

# ST. IVES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2019 – 2036

## Pre-Submission Plan



PUBLISHED BY

St. Ives Town Council for Pre-Submission consultation  
under the Neighbourhood Planning (General)  
Regulations 2012 (as amended).

OCTOBER 2023

# GUIDE TO READING THIS PLAN

Of necessity, this Neighbourhood Plan is a detailed technical document. The purpose of this page is to explain the structure and help you find your way around the plan.

## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

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This section explains the background to this Neighbourhood Plan and how you can take part in and respond to the consultation.

## 2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

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This section details many of the features of the designated area.

## 3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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This rather technical section relates this Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework and the planning policies of Huntingdonshire District Council.

## 4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

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This section explains the community involvement that has taken place.

## 5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

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This key section firstly provides a statement on the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives. It then details Policies which are proposed to address the issues outlined in the Foreword and in Section 4. These Policies are listed in Table 1. There are also Policy Maps at the back of the plan.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

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This section explains how the Plan will be implemented and future development guided and managed. It suggests projects which might be supported by the Community Infrastructure Levy which the Town Council will have some influence over. Finally, it deals with a number of issues which although relevant are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

FOREWORD

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## FOREWORD

St Ives is a very special place, with a long history but one that is adapting to the changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a modern market town. This development has to be carefully managed to create the right balance between future growth, maintaining our heritage, enhancing the local environment and dealing with climate change.

Those who live or work here or in the surrounding villages and visitors value what the town has to offer and this Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision and objectives for the future.

This Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by a working group, a mix of Town Councillors and local residents with input from many local groups, as well as our planning consultants O Neil Horner. Our work was affected by the Covid pandemic, but we have been able to attend meetings of local groups and held a public exhibition at the Farmers Market.

You have told us that St Ives has reached a natural limit and that major new development is not appropriate. You also say that protecting our heritage is important and that you want to see the enhancements to the local environment.

This draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan is for your comment, an opportunity to let us know if you support the proposed policies or if there are other policies that we need to include.

Please read the draft, along with the evidence base and let us have your views before we create the final version for submission and the start of formal legal review and adoption process.

**Nick Dibben**

**Chair St Ives Neighbourhood Plan working group**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1. St. Ives Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area (SINP) designated by the local planning authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, on 4 March 2019. The area coincides with the parish boundary (see Plan A on page 4). The plan is being prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations of 2012 (as amended).

1.2. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set out a series of planning policies that will be used to determine planning applications in the area in the period to May 2036. The Plan will form part of the development plan for Huntingdonshire district, alongside the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (HLP).

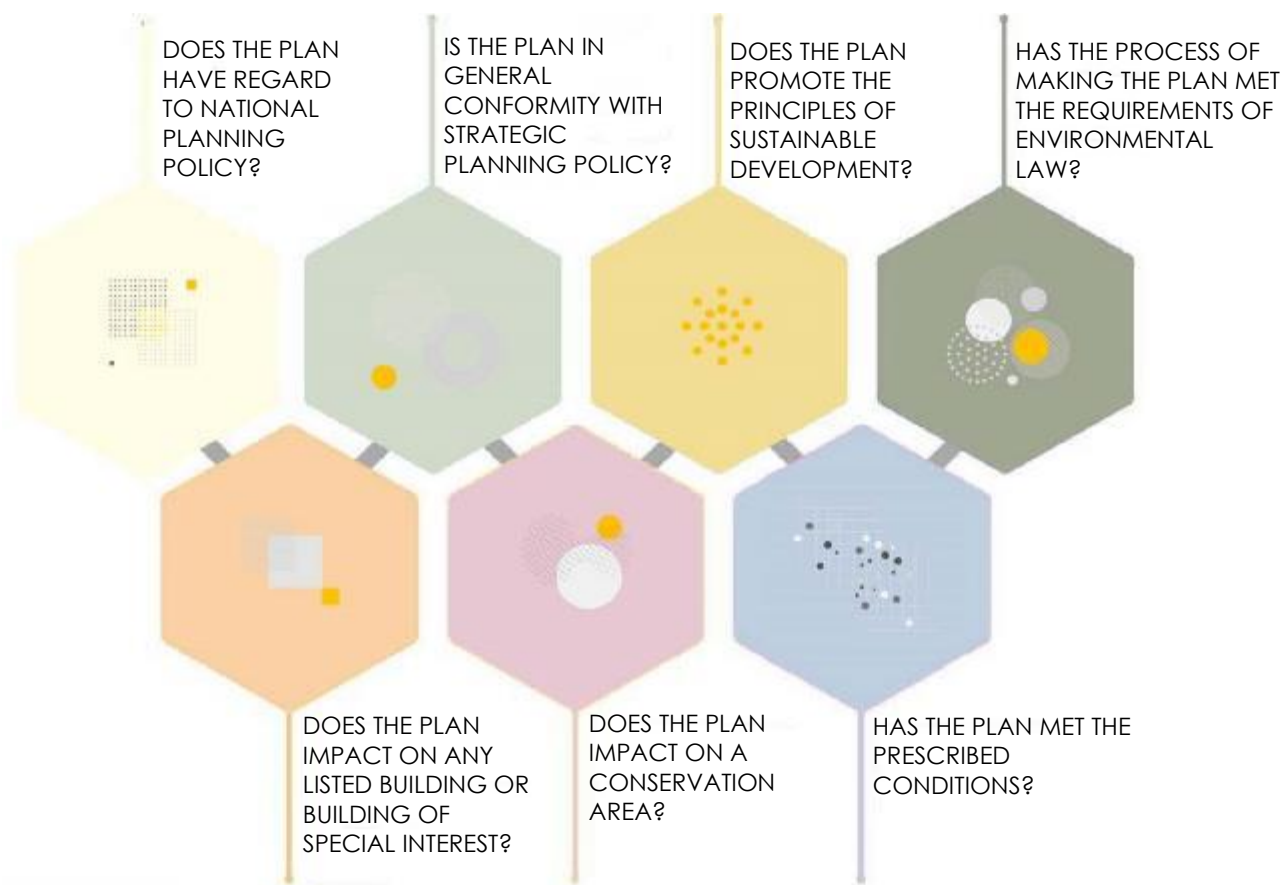
1.3. Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities, like St. Ives, with the opportunity to manage the quality of development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Plan becomes part of the Council's statutory development plan and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided in the neighbourhood area. Plans must therefore contain only land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Plan if they are not directly related to planning. Although there is scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet all of the relevant basic conditions (see Figure 2 overleaf).

