

The purpose of the meeting:

- To share the information we have gathered regarding the Call For Sites
- To facilitate discussion and address concerns
- Hopefully provide information that will answer many of the questions in people's minds

What will be covered:

- What is Call For Sites
- The Huntingdonshire Local Plan
- What we (the Parish Council) understand to be the next steps and what our role is.

What is Call for Sites

It was issued by HDC in January for any landowner (be it farmer, private residence owner, town or parish council) to send HDC details of land that might be suitable for allocation in the their next Local Plan.

The Call asked for sites to be submitted with potential for residential, commercial, infrastructure, and open space use.

The submission of a site by a landowner only means that the site will be considered and assessed as to whether it has potential to be suitable for future development. This does not guarantee that it will be allocated for development in the HDC Local Plan, or that planning permission can be obtained for the proposed development.

It is important to understand that the submitted sites have not yet been assessed for their suitability by HDC.

The HDC Local Plan

- The local plan is for the future development of Huntingdonshire, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the community.
- It establishes a vision for the future of the district.
- The Call is related to the 5 year review of the current Local Plan, adopted in May 2019 and was supposed to run until 2036 and as it is only 2023 you might well ask
- Why now? The HDC Local Plan has to react to demands by Central Government and since 2019 there have been 3 changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Huntingdonshire's updated Local Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the district. It will set out the planning policies and site allocations to guide development and growth across the whole district.
- Once finalised and adopted, it will replace **in full** the current plan to 2036
- The adoption of the new Plan is expected to be sometime in the Winter of 2028 and Councillor Jonathon Gray has suggested that we are unlikely to know until sometime in 2026 which sites HDC want for their Local Plan. However if a landowner withdraws their site, this should show on the HDC website. Councillor Gray is pushing for it to be published as soon as a site is definitely 'rejected'.

The Catworth Submissions:

- Ref: CfS:12 Fruit Field, Station Rd (opposite Playing Field)
Jenny Green – Residential - 40 houses
- Ref: CfS:17 Land East of Fox Rd (field east side of The Cut)
Eastern Farms – use not specified: TBD
- Ref: CfS:356 Land West of Fox Rd (field west side of The Cut)
Eastern Farms - use not specified: TBD
- Ref: CfS:357 Land East of Church Rd (the Church Field)
Eastern Farms – Residential plus other categories
- Ref: CfS:358 Triangular Land South of Church End (on the right of the
lane to Little Catworth)
Eastern Farms – use biodiversity net gain / off-setting.
- Ref: CfS:63 Land South of A14 (field around The Fox)
Strangward Trust – Commercial Use
- Ref: CfS:64 Land West of Catworth (between Brook Lane and the
track to Brook House Farm/Grange Farm)
Strangward Trust – Residential

Next Steps

- HDC will analyse all submissions
- There will be a desktop review. It is proposed that all potential sites will be loaded into a GIS (Geographic Information System) database using the location plans. This will show their spatial distribution across the district.
- This process will also help to identify business, employee numbers, street data, road networks, as well as the speed limits and traffic counts for that network. We understand this will be made into an interactive map to be published on HDC's website.
- HDC will finalise two important methodology documents: Land Availability Assessments and Settlement Hierarchy Methodologies. These will give additional information about how all the sites that have been put forward will be assessed and appraised considering suitability, availability and achievability.
- These 2 documents are in draft and can be accessed through HDC's website.
- If you were to view the **Settlement Hierarchy Methodology** on the HDC's website, you will see that it allocates scores to areas according to, for example, access to schools, libraries, GP surgeries, community buildings, open spaces, number of business, high speed broadband, and many other facilities.
- Bythorn has been used as a sample settlement within the draft Methodology, and we already have an indication that at this draft stage, out of a potential score of 440 points, Bythorn scores 78 points. One might speculate from this that the low score would indicate that Bythorn may be in a less favourable area for development than other areas. Only time will tell.
For information: Stilton received a score of 176, Warboys 214 and St Neots 416 out of a total potential score of 440 points.

After this process HDC will then:

- provide feedback on engagement outcomes.
- identify any further issues for engagement.
- prepare potential strategy and policy options.
- Further Issues and Options engagement to take place in Summer 2024 – 10 weeks.

Role of the Parish Council.

At the Bythorn village meeting, Jonathon Gray said:

‘Contrary to popular opinion, finalising a Local Plan is not really a democratic process. The Local Planning Authority (the District Council) does vote on and approve the Local Plan. But the Local Plan must then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate where an independent Inspector (appointed by the Government) will carry out an examination and then recommend to the Local Planning Authority whether or not it can adopt the plan. In most cases some changes will be recommended. It is what is called a ‘quasi-judicial process’.

As a Parish Council we are told that we will have an opportunity to comment in Spring 2024 but we do not yet know what form this will take and how long we will have to formulate that response. Throughout this process we will:

- Participate in every way possible in relation to the Local Plan Update, CFS and any other matter which impacts on the proposals relating to Catworth.
- We want to represent the views of the residents of the Parish and seek those views to help us respond to any progression of the Catworth submissions.
- We will work with neighbouring Parish Councils to support them in responding to the Local Plan and to ensure that where proposals impact the larger area, ie the proposed commercial site at The Fox, we attempt to develop a unified response on the impact to the wider area.
- As we learn more we will keep everyone informed of updates via the Parish Council Website. Notification that an update is available will be via Village Matters and the village Facebook page. Everyone is also welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm.

Our Consultative Document – The Neighbourhood Plan

Our greatest tool to help us in all of this, will be the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) questionnaire, which will hit your doormats before Christmas.

The NP will, once adopted by HDC, become a legal document. Since Call For Sites, the working group have incorporated questions into the questionnaire relating to the submissions – and you can make your views known.

Please take the time to complete it. It is going to become a very important consultative document. It will be delivered to all homes in paper form and will also be available for completion online.

