural challenges within the economy that must be resolved if Huntingdonshire is to compete for and win investment, attract and retain talent and create the number of new jobs that economic forecasts suggest is possible.

These challenges include:

1. People. The proportion of the population who are of working age in Huntingdonshire is reducing.
2. Place. Huntingdonshire has planned a number of key strategic developments. However, development will not just 'happen'. A targeted approach, which differentiates the Huntingdonshire 'offer' is needed.
3. Business. There is a polarisation in the business base of Huntingdonshire and a tendency towards more traditional industry sectors.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been written in response to the strengths and challenges of Huntingdonshire's economy. It has been written at a time of great economic uncertainty. However, the evidence gathered has demonstrated that it is clear that Huntingdonshire, with the right strategy in place, shows the potential to adapt successfully to the changes in the UK economy and build its profile and competitive position, in order to compete for investment, talent and jobs.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is 'going for growth'. The Plan aims to deliver economic growth by focusing on achieving a set of key ambitions, the '2023 Objectives':

1. To create a flexible and resilient workforce.
2. To make Huntingdonshire a location of choice.
3. To foster a culture of enterprise.

Delivery

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will deliver its strategy over the next 10 years via the following framework themes:

- People;
- Place; and
- Business.



Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Potential

Huntingdonshire: 'The People'

Huntingdonshire is the largest District by population in Cambridgeshire. New Census data suggests that the population increased by an additional 1,300 more than estimated in the East of England Forecasting Model (the forecasting model for the East of England, which projects economic, demographic and housing trends). This suggests that future population growth may also exceed expectations. If this faster than anticipated population growth continues, it could lead to improved economic outcomes for Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire's population is skilled and highly motivated. The proportion of the population with higher level qualifications is high and the unemployment rate is lower than in many other Districts in Cambridgeshire.

Huntingdonshire residents have benefited from increasingly higher salaries in recent years, with the salaries of people who both live and work in Huntingdonshire increasing to closer match those of Cambridge City.

Huntingdonshire residents are entrepreneurial and a significant proportion of the population is self employed. Residents also have excellent qualifications and many are employed in managerial and professional occupations.

Many Huntingdonshire residents work within the District, a substantial number also travel to well paid jobs in Cambridge City and many travel further afield to work in London. The planned new rail improvements will decrease the travel time to London further and key strategic development areas such as Huntingdon West, St Neots and Alconbury Weald will benefit as a result.

The recession caused the Huntingdonshire economy to contract and unemployment levels did rise as a result. However, the economy of Huntingdonshire has returned to pre-recession levels very quickly, which shows that the population and local economy are resilient and able to withstand economic shocks.

Huntingdonshire's population is well placed to contribute to and benefit from future economic growth. The population of strategic development areas such as St Neots, is already increasing. The framework for economic growth is set to deliver substantial new development over the next 10 years.

However, there are key issues that must be addressed if Huntingdonshire's population is to benefit from the potential for economic growth and if it is to compete in the ever increasingly competitive environment of Cambridgeshire.

The primary issue is that the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. The population is ageing, economic activity rates are declining and recent figures suggest better qualified residents may be moving out of the District.

For this reason, it is important that there is a significant boost in new housing development. Housing appropriate to attract those with higher level skills who are economically active is important for the future prosperity of the district, alongside other initiatives to increase the provision of affordable housing as identified in the strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Meanwhile there are some areas of deprivation within the District which are experiencing increasing issues with barriers to employment, accessing public services and housing. It is important that residents within less affluent areas as well as residents of more rural areas, are able to participate equitably in the economy and that they are able to share the benefits of economic growth.

Timing is critical. It is imperative that these issues are addressed early through the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan. This is so the Huntingdonshire economy can achieve its potential and that, most importantly, the benefits of economic growth can be spread across the District fairly and equally for all residents, including rural areas.



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Huntingdonshire: 'The Place'

Huntingdonshire is strategically located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area. It is the largest district by area within Cambridgeshire and is well connected by road and rail to the rest of the UK.

The economy of Huntingdonshire is closely linked to Cambridgeshire and in terms of out-commuting, the District looks particularly to Cambridge and Peterborough. The recently completed guided bus-way to Cambridge has improved access through key Cambridgeshire employment corridors. With regards to rail links, Huntingdon and St Neots are currently connected with London Kings Cross by a frequent 50 minute rail service.