1.4. In addition, the Town Council will need to demonstrate to an independent examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community and stakeholders in preparing the Plan. If the examiner is satisfied that it has, and considers the Plan meets the above conditions, then the Plan will go to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority (over 50%) of the turnout votes in favour of the Plan, then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the neighbourhood area.

### THE PRE-SUBMISSION PLAN

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1.5. This is the opportunity for the Town Council to formally consult on the proposed vision, objectives and policies of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (the Pre-Submission Plan). The Town Council has reviewed the relevant national and local planning policies and assessed how they affect this area. It has also gathered its own evidence and its reports are published separately in the evidence base.



**1 Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & THE HABITATS REGULATIONS**

1.6. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) assesses the environmental effects of a proposed policy or plan. It allows for the cumulative effects of development and policies to be assessed and addresses any identified issues at an early stage. A screening request has been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) for this purpose and HDC have issued a screening opinion following consultation with the statutory consultees in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). The screening opinion establishes that an SEA is not required. The basic conditions statement that will be published alongside the submission plan in due course will set out how the policies in this plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

1.7. The request also sought HDC's opinion that the designated Neighbourhood Area does not include, or is in close proximity to, any nationally designated sites and so no Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required as per the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The screening opinion also confirms that an HRA is not required.

## THE NEXT STEPS

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1.8. Once the consultation is complete, the Town Council will review the comments made, assess where amendments are required, and prepare a final version of the Plan. This will be submitted to HDC for a further consultation and to arrange for its examination by an independent examiner and subsequent referendum, if the examiner is satisfied that the draft plan meets the basic conditions.

## THIS CONSULTATION

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1.9. If you have comments to make on this plan, please do so by **1 December 2023** at the latest in the following ways:

### **St Ives Town Council**

**Town Hall**

**Market Hill**

**The Old Riverport**

**St Ives**

**Cambridgeshire**

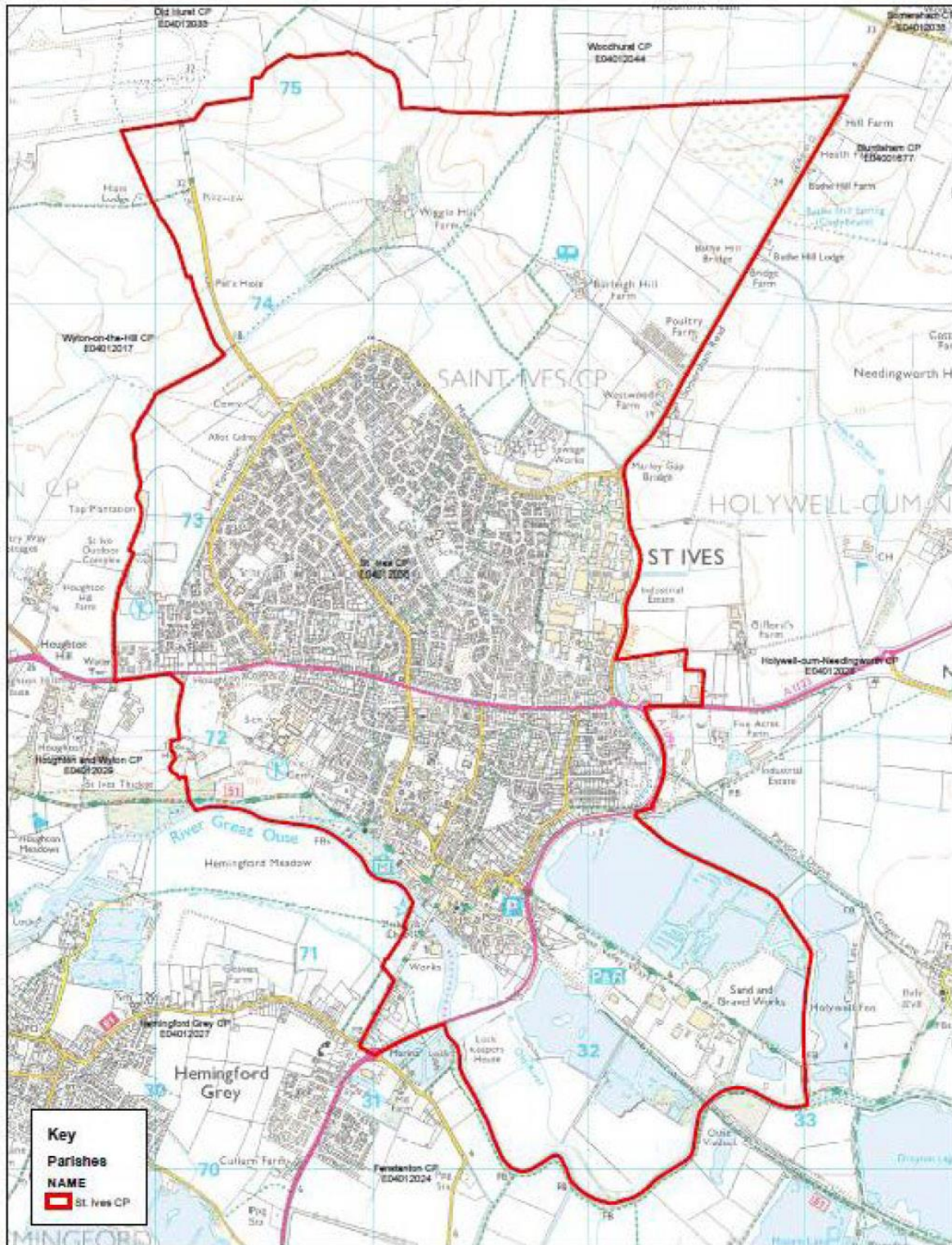
**PE27 5AL**

**E:** [np@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:np@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk)

1.10. Further information on the Plan and its evidence base can be found on the project website at:

**[www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk)**





Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area

## 2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

2.1 The market town of St Ives is located in the county of Cambridgeshire and within the area of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC). The Town is located on the River Great Ouse and has developed asymmetrically to the north of the river. The south side of the river is part of the flood plain.

