



<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr. Dr Tumi Hawkins	
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Stephen Kelly	

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## **Response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation**

### **Executive Summary**

1. This report seeks agreement of a proposed response to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation.
2. The initial Issues Engagement stage is the first stage of reviewing Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (adopted 15 May 2019). The Consultation paper identifies key issues but doesn't propose specific responses to them at this stage, instead it is seeking feedback from local residents, communities, businesses and organisations on what the priorities for improving the district of Huntingdonshire should be. Responses to this document will inform Huntingdonshire District Council's Local Plan Review. Given the proximity of Huntingdonshire to South Cambridgeshire, the contents of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan could in principle impact on the emerging joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and a joint response from Greater Cambridge is recommended.

### **Key Decision**

3. No

### **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - a. Agrees the proposed joint response to the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation
  - b. Agrees that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Lead Member for Planning
  - c. Agrees that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. The contents of the Huntingdonshire Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation papers referred to in this report could in principle impact on Greater Cambridge and have implications for the emerging joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The proposed response seeks to minimise negative and maximise any positive impacts of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan review on Greater Cambridge.

## **Details**

### **Background**

6. Huntingdonshire District Council is reviewing their Local Plan to 2036 (adopted 15 May 2019) and are undertaking early engagement on key issues relevant to the plan between 24<sup>th</sup> April – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The consultation documents explore issues but don't currently include options for responding to these. The Greater Cambridge Councils therefore have an opportunity to identify key cross-boundary matters they consider require active exploration by Huntingdonshire in the preparation of their Local Plan.
7. The paragraph below identifies the points raised in the proposed response to consultation which is included at appendix 1 to this report. The proposed response focuses comments on aspects that impact on Greater Cambridge rather than providing a general commentary on all elements of the forthcoming plan, which is a matter for Huntingdonshire District Council with their community and ultimately their inspector. Notwithstanding, given both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's ambitious policy approaches regarding climate and biodiversity as set out in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals, together with the cross-boundary (and indeed global) nature of both opportunities and impacts in relation to these topics, it is recommended that the consultation response should note the approach to these topics taken in the First Proposals, and encourage Huntingdonshire District Council to adopt similarly ambitious policy approaches in their plan.
8. The proposed response identifies the following response points requiring future substantive engagement:
  - strongly suggest that Huntingdonshire District Council explore in full water supply issues, and stress the importance of ambitious water efficiency policies, particularly as part of Huntingdonshire district is served by Cambridge Water as is Greater Cambridge.
  - note merits of discussing potential cross-boundary green infrastructure opportunities.

- note travel to work, housing market and economic connections, and encourage further engagement regarding these topics as well as on proposed strategic infrastructure projects including the A428 upgrade and East West Rail project.
  - encourage Huntingdonshire District Council to adopt ambitious climate and biodiversity policy approaches in their new plan.
9. As a proposed joint response with Cambridge City Council, a mirror report is also being taken to Cambridge City Council's Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

## **Options**

10. The options available to members are:
- a. Agree the proposed response to the consultation without amendments
  - b. Agree the proposed response to the consultation with amendments
  - c. Decide not to submit a response to the consultation – this option is not recommended as the plan would progress without awareness of potential impacts on Greater Cambridge

## **Implications**

11. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change and any other key issues the following implications have been considered:-

## **Risks/Opportunities**

12. The proposed response to Huntingdonshire District Councils Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) Consultation seeks to note the continuing need for ongoing duty to cooperate, and in doing so prevent the risk of those plans generating negative environmental, social and economic impacts on Greater Cambridge which could increase this Council's risks in these areas, and could lead to potential political and reputational damage. Paragraph 8 notes specific topics that could lead to potential environmental, social and economic impacts on Greater Cambridge.

## **Climate Change**

13. Development plans provide an opportunity to address the aspects of the environment that can be influenced by the planning system. The proposed response encourages Huntingdonshire District Council to adopt ambitious climate and biodiversity policy approaches in their new plan, noting the approach taken within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The proposed response specifically suggests that Huntingdonshire District Council explore in full water supply issues in the preparation of a new Huntingdonshire Local

Plan, noting the severity of the issue in Greater Cambridge and at a regional level, and in particular as part of Huntingdonshire lies within the area served by Cambridge Water as is Greater Cambridge.