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live, featuring a network of market towns, including Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey and key natural assets, including the river, the Great Ouse. Huntingdon is the primary service centre and an important employment area. However, St Neots is the largest centre by population in the District and is also home to an established business base, with a number of major employers and a specialism in manufacturing.

The housing market in Huntingdonshire is relatively affordable and buoyant and has remained so throughout the recession. There are established business parks in Huntingdonshire, with Huntingdon and St Neots hosting the bulk of the commercial accommodation in the District.

Huntingdonshire 'the place' will look very different in years to come. Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns and their environs are set to grow, with ambitious plans over the next 20 years to build new homes and create new job opportunities.

Development is already underway in areas such as St Neots. It has also commenced at Alconbury Weald where the key growth catalyst is to create a new Enterprise Campus.

Although there is considerable growth potential in Huntingdonshire, it is by no means a given that this growth will occur. This Economic Growth Plan recognises the economic potential of Huntingdonshire and provides the framework for Huntingdonshire to develop as a location of choice, marketing itself as an investment location and selling its proposition to the investment marketplace.



It is critically important that Huntingdonshire leverages its strategic location to develop closer links with partners across the sub region. Cambridge City is a globally recognised leader in the knowledge economy, with high value sectors contributing substantially to the local economy. The potential for further growth is clear and Huntingdonshire's proximity to this key growth pole is seen as a major opportunity to develop complementary sector specialisms, supply chains and business accommodation.

Critical infrastructure is also required to unlock growth. Road and rail improvements must be delivered and perhaps most importantly, digital connectivity must be maximised if the District is to achieve its full potential and become a destination of choice to live, work, visit and to invest.

The potential for further growth is clear and Huntingdonshire's proximity to this key growth pole is seen as a major opportunity to develop complementary sector specialisms, supply chains and business accommodation.

Huntingdonshire: 'The Business'

Huntingdonshire has a strong, stable, established business base. Once established, businesses survive well and many businesses are aged 5 years and over. There are a number of key employers in Huntingdonshire, which employ upwards of 200 people. This includes Huntingdon Life Sciences, which is a global player in the life science sector, employing highly skilled people and supporting an established supply chain base.

The majority of the business base of Huntingdonshire consists of small to medium enterprises (SME), a high proportion of which employ between 0 and 4 people. Many of these businesses are owned by residents working in skilled trades occupations.

The business base of Huntingdonshire was hit by the recession, with unemployment increasing early on in the recessionary cycle. This suggests that the impact was felt by the private sector, rather than by losses in the public sector, which came later. The quick recovery of the economy to pre recession levels points to a resilience within the private sector and therefore the business base of Huntingdonshire.

Although the manufacturing sector has contracted in recent years, in line with national trends, it remains important to the Huntingdonshire economy and the latest figures available suggest that 13.7% of employment in the District remains geared towards manufacturing. However, Huntingdonshire's business base is diversifying, with the number of business units operating in the professional and scientific sector increasing considerably in recent years, as well as an increase in employment in the financial and professional services sector.

St Neots is home to a well established network of businesses, many of which employ substantial numbers and are focused on the manufacturing sector or are part of well established supply chains.

There is a key opportunity for these businesses to explore new markets, develop trade and investment capability, invest in R&D and continue to advance working practices to adapt to an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Alconbury Enterprise Campus, one of the Government's new 'breed' of Enterprise Zones, is a strategic development site that will act as a key investment

proposition for the next 2 decades. It is a vast site, in one ownership, with the potential to act as an economic growth catalyst bringing growth benefits across the District, both directly and indirectly through the 'trickle down' effect. The Enterprise Campus has the capacity to accommodate 8,000 new jobs. It could also have an added value effect of creating new jobs throughout the District. If the new jobs accommodated on the Enterprise Campus are focused in target sectors, there is the potential to generate additional employment of 4,600 elsewhere in Huntingdonshire. This is a total of 12,600 jobs over and above the East of England Forecasting Model baseline.

It is a positive sign that the first occupier on the Enterprise Campus is a 'clean tech' company, an advanced, high value business in a growing sector. There is clear potential for growing businesses at Alconbury Weald, bringing in new investment and to benefit from the proximity to the major knowledge and investment hub of Cambridge.





Although the Huntingdonshire economy recovered quickly from recession and there are clearly genuine economic growth opportunities, to ensure resilience in the future and to grow the business base of the District, a number of areas must be addressed in order to capitalise on future economic growth.