2.2 St Ives is 8km to the east of Huntingdon and 20km to the west of Cambridge. The town acts as a local centre for a number of surrounding villages.

2.3 St Ives is connected to Cambridge via the guided busway, a dedicated bus route built on the former railway line which opened in 2011. The busway provides easy access to the Science Park and Cambridge North Railway station in the north of Cambridge, Cambridge city centre and Addenbrooke's Hospital to the south of Cambridge. Services have been reduced due to Covid, but in October 2023 the overall frequency is every 10 minutes to Cambridge Monday to Friday daytime, and every 20 minutes to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Huntingdon town centre and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital (Huntingdon). There is a 1000 space park and ride site for the busway close to the town centre. There is evidence that the busway brings shoppers and visitors into St Ives from the Cambridge area.

2.4 Bus services to adjacent villages are far less frequent. Some villages have several buses each day, others just a service on St Ives Market Days. In March 2020, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority announced plans to run regular hourly busway services to adjacent villages. However, the introduction of these services was cancelled due to the Covid lockdown.

### BRIEF HISTORY

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2.5 Archaeological excavations have revealed that people have been living in the area for thousands of years. In Roman times, the Via Devana linking the roman settlements of Cambridge and Godmanchester (now the A14 / A1307) ran a few kilometres south of town and recent studies during the construction of the upgraded A14 have found several settlements in the area. The site of a roman villa has also been found in the current town.

2.6 In around 500AD, Saxon settlers founded a village called Slepe in the location of the current town centre and this is name recorded in the Domesday Book. The direction of the town changed in the early years of the 11th century when farmers found a stone coffin in the area. The monks of Ramsey Abbey declared the bones to be those of St Ivo, a Persian Bishop who had visited the area as a missionary. A Priory was built on the spot where the coffin was found and became a place of pilgrimage.

2.7 King Henry I granted the now renamed town of St Ives a charter to hold an annual Easter Fair in 1110 and a wooden bridge was built across the river around the same time. In 1200, weekly markets started in the town. The layout of the town buildings and streets reflects the outlines of earlier fields and individual strips of land used by the farmers. The

wooden bridge over the river was replaced by a stone bridge in the 1420s that still exists today. The Parish Church also dates from the 15th century. The town prospered on wool and cattle as the fairs and markets grew in size. The river was an important transport artery and barges carrying goods to and from the port at Kings Lynn to St Ives.

2.8 The railway came to St Ives in 1847 and the town developed into an important railway junction with routes to Cambridge, Kettering, March and Ely. The railway lines closed in stages from the 1950s with the last passenger train to Cambridge departing in 1970, the same year that the cattle market closed. The cattle market site is now used as a car park.

2.9 Part of the old railway line became the town by-pass road in the 1970s and more recently the guided busway has been built on the former railway line to Cambridge.

2.10 The town saw rapid housing development from the 1970s with thousands of new houses being built on the area north of St Audley's Lane. More recent housing development has taken place on the old golf course to the west of the town, completed in 2021 and new retail units to the east of the town.

## ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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2.11 The former gravel pits on the east side of the town are designated County Wildlife sites (CWS). These lakes are currently used for sailing and fishing. Part of Holt Island near the town centre is also a County Wildlife Site and is open to the public at weekends during the summer. Sites just outside the town boundary include Hemingford Meadow (CWS) south of the river, RSPB Fen Drayton to the east and Houghton Meadow (SSSI) to the west along the Thicket Path.

2.12 St Ives has a large number of listed buildings, concentrated within the town centre as shown on the extract from the Historic England map below.



**Plan B: Listed buildings in St Ives**

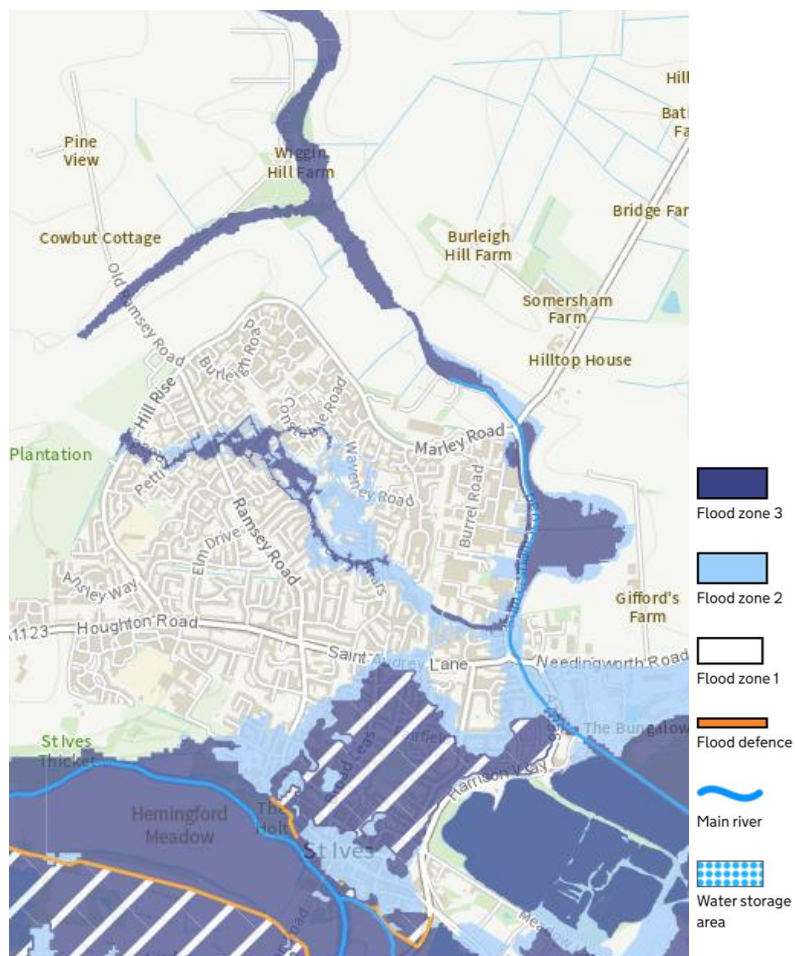
2.13 The 15th century bridge over the river and the site of the former St Ivo Priory are scheduled monuments (highlighted in red on Plan B).