## **Consultation responses**

14. As a response to another organisation's consultation, and given the nature of issues raised, officers don't consider that there are substantive additional consultation and communication issues requiring consideration.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Being green to our core**

15. See above comments at paragraph 14 in relation to Climate Change implications

## **Background Papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan

- [Greater Cambridge Local Plan - First Proposals | Greater Cambridge Shared Planning \(greatercambridgeplanning.org\)](https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/)

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Issues Engagement consultation documents:

- **The Issues Engagement Paper**  
(<https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/37422>) - an in-depth look at the issues including detailed questions to encourage comprehensive responses
- **The Issues Summary Paper**  
(<https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/37424>) - a quick look at the headline issues, with one or two open questions to get opinions
- **The Issues Easy Read Version**  
(<https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/37419>) - a simplified document with tick box questions

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper– proposed joint consultation response

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## **Appendix 1: Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper– proposed joint consultation response**

This response to the Huntingdonshire District Council Issues Engagement Paper (Regulation 18) consultation is made by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The main issue we wish to raise is that we would strongly suggest that Huntingdonshire District Council explore in full water supply issues in the preparation of a new Huntingdonshire Local Plan, noting the severity of the issue in Greater Cambridge and at a regional level, and in particular as part of Huntingdonshire lies within the area served by Cambridge Water as is Greater Cambridge. This is the same issue we raised in our response to your Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The Issues Engagement Paper correctly refers to the draft Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England which recognised the whole of Eastern England as being ‘seriously water stressed’ and with the prospect of severe water shortages unless new demand and supply measures are taken forward. The new Local Plan must carefully consider the water supply available from both Anglian Water’s and Cambridge Water’s emerging Water Resources Management Plans, taking into account when new sources of supply such as the Fens Reservoir are due to become operational. We understand that you have engaged consultants to produce an Integrated Water Management Study to consider the above issues as well as wider water cycle issues. Noting that rivers and catchment areas cross administrative areas, we consider it important that Huntingdonshire engage with Greater Cambridge on this critical piece of evidence.

Noting the water supply challenge, we would stress the importance of ambitious water efficiency policies which set out levels of water use for both housing and non-housing development, following at a minimum the optional Part G Building Regulations level of 110 litres/person/day, but considering whether a lower level may be justified due to the level of water stress. The Greater Cambridge First Proposals Local Plan included [water efficiency standards](#) of 80 litres/person/day in all new housing development, that go beyond what Local Authorities are currently able to require (as set out in the Deregulation Act 2015). For Greater Cambridge the case for greater water efficiency is so strong that there is a case for seeking this approach, and this may also be the case in Huntingdonshire.

Aside from the water issue, we note the potential [Strategic Green Infrastructure initiatives](#) identified in our Local Plan evidence that could cross the administrative boundary between Huntingdonshire and Greater Cambridge, including the Great Ouse Fenland Arc and Western Gateway multifunctional GI corridor. We would welcome continued dialogue on this topic as our respective plans progress.

We also note that Huntingdonshire and Greater Cambridge have travel to work, housing market and economic connections, and that strategic infrastructure projects including the A428 upgrade and East West Rail are planned to travel through both of our areas. The Councils value previous joint working with Huntingdonshire on these issues and will look to continue this as our respective plans and key infrastructure projects progress.

Beyond the above, in common with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have both declared climate emergencies. The Councils acknowledge the challenges faced by Huntingdonshire District Council in addressing the Climate Emergency. Given the cross-boundary (and indeed global) nature of both opportunities and impacts in relation to the climate and biodiversity emergencies, we encourage Huntingdonshire District Council to adopt ambitious climate and biodiversity policy approaches in their new plan, noting the approach taken within the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

The Councils are already engaging with Huntingdonshire District Council under the Duty to Cooperate in relation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. We would welcome further dialogue with Huntingdonshire as our respective plans progress, including but not limited to the cross-boundary matters identified above.