These include:

- Building on business strengths. Small businesses must be supported to grow and established businesses must be encouraged to invest in technology, processes and research and development;
- Prioritising industry sectors. The sector profile of Huntingdonshire must be diversified to include a greater range of businesses that can provide additional ‘value’ to the economy. Building closer links with Cambridge City and exploring new, high value sectors, including green technology and renewables is a key opportunity for accelerated growth; and
- Delivering economic growth. Ensuring that critical infrastructure is delivered to support economic growth, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements, superfast broadband and site specific infrastructure, such as at Alconbury Enterprise Campus.

There is clear potential for growing businesses at Alconbury Weald, bringing in new investment and to benefit from the proximity to the major knowledge and investment hub of Cambridge.



The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council and has been informed by the needs and aspirations of local businesses, residents and key public sector partners, including the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership. This strategy is owned by Huntingdonshire District Council and sets out how the Vision for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth' will be achieved.

The Vision

The Vision for the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is that:

'By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live, work and invest in England.'

The Vision for Huntingdonshire is simple. Achieving the vision will be challenging. It will require all partners to work together, across boundaries, in order to ensure that Huntingdonshire realises its growth potential.

The Evidence Base

This Economic Growth Plan has been informed by a Local Economic Assessment (LEA) for Huntingdonshire District, which presents an analysis of:

- The structure of the local economy;
- The historic and future predicted trends in key sectors of the economy; and
- The implications of these trends on the people and businesses that interact within the local economy.

This Economic Growth Plan has also contributed to the preparation of a new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire; the new Development Planning Document for the District.

The Guiding Principles

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable. The guiding principles are as follows:

- The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will play to the strengths of the District and focus on its key assets;
- The approach of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is open and non-protectionist. Closer links with the Cambridge economy and working in partnership across the County are key growth opportunities; and
- The Huntingdonshire 'offer' will complement other areas, however its offer will also be distinctive and will raise the profile of the District as an investment location.



Achieving the Vision

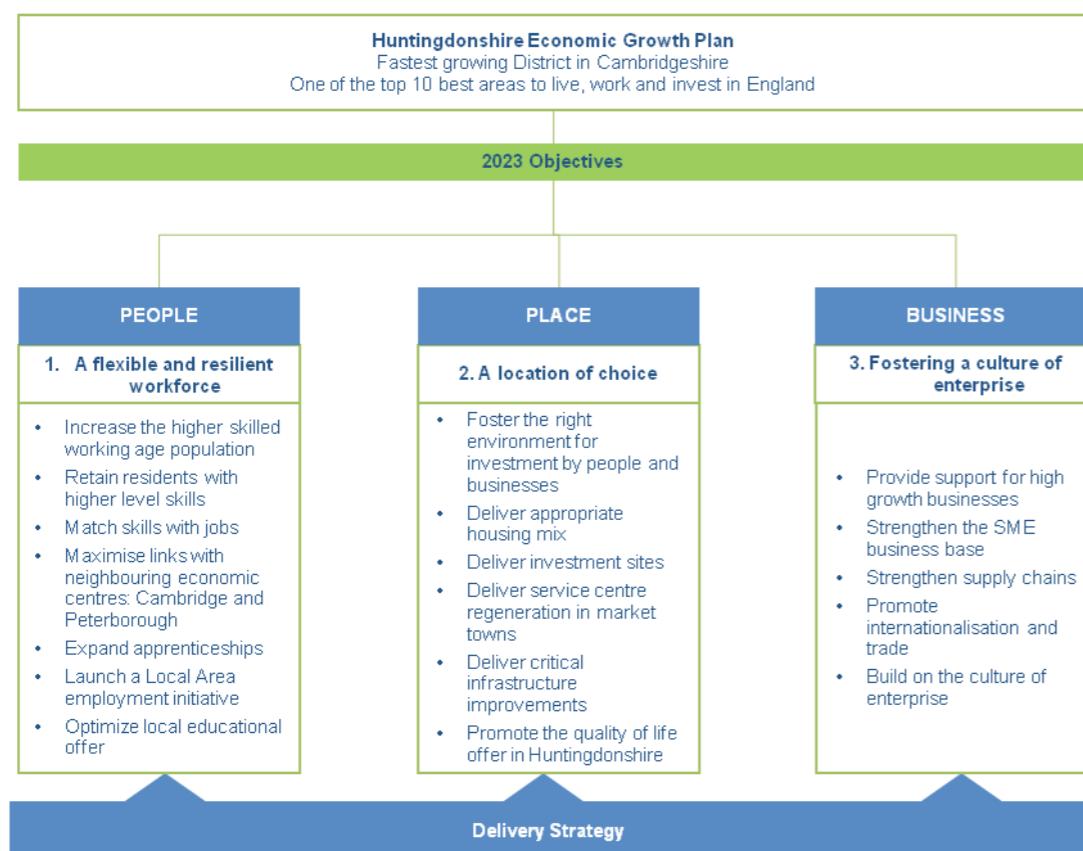
In order to unlock the true potential of Huntingdonshire's 'going for growth' vision, the District will achieve three key '2023 Objectives':