## FLOOD RISK

2.14 The town centre is within Flood Zone 2 and is protected by flood defences installed during the 1990s which also protect the south of the town within Flood Zone 3. Hemingford Meadow to the south of the river and outside the NP area, is part of the flood plain and will generally flood once or twice each year.

2.15 Parts of the north of the town adjacent to an underground stream are considered in Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are no reports of surface flooding in these areas over the last 40 years.

2.16 The Marley Gap Brook to the north of the town which leads into Parsons Drive on the western edge of the town are prone to flooding, with the most recent incident in December 2020. The flooding was made worse by the presence of fallen trees in the water course restricting water flow.



Plan C: Environment Agency Flood Map

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

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2.17 The estimated population of the Parish for mid 2019 taken from the Office of National Statistics site indicates that St Ives population is 17,022. The age profile as follows:



## FACILITIES, SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT

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2.18 Markets are held in the town centre every Monday and Friday. Farmers Markets are held twice a month on Saturdays. Other specialist markets are held from time to time.

2.19 The major employment area in the town is located to the east off the Somersham Road. Footpath links to the adjacent residential area is limited. In the past year the guided bus service has been extended to the industrial area. Business units and office space in the town centre has reduced in recent years and the buildings have either been replaced by residential properties or converted to residential use.

2.20 Information provided by HDC and the 2011 Census indicated that many people in the town work in Huntingdon and Cambridge, whilst the town attracts commuters from surrounding villages.

2.21 The Norris Museum located on The Broadway is the museum for Huntingdonshire and re-opened after a major refurbishment in July 2017. The museum is owned and supported by St Ives Town Council.

2.22 The town has a number of venues for sporting activities, performance spaces and for community groups to meet. One Leisure St Ives, run by the District Council has a swimming pool, fitness studios, a gym and a sports hall. The associated outdoor facility has tennis courts, a cricket pitch and an athletics track. The town also has a bowls club, rugby club and rowing club. Children's play equipment is provided at various locations around the town.

2.23 Adjacent to One Leisure is the Burgess Hall that is used for performances, meetings and conferences. Other venues in the town include the Corn Exchange in the town centre and the Burleigh Hill Community Centre in the north of the town. Various church halls and school halls also provide spaces for people to meet.

2.24 The Town Council run the allotment area and the cemetery, both located in the north of the Town.

2.25 St Ives has a number of schools as shown in the table below:

School	Year Groups	Ages
Eastfield Infant School	Nursery – Year 2	4-7
Westfield Junior School	Year 3-6	7-11
Wheatfield Primary School	Nursery – Year 6	4-11
Thorndown Primary School	Nursery – Year 6	4-11
St Ivo Academy	Year 7 to 11	11-18

2.26 There are no further education facilities in St Ives. Adult Learning courses take place at the Ivo Academy and other venues in St Ives. The Cambridge Regional College has facilities in Cambridge (adjacent to the busway) or Huntingdon.

2.27 There are three GP surgeries in St Ives, located in the town centre, on Ramsey Road and Constable Road. The town centre also has a number of dental practices, opticians and other specialist health care providers. Pharmacies are located in the town centre and close by the doctors surgeries on Ramsey Road and Constable Road.

2.28 St Ives has a number of formal parks and green spaces as shown on Plan Q.

Space	Run by
Berman Park	Huntingdonshire District Council
Hill Rise Park	Huntingdonshire District Council
Holt Island	Huntingdonshire District Council
Slepe Hall Field	St Ives Town Council
Warners Park	St Ives Town Council
Wheatfields Park *	Huntingdonshire District Council

- The Space does not have an official name

2.29 In addition, there are a number of smaller green areas that are used for recreational activities within the built-up area.

### 3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Parish lies within Huntingdonshire District in the county of Cambridgeshire. Huntingdonshire District Council is the local planning authority for the area.

#### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

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3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The following paragraphs of the latest NPPF version published in July 2021 are considered especially relevant:

- Neighbourhood planning (§28 - §30)
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres (§86)
- Healthy and Safe Communities (§92 - §93)
- Open space and recreation (§98 - §103)
- Promoting sustainable transport (§106)
- Achieving well-designed places (§128)
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding (§153)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (§174)
- Habitats and Biodiversity (§179)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (§190)

3.3 The government has recently consulted on proposed changes to the NPPF, and the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) is currently passing through Parliament. It expects to publish the new NPPF and enact the LURB in the near future, but there are further changes to the NPPF proposed in relation to the LURB. The proposed amendments continue to indicate that there remains a future for neighbourhood planning.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY

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3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan which comprises the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (HLP) to 2036 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mineral and Waste Plans adopted in 2021.

3.5 The HLP defines the St Ives Spatial Area which is different to the Neighbourhood Area as this also covers the built-up area that extends into the surrounding parishes (Policy LP2). Policy LP2 identifies the town as one of the four most sustainable locations in the District for planned growth; it refers to the decision not to allocate land within the plan for 4,500 homes and 10 Ha employment etc at the 250 Ha RAF Wyton, for which there is a draft masterplan, but it continues to encourage proposals to come forward in the future.

3.6 The HLP allocates land for 430 homes on two sites (St Ives West and the football club) and 5.6 Ha of employment land (at Gifford's Farm on the eastern edge of the town but outside the SINP boundary) (Policies SI1 – SI3). Policy LP7 confines housing and employment growth to the sites allocations or to within the built-up area and Policy LP10 sets out the types of development that are suited to the countryside outside the built up area.

3.7 The HLP also contains a range of other policies on green infrastructure, flood risk, design, town centres and housing. The Development Plan is supported by a number of other planning guidance documents, the most recent being the Landscape and Townscape SPD adopted in March 2022 (see Plan D).

3.8 Huntingdonshire Council has agreed to prepare an updated Local Plan and the latest Local Development Scheme of March 2023 anticipates adoption in Winter 2028. An Issues and Options consultation has recently been completed and the Town Council made representations highlighting relevant neighbourhood plan provisions. The Town Council will continue to engage in this process. The preparation of the updated Local Plan is therefore in its very early stages.

3.9 The district lies within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority area which has allocated funding to mitigate the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and to begin long-term master planning activity in the towns. A draft St Ives Implementation Masterplan was published for consultation in July 2022 by Huntingdonshire District Council and its feedback will inform how Huntingdonshire District Council progresses the ideas presented in the masterplans. The draft St Ives Implementation Masterplan July 2022 identifies five specific projects (see Plan E). The Town Council was provided with an update on the prioritisation of projects moving forward in April 2023 and the document is now referred to as a 'Vision for St Ives' in the final version of the document dated July 2023.

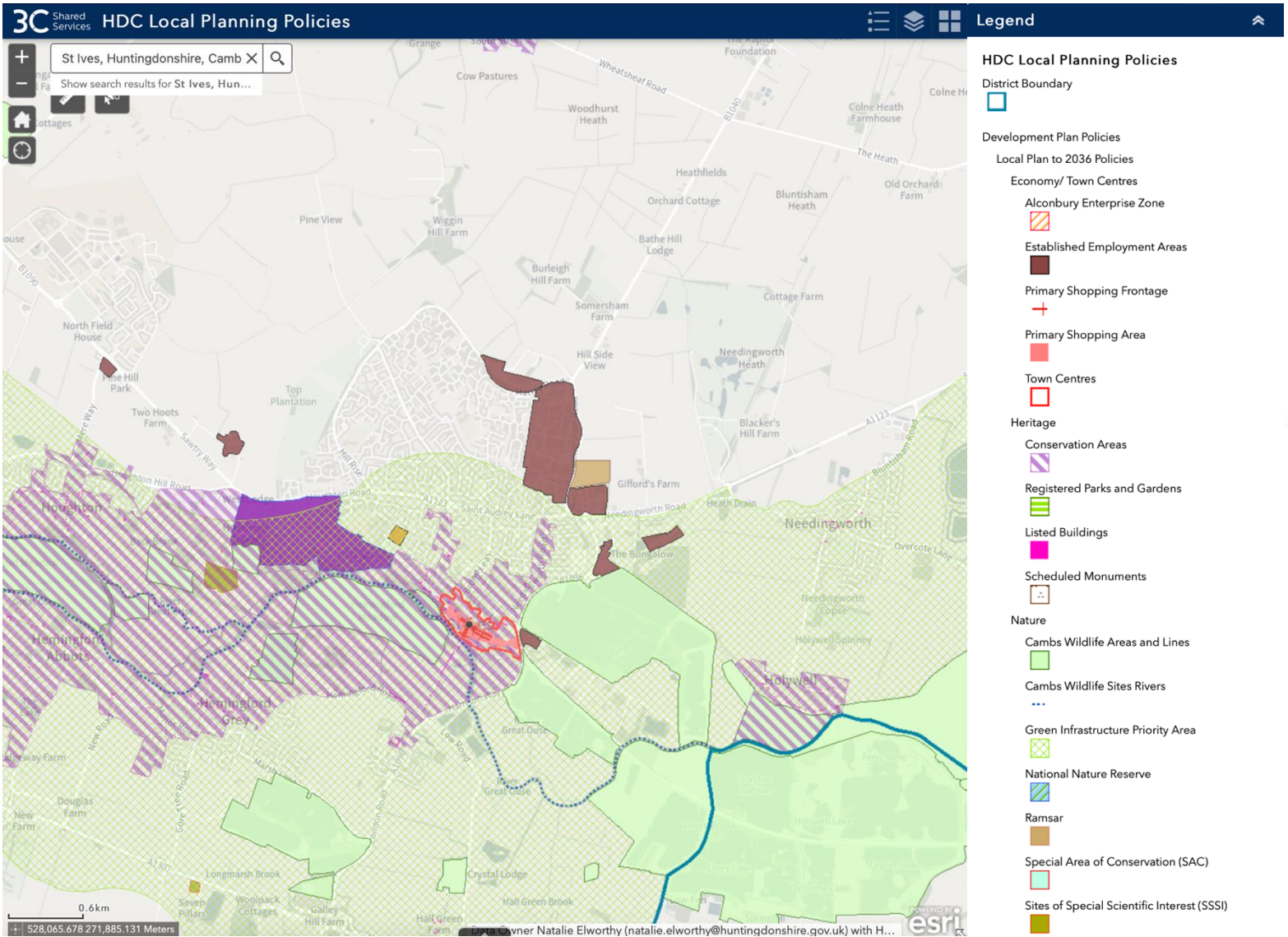
3.10 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mineral and Waste Plans identifies a large Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel to the south of the built up area, retains the waste management area off Meadow Lane and the water recycling area off Bank Road in the north of the built up area (see Plan F).

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING POLICY

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3.11 The made Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan applies in the neighbouring parish of Houghton and Wyton and its focus is on retaining the village identity of its settlements. The adjoining parish of Hemingford Grey and is also preparing a neighbourhood plan, but has not yet reached any formal neighbourhood planning stages in its preparation process.