2023 Objectives
1. We will build a flexible and resilient workforce, by attracting skilled, working people into Huntingdonshire to meet the needs of business and by supporting all existing Huntingdonshire communities so that they can benefit from economic growth.
2. Huntingdonshire will be a location of choice. By fostering the right environment for investment, by people and business, Huntingdonshire will take its place in the top 10 best places to live, work and invest in England by 2023.
3. We will foster a culture of enterprise, by supporting the existing business base, encouraging investment from businesses in high value sectors into the District and by encouraging entrepreneurship at an early age.

Delivery of these three key '2023 Objectives' will be achieved through a partnership approach to investment and will be underpinned by a detailed delivery strategy.

Achieving the 2023 Objectives

The following diagram sets out the components of each of the '2023 Objectives':



Delivery

Making this Economic Growth Plan a success and delivering the 2023 Objectives will require all partners to work together. This strategy will be delivered under the umbrella of three framework themes:

- People. Partnerships working on this theme will focus on understanding and responding to the development of the workforce;
- Place. A co-ordinated inward investment strategy, aiming to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire, deliver strategic development and attract and retain investment in the District, thereby creating new, sustainable jobs; and
- Business. A network of businesses, and partners focused on growing the existing business base in the District and helping to make it more competitive.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is not new in Huntingdonshire. It is a well established practice and the framework for delivering this Economic Growth Plan will build upon and strengthen existing relationships across the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership. These partnerships will include, inter alia:

- Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership;
- Education providers;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Huntingdonshire Manufacturing Association;
- Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Greater Cambridge and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- Private sector partners and their representative groups.



2023 Objective - People: A Flexible and Resilient Workforce

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire's population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire and is projected to grow to 209,000 by 2036. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive. The unemployment rate and the proportion of the population claiming benefits is lower in Huntingdonshire than the UK average. The way that the economy recovered from recession was driven by an increase in productivity, which shows positive signs in respect of the productivity levels of the local labour force.

However, the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. This strategy seeks to address the contraction in the workforce by implementing a set of projects that will encourage new people to live in Huntingdonshire, as well as connecting people who live in Huntingdonshire who are not economically active with the benefits of economic growth and new job opportunities.

Creating a Flexible and Resilient Workforce

This is the first key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan. The interventions set out in the following table help to fulfil this fundamental requirement and also act as ways of differentiating Huntingdonshire and producing opportunities to accelerate economic growth.

The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
People: A Flexible and Resilient Workforce	Increase the working age population in Huntingdonshire by attracting new people to live in the District.
	Retain residents with higher level skills, in order to maintain the excellent skills levels of the workforce.
	Work with schools and employers to ensure that the future skills needs of the Huntingdonshire economy are met and that local people can benefit from opportunities.
	Maximise links with the Cambridge economy and with other GCGP districts, in order to encourage further up skilling of the workforce and to share the benefits of economic growth.
	Launch a Local Area Initiative, to create a better connection between employment opportunities and residents in areas of deprivation and high unemployment.

Huntingdonshire's population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive.



The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce in Huntingdonshire will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Increase the working age population	Prioritise the delivery of new homes, including new housing development at Alconbury Enterprise Zone, with a priority placed on quality family homes, in order to attract new working families to live in Huntingdonshire.	Place
	Deliver Alconbury Enterprise Zone in a 'high growth' scenario, accommodating up to 8,000 additional jobs in target sectors, with the potential to create an additional 4,600 jobs elsewhere in Huntingdonshire, in order to accelerate economic growth and bring investment across the District.	Place
	Deliver proposed development in Huntingdon West, St Neots and St Ives and support the regeneration of these key service centres, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide services to a growing population.	Place
	Deliver critical infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the A14, planned rail improvements and super fast broadband, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide the infrastructure to support a growing population.	Place
	Launch a marketing programme, in order to attract high-skilled, working families to relocate to Huntingdonshire.	Place
Retain residents with higher level skills	Develop university-level qualification capability in Huntingdonshire, with the aim of establishing a partnership between an already established university and a local education provider, in order to encourage people to study in Huntingdonshire. This will retain young people of university age in the District to study and provide local opportunities for mature students to study locally.	People
	Launch Huntingdonshire alumni network, a virtual network of people originating from Huntingdonshire, who can work together with partners promote the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.	Business
	Prioritise high value sectors for investment in Huntingdonshire, particularly advanced manufacturing, chemicals, health and care and green technologies, in order to provide high value employment opportunities for a skilled workforce.	Place
	Promote innovation and R&D within the existing business base, with a particular focus on the manufacturing sector, in order to increase the productivity of the sector and support its competitiveness.	Business
Match skills with jobs	Identify and promote the skills needs of the current and future business base, by working with schools, employers and private sector recruitment agencies, in order to proactively develop the labour market in Huntingdonshire.	Business
	Develop a District-wide approach to early stage careers advice and apprenticeships, in order to prepare young people for the labour market, matching skills with future jobs within the business base and thereby encouraging young people to stay in the District as they reach working age.	People
	Develop 14-19 capability and vocational training.	People
Maximise links with Cambridge	Work closely with Cambridge University, particularly in respect of R&D and spin-outs, to encourage mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas and to potentially provide more affordable accommodation at Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus for spin-out companies.	Place
	Promote the studying of science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) subjects at school, so as to encourage qualifications in subjects that will lead to employment in high value sectors.	People
	Work closely with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce, in order to grow links between the business base in Huntingdonshire and Cambridge, potentially identifying opportunities to grow supply chains and facilitate two way investment.	Business
Launch a Local Area Employment Initiative	Explore the opportunities for community budgeting in deprived areas, so as to join together support for employment and skills development in areas of high unemployment, to create a neighbourhood 'offer', in order to connect local people better with employment opportunities.	People
	Adopt a community organising approach for Huntingdonshire, particularly in areas of high deprivation, in order to empower local communities and nurture community leaders.	People

2023 Objective - Place: Huntingdonshire - a Location of Choice



The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live. Well connected to the rest of Cambridgeshire, London and the rest of the UK and home to many market towns, it also remains a relatively affordable location, particularly when compared with Cambridge City.

The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. However, the profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

Making Huntingdonshire a Location of Choice

This Economic Growth Plan seeks to promote Huntingdonshire in order to deliver the vision and to ensure that in 2023, Huntingdonshire is one of the top 10 places to live, work and invest in England.

This is the second key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan. Delivering this objective will transform the way that Huntingdonshire looks and is viewed by potential investors, as well as those looking to move into the District. It will also provide the platform to accommodate future economic growth potential, as well as putting steps in place so that the 'offer' of Huntingdonshire is communicated to potential residents, investors and visitors on a global scale.

The 2023 Place Objective: to make Huntingdonshire a location of choice will focus on the following key areas:

The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. The profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Place: a Destination of Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster the right environment for investment by delivering strategic development in Huntingdonshire, making a success of Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus and improving key service centres in market towns. Unlock economic growth potential by delivering critical infrastructure to support the economic growth potential of Huntingdonshire, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements and digital connectivity, in the form of superfast broadband. Improve and promote the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest, by promoting the attractiveness of the District as an investment location to key partners, potential investors and residents looking to relocate.