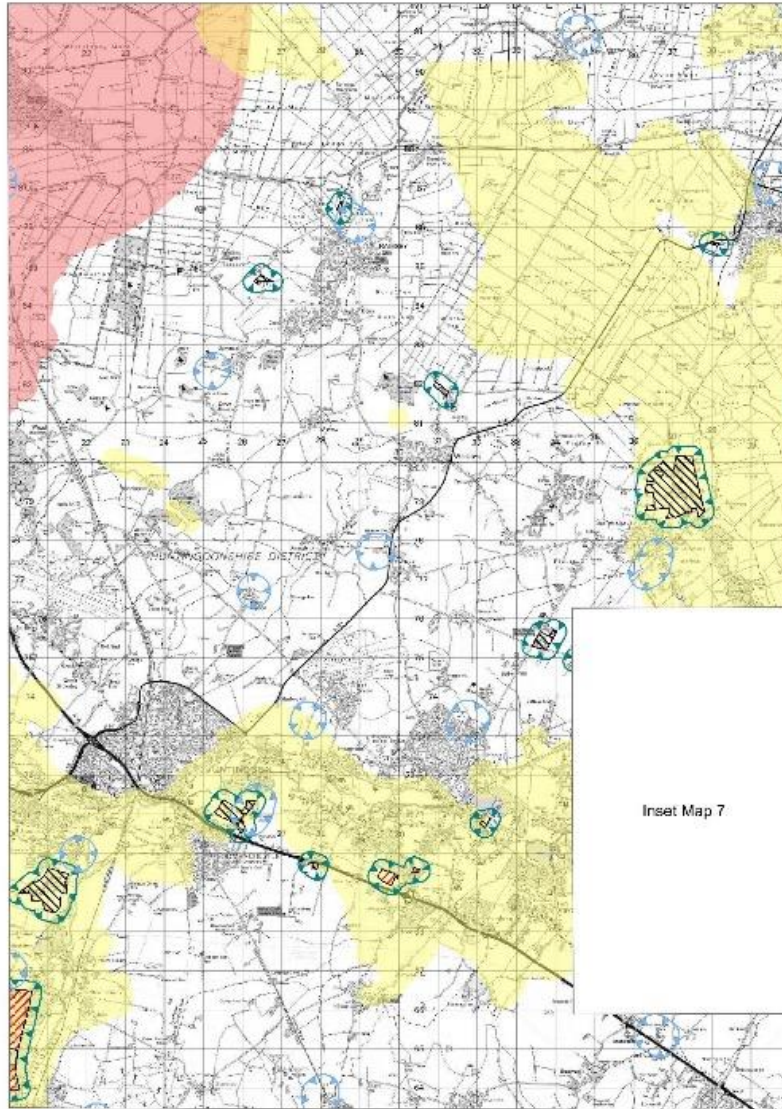




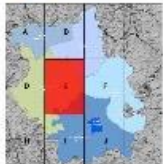
Plan D: Huntingdonshire adopted Local Plan to 2036 Policies Map



Plan E: HDC Vision for St Ives policy map July 2023



Inset Map 7



Overview Map E

Scale: 1:115,000



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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals & Waste Local Plan: Proposed Submission, Nov 2019

### Map Key

-  MAA – Mineral Allocation Area
-  MDA – Mineral Development Area
-  WMA – Waste Management Area
-  TIA – Transport Infrastructure Area
-  WRA – Water Recycling Area
-  CA – Consultation Area (WRA)
-  CA – Consultation Area (MAA, MDA, WMA, TIA)
-  MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area (Brickclay)
-  MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area (Chalk)
-  MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area (Limestone)
-  MSA – Mineral Safeguarding Area (Sand and Gravel)
-  Plan Area Boundary

This document accompanies the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (CPMWLP), adopted in July 2021, and aligns with the information published at the consultation stage. It is not the official 'Policies Map' for the area, but instead identifies the changes to the Policies Map from those already allocated in 2011 and 2012, that have arisen because of the adoption of the CPMWLP. The allocations and other notations identified on the maps within this document are automatically (from the date of CPMWLP adoption) included on the official 'Policies Map' of each district-based Council in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. All previous Minerals and Waste related allocations or notations arising from 2011 and 2012 are now superseded. Minerals and Waste Local Plans are, at the same time, automatically deleted from each of the district-based Policies Maps.

It should be noted that maintaining and keeping up-to-date the individual district-based Policies Maps for the CPMWLP area is the responsibility of each district council in the CPMWLP area. Each district-based Policies Map illustrates geographically the application of the policies in the adopted 'development plan' for that district area, with the 'development plan' comprising all Local Plans (district based Local Plan(s) and the CPMWLP), plus any Neighbourhood Plans. Please contact the applicable district-based council for their latest Policies Map, though there may be some delay by each district-based council publishing updated versions of their Policies Map, in pdf or hard copy form, to take account of the changes arising from the now adopted CPMWLP.

## Plan F: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough adopted Minerals and Waste Plan Policies Map

## 4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 Throughout the development of the St Ives NP, there has been regular contact with the community to keep people informed and to get feedback and ideas. A summary of these activities is given below.

4.2 Early Stages – At the start of the process stalls were held during 2019 at the St Ives Carnival and Music Festival at Hill Rise Park (2day event) and the Saturday Farmers Market in the town centre. These events were used to make residents aware of the NP and gather ideas on the future of the town.

4.3 Issues raised by the public at these events included:

- Housing – Whilst many people agreed there was a housing shortage in the area, there were concerns that local infrastructure could not cope with extra housing and that there was potential to use brown field sites such as RAF Wyton for new housing.
- Town Centre – People wanted improvements to the town centre that would help attract shoppers and other visitors to the town. Lack of parking and too many cars were also raised. The need to protect the character of the town centre was a key issue. The need for good design for key buildings and developments was highlighted.
- Other parts of St Ives – People felt that there was too much emphasis on the town centre and more needed to be done to support other parts of the town although few specific ideas were raised.
- Flooding – flooding was a major concern and a key reason given why there should not be significant new housing.
- Traffic – a number of issues were raised including too much traffic on St Audley's Lane, pot holes, traffic speeds and expensive parking.
- Things to do – the lack of suitable activities for people in their 20s and 30s was noted.
- Climate change – people wanted the NP to support climate change issues.

4.4 Updates on the NP progress were provided in the Town Council's magazine The Bridge. As part of its statutory duties, the Town Council holds an Annual Town Meeting where residents can question councillors. In recent years, the Town Council has arranged a community fair before the formal meeting. The NP working group has had a stall at these community fairs in 2020, 2022 and 2023. These events allow the working group to provide updates to residents and other community groups and gather more feedback. At the Annual Town Meetings in 2020 and 2022, the Chair of the NP Working Group was part of the panel during the general discussion. An informal consultation on the emerging NP themes took place during July 2021. Events were held at the Burleigh Hill Community Centre and at the Farmers Market. A report on the consultation and the summary of the responses is provided in Appendix A. Presentations have been given to the St Ives Eco-Group and the St Ives Civic Society and a meeting held with some shop traders.

## 5. VISION, OBJECTIVES & LAND USE POLICIES

### VISION & OBJECTIVES



#### INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE POLICIES

5.1 The following policies relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area of St Ives. They focus on specific planning matters that are of greatest interest to the local community.