The 2023 Place Objective: Huntingdonshire – a location of choice will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Foster the right environment for investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus as a key inward investment location and employment driver. Adopt a target sector model, with the aim of contributing an additional 8,000 new jobs in target sectors as a result of the delivery of the Enterprise Campus. Deliver new mixed use development, including new homes, business accommodation, retail and leisure space, new strategic open space and other recreation opportunities in defined spatial planning areas, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (Huntingdon, West Brampton and Godmanchester) and St Neots Spatial Planning Area. Seek to deliver this development through a network of developer partners. Co-ordinate a programme of regeneration in service centres as part of a physical regeneration programme to complement the Local Area Initiative. Deliver this regeneration through partnerships with the public sector and also through an approach focused on community ownership and empowerment. Deliver housing targets as set out in the high growth scenario option of the emerging Local Plan, including additional new homes at Alconbury, owing to additional demand from the successful delivery of the Enterprise Campus. Launch a community organising initiative, focused on fostering local leadership and community cohesion, particularly in more deprived areas. Re-launch the developer's forum, with representation from housebuilders and commercial developers active in Huntingdonshire. 	Place
Unlock economic growth potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver improvements to the A14, by playing an active role in securing approval from central government to deliver a revised scheme. These improvements will support further economic growth in Huntingdonshire by improving connectivity, helping small to medium businesses to move goods and people in and out of the District quickly and easily. These improvements will also help to unlock the development potential of Huntingdonshire West, delivering new homes and mixed use development. Deliver strategic rail improvements, particularly at Huntingdon and St Neots, in order to support the ambitious development plans in those areas and further improve the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to live, work and invest. Deliver superfast broadband across Huntingdonshire District, by working in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils to deliver the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, thereby supporting further economic growth and giving comfort to potential investors in terms of future connectivity. Prepare a Visitor Economy Strategy, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Cambridgeshire County Council, in order to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit and to complement the marketing campaign encouraging working families to relocate to the District. Prepare an investment Portfolio, incorporating Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, key strategic development sites across the District and sector-based inward investment strategies for sectors including health and care, advanced manufacturing and green technologies. Launch a Huntingdonshire Alumni Network of key business leaders, community champions, leaders and political figures. This network could be called upon to provide insight into Huntingdonshire for potential investors and can be used as a sounding board to prepare and promote the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio. 	Place
Improve and promote the profile Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place Place People Place Place Place 	Place

2023 Objective – Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential.

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is home to a well established business base, with businesses operating in key locations across the District. Key employers include Huntingdon Life Sciences and Solo Cup Europe, each with upwards of 450 staff, but the majority of businesses in the District employ between 0 and 4 people.

However; there remains a polarisation in the business base and a need for businesses to adopt more advanced techniques and break into new markets in order to survive as well as to grow.

Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential. In this, the third pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan, partners will work together to attract new investment into Huntingdonshire, to invest in high value sectors, to grow supply chains and to bring schools and employers closer together to foster a culture of enterprise across the District.

In addition to supporting and growing the business base, Huntingdonshire District Council will seek to improve the way it works with businesses, paying particular attention to procurement practices and the experience of businesses in working with the council.

The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise	Strengthen the SME business base, by proactively engaging with SMEs across a range of sectors with growth potential, to accelerate business growth.
	Strengthen supply chains, by mapping current supply chains and identifying opportunities to grow and develop these in the future.
	Promote internationalisation, by working with existing businesses in Huntingdonshire to encourage them to leverage new trade and investment opportunities.
	Build on the culture of enterprise in Huntingdonshire, by bringing schools and employers closer together and encouraging greater entrepreneurship across a range of sectors.

The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Themes
Strengthen the SME business base	Launch a high growth business support programme, to provide support across industry sectors for businesses with growth capacity. Support to include mentoring, coaching and supply chain development opportunities, delivered by businesses, to Huntingdonshire businesses, with the aim of providing a kick-start to businesses with the potential to grow and create new employment opportunities.	Business
	Encourage support for SMEs by engaging larger employers in Huntingdonshire with the SME business base to provide mentoring / coaching opportunities, thereby creating an inclusive business network and opportunities for business growth, new job creation and supply chain development.	Business
	Ensure that appropriate business accommodation is delivered to meet demand from SMEs in respect of future business investment, by launching a developer's forum and encouraging two way dialogue between Huntingdonshire, the LEP and developers, thereby mapping current and future demand for business accommodation and SMEs.	Place
	Review the relationship between Huntingdonshire District Council and businesses, particularly in respect of the planning applications process, as well as conducting a review of corporate procurement processes.	Business
Strengthen supply chains	Map Huntingdonshire's supply chains, in relation to manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, chemicals, bioscience, pharmaceuticals, health and care, green technologies, professional services, tourism/visitor economy, so as to understand how supply chains function in Huntingdonshire and spot linkages, opportunities and gaps.	Business
	Prepare supply chain development strategy, prioritising sectors that show potential for growth and development through the mapping process. Reflect in the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Business
Promote internationalisation	Launch an internationalisation programme, in order to develop trade and investment capability within the existing business base in Huntingdonshire and to inform the preparation of a Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Place
	By working with Urban & Civic, the owners of Alconbury Weald and the LEP, Huntingdonshire District Council to promote Alconbury nationally and internationally as the primary inward investment location in Huntingdonshire, in order to prioritise international investment and bring 'down stream' economic growth benefits across the whole District.	Place
Build on the culture of enterprise	Co-ordinate enterprise development in schools at a District level, through the preparation and implementation of an enterprise strategy, focused on encouraging enterprising behaviour in children and young adults.	People
	Bringing schools and employers closer together, by linking partners in this theme, providing opportunities for businesses to mentor and coach schools and schoolchildren, encouraging enterprising behaviour from an early age.	Business
	Re-launch a Huntingdonshire 'Dragons Den', in order to generate interest in entrepreneurship and encourage schools, residents and employers to take part in the programme.	Business



Huntingdonshire in 2023

Delivering the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The 10 Year Delivery Programme

This Economic Growth Plan sets out the 10 year Vision for Huntingdonshire. Achievement of the Vision hinges upon the successful delivery of the '2023 Objectives' through a range of ambitious interventions.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors. The phased programme is presented below, according to short term actions (1-3 years), medium term actions (3-5 years) and longer term actions (5 years+):

	People	Place	Business
Short Term Delivery Actions	District wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships. Enterprise Strategy – young people. Marketing programme to attract high skilled working families. Promote study of science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) subjects.	High value sectors. Developer's Forum. Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio. Internationalisation programme. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Links with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce. Dragons Den competition. Improve relationship between the Council and business. Link schools with employers.
Medium Term Delivery Actions	Local Area Initiative. Community Organising. Visitor Economy Strategy. University capability.	Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) business accommodation. Links with Cambridge University. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	High growth SME support programme. Supply Chain Strategy. Business mentoring/coaching. Innovation and R&D in manufacturing.
Longer Term Delivery Actions	Community Budgeting in areas of high need.	Critical infrastructure. Housing targets, with additional demand from Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Huntingdonshire Alumni Network.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors.

Huntingdonshire in 2023

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

Huntingdonshire is 'going for growth'.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will:

- Build on the strengths of Huntingdonshire;
- Build resilience within the economy;
- Unlock the economic potential of the District; and
- Share the benefits of economic growth throughout the Huntingdonshire population.

In 2023, Huntingdonshire will be a different place.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will have been delivered successfully. Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live, work and invest in England.

New jobs will have been created, new homes will have been built and Huntingdonshire will have built on its strengths to become a location of choice.

Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus will have delivered a significant amount of new development and strategic development schemes at Huntingdon West and St Neots will be almost complete. Service centre regeneration in market towns will also be underway and the District will have raised its profile and built on its strengths to become an even more attractive place to live. The working age population will have increased in proportion to the rest of the population and the business base will be starting to shift, with small businesses growing and moving into new markets, as well as working more efficiently and effectively with local supply chains.

Public sector partners and private sector investors will have worked together over a decade to deliver transformational goals across the three 2023 Objectives – People, Place and Business.

The following diagram illustrates the outcomes that will be achieved through working with partners to deliver the 2023 Objectives.



Measuring Success

Achieving the Vision

Measuring the Success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will be measured according to the following criteria:

1. Statistical analysis to assess on-going progress towards achieving the Vision.
2. Monitoring progress towards the delivery of actions within each 2023 Objective, by updating a delivery plan on a biannual basis.
3. Regular engagement with partners to gauge qualitative opinion on the progress towards achieving the Vision.

Statistical Analysis

The first part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire by 2023, will be measured by per capita GVA growth. This is a measure of economic, scale, output and activity. GVA growth will be measured on a biennial basis and progress will be reported to partners and the Huntingdonshire resident and business community.

The second part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be one of the top 10 places to live, work and invest in England, will be measured according to a combination of factors, around the 'quality of life' theme. Progress will be tested biennially with a sample of Districts in England. The factors are as follows:



Monitoring Progress

The delivery plan which accompanies this Economic Growth Plan will be updated on a biannual basis by Huntingdonshire District Council and the update published in a public document, for consultation and comment.

Regular Engagement

A programme of regular engagement with partners, residents and businesses will be conducted in order to monitor progress towards achieving the Vision and in order to modify or shift the focus of the proposed interventions, where appropriate.

"By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live, work and invest in England."

If you would like to be a part of achieving this exciting vision

Contact Huntingdonshire District Council's Economic Development Team

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Notes



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