5.2 There are many parts of the Parish that are not affected by these policies, and there are many other policy matters that have been left to the adopted and forthcoming Huntingdonshire Local Plan to cover. This has avoided unnecessary repetition of policies between this Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, though they have a mutual, helpful inter-dependence.

5.3 Each policy is numbered and titled, and it is shown in bold italics. Where necessary, the area to which it will apply is shown on the Policies Map attached to the document. After each policy is some supporting text that explains the purpose of the policy, how it will be applied and, where helpful, how it relates to other development plan policies.

## **POLICY SI1: A SPATIAL PLAN FOR THE TOWN**

- A. The focus for new development in the parish of St Ives will be on reusing brownfield land and on realising suitable development opportunities within the built-up area of the town, as shown on the Policies Map. The principles of ‘brownfield first’ in the town will deliver development land over the plan period that will remove the need for extending the town further into the open countryside.**
  
- B. Within the built-up area of the town, the focus for using brownfield land and other development will be in the town centre as a sustainable location to contribute to strengthening the centre’s role as a vibrant, accessible focus for meeting local needs and enhancing the multi-functional value of the Great Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Priority Area.**
  
- C. Development proposals outside the town centre should sustain and enhance the residential character of the suburban areas of the town through sensitively designed infill and plot redevelopment and continue to help meet the day-to-day needs of the local community in accordance with Policy SI4 Walkable Neighbourhoods and enhancing the multi-functional value of the Great Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Priority Area, where relevant.**
  
- D. Outside of the built-up area of the town development will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities provided by the development plan for the countryside focussing on improving access to, and the enjoyment of, the countryside and enhancing the multi-functional value of the Great Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Priority Area, as shown on the Policies Map.**

5.4 The policy establishes the essential spatial principles for development across the designated Neighbourhood Area. In doing so, it provides a policy bridge between the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and all its other policies.

5.5 The Neighbourhood Area forms part of the St Ives Spatial Planning Area as defined by the HLP. St Ives is the primary settlement in the St Ives Spatial Planning Area. As one of the four historic market towns of Huntingdon, the town is one of the largest centres of population and services in the district and a sustainable location to accommodate growth, either through using previously developed (brownfield) land and other development opportunities within the built-up area or on land at its edges which has already been allocated by the HLP.

5.6 The built-up area of the town offers many development opportunities, especially within the town centre, including the re-use of brownfield land. A significant opportunity has been identified within the HDC Vision for St Ives document for the cattle market site to the east of the town centre, and it is likely that other brownfield land will also become available later in the plan period.

5.7 The policy requires that proper attention is given to prioritizing and realising such opportunities as they arise, rather than extending the built-up area of the town into precious open countryside. Not only is this approach more efficient in terms of using scarce land resource, but it will avoid creating unsustainable patterns of growth, poorly located from the established town centre and other infrastructure and therefore car dependant.

5.8 The town centre lies in the southern most part of the built-up area and contains a healthy mix of town centre uses. HLP Policy LP 21 defines the town centre as a sustainable location for shopping, working, service and leisure uses which attract a wide range of people throughout the day and evening. Outside of the town centre lies the town's residential areas, including several important services and facilities. Part of the southern extent of the town also forms part of the Great Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Priority Area which has been defined by the HLP (Policy LP3). The Area has potential to consolidate and link important habitats and facilitate access improvements.

5.9 Beyond the town's built-up area lies the open countryside consisting of the Great River Ouse which forms the southern boundary of the town centre with the Holt Island Nature Reserve at the western end and the meadows around the St Ives Chub Stream and the Meadow Lane Gravel Pits at the eastern end. The countryside also includes the outdoor sport, recreation and amenity green space in the north and east of the built-up area of the town amongst its predominantly arable land with some tourism use. It is therefore more suited to the limited and specific opportunities provided by the development plan. There is however little connection to many of these green infrastructure assets, and the wider open countryside, and the policy seeks to encourage proposals which tackle these, and other, issues if the town is to continue to be sustainable.

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## **POLICY SI2: A SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPEROUS TOWN CENTRE**

**A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the St Ives Town Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of maintaining a healthy mix of commercial, business and services uses, 'greening' the town centre, improving pedestrian and cycling connectivity and creating 'shared space' for cultural/art/market purposes.**

**B. Development proposals within the defined Town Centre boundary will be supported provided that the resulting layout of schemes:**

- i. Improve the sense of arrival into the Town Centre, where relevant;
  - ii. Achieves a positive relationship with existing green infrastructure provision in the Town Centre and incorporates new green infrastructure in line with Policies SI7 Green Infrastructure and SI10 Urban Greening and Tree Canopy Cover;
  - iii. Retains and enhances pedestrian and cycling connections to the Town Centre and to riverfront of the River Great Ouse to promote active travel;
  - iv. Improves the movement of pedestrians and cyclists in and around the Town Centre and along the riverfront of the River Great Ouse in line with Policy SI8 Active Travel;
  - v. Contributes to the attractiveness of the Town Centre through public realm enhancements which may include the introduction of areas of shared space and street planting;
  - vi. Accords with development plan policies in respect of sustaining and enhancing the special architectural and historic character of the St Ives Conservation Area and other heritage assets.
- C. Development proposals for a change of use that will result in the loss of an active commercial, business and service (Class E) use of a ground floor frontage in the established Primary Shopping Frontage, as shown on the Policies Map, will not be supported.
- D. Other town centre uses in the established Primary Shopping Area, as shown on the Policies Maps, but beyond the Primary Shopping Frontage, will be supported.
- E. Residential uses (Class C3) on upper floors in the established Primary Shopping Area, will be supported, provided that the active Class E use of a ground floor frontage in the Primary Shopping Frontage is not compromised and that satisfactory residential amenities can be achieved. Proposals that require some loss of ground floor floorspace to facilitate access to upper floor residential will be supported where this can be achieved without undermining the integrity and viability of the existing unit(s); and provided it will not result in a proliferation of residential accesses that would undermine the vitality and viability of an individual shopping frontage.

5.10 A survey of the town centre has identified 200 business premises including a range of shops and services and places to eat and drink. Close proximity to Cambridge with easy access along the busway brings many visitors to the town. The local community recognises that it is necessary to continue to make St Ives more attractive to residents and visitors by revitalising and diversifying the town's economy and by celebrating its historic buildings and townscape.



5.11 The policy therefore identifies the Town Centre boundary, as defined in the HLP Policy LP21, which not only incorporates essential Class E uses but other residential, local community and leisure uses. The existing amenities and their connection and close proximity to the Class E uses serves a much wider purpose than simply providing retail services to meet day-to-day needs. The Town Centre functions as an important meeting place for local people to meet health, recreational and day-to-day business, commercial and service needs with new development anticipated to contribute to this wider purpose. The approach is in line with the Grimsey Review 2 ([link](#)) conclusions which highlight the need to reshape centres into community hubs which incorporate health, housing, arts, education, entertainment, business/office space, as well as some shops, while developing a unique selling proposition.

5.12 The policy therefore seeks to retain these Town Centre functions and make provisions for redevelopments to enhance these functions through improving accessibility and the safety and enjoyment of the active travel environment, the public realm and the green environment through managing design features for all new development proposals within the Town Centre area. The Town Council is actively seeking the provision of changing places toilet facilities in the Town Centre area. Proposals which contribute to the delivery of such a facility will be supported. It is also recognised that town centre development may require a reduction in parking provision.

5.13 The policy also reflects the requirements of HLP Policy LP21 on retaining Class E use at ground floor frontages in the Primary Shopping Frontage, as defined by the HLP. The New Use Class Order bundled together old Class A1 – A3 and other uses together as a new class E use after the adoption of the HLP. It is also recognised that some changes of use do not now require planning permission and new permitted development rights has enabled future changes of use from what are now Class E uses to residential uses. The Town Council hopes that Huntingdonshire Council will make an Article 4 Direction for the Primary Shopping Frontages premises to remove those rights, enabling such changes to remain in planning control and the Town Council will submit a formal request for this following the referendum of the SINP.

5.14 In the meantime, proposals made at premises with a Primary Shopping Frontage will require Prior Approval. For prior approval applications on premises which lie in the Conservation Area, such approval will require the consideration of any harmful effects to the character of the Conservation Area from the loss of such use. The Town Centre lies entirely within the St Ives Conservation Area. Although the Neighbourhood Plan policy (as part of the development plan) is not engaged in a Prior Approval determination by way of S38(6) of the 1990 Planning Act, together with the St Ives Character Appraisal and Design Guidelines, commercial, business and service uses play an important part of the distinct function and character of the Conservation Area and could therefore be a legitimate reason for refusing approval for proposals that will harm the character of the Conservation Area.

5.15 It is now widely accepted that high streets need to diversify to become more community focussed in their use and to do so requires planning for a mix of different uses ([link](#)). Whilst the main focus for the established Primary Shopping Frontage is focussed on Class E uses, the wider Primary Shopping Area, as defined by the HLP, provides an opportunity to focus on other town centre uses which not only includes retail, but also leisure, entertainment, arts, heritage, cultural facilities, community facilities or tourist attractions as identified by HLP Policy LP21. Spending data from St Ives, indicates that St Ives has many more visitors than other towns within Huntingdonshire and therefore this includes learning and non-residential institutions (Class F1), Local Community Uses (Class F2), Hotels (Class C1), and suitable town centre Sui Generis uses such as theatres, cinema, public houses, wine bars etc. The policy therefore encourages other town centre uses in the Primary Shopping Area but beyond the Primary Shopping Frontage.

5.16 It is also now widely accepted that residential uses (Class C3) in Town Centres contribute to maintaining and/or enhancing its vitality and viability. The policy therefore also makes provision for Class C3 uses on upper floors ensuring that active frontages remain at ground floor level and access schemes do not harm frontages.

### **POLICY SI3: TOWN CENTRE EAST – REGENERATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- A. Within the defined Town Centre boundary, the Neighbourhood Plan defines a Town Centre East Masterplan Area, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of supporting regeneration opportunities.**
  
- B. Proposals for redevelopment will be supported provided they demonstrate how they will contribute to the vision and accord with the development framework for the Town Centre East Masterplan Area attached as Appendix B.**

5.17 As part of the long-term master planning activity in the district's towns being pursued by Huntingdonshire District Council a review of proposals for an 'Innovation Quarter' for new development on the Cattle Market car park site in St Ives by the Town Council indicated that insufficient consideration had been given to integrating the development, or its potential for regenerating the town centre. The Town Council therefore commissioned a Town Centre East Masterplan Area Study which has been attached as Appendix B.

5.18 The Town Centre East Masterplan Area has been defined for its potential to plan for improvements to the eastern part of the Town Centre by strengthening connections between The Pavement/Market Hill and Station Road and creating a context for the redevelopment of the Cattle Market site. The Vision for the Town Centre East Masterplan Area is therefore for the Cattle Market site and Station Road to be a more active part of

the town centre creating an attractive entrance to the town from the east, with better access to the riverfront, the town's wider amenities and green infrastructure for residents and visitors.

5.19 The Study sets out specific design guidance for any future redevelopment coming forward in the Town Centre East Masterplan Area. The Study is an integral part of the policy but is extensive and is therefore published as an appendix to the SINP. To be clear therefore, the Study has been prepared and consulted on as part of the Plan, its content carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight. Applicants will therefore be expected to have acknowledged, understood and responded positively to the Study as relevant to the location, scale and nature of their proposals. Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the Study then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

## **POLICY SI4: WALKABLE COMMUNITIES**

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies broad locations at Saint Audrey Lane, Houghton Road, Hill Rise/Ramsey Road, Marley Road/Ramsey Road, as shown on the Policies Map, as walkable communities that are primarily residential areas lying more than 800m walk from the defined Town Centre.**
- B. In each broad location, proposals comprising one or more of the following uses will be supported in principle:**
- i. Class E(a) convenience food retail for up to a total of 600 sq.m of net internal retail floorspace**
  - ii. Class E(b) café**
  - iii. Class E(d) indoor sport and recreation**
  - iv. Class E(e) medical services**
  - v. Class E(f) day centre or nursery**
  - vi. Class F1 learning and non-residential institution; and/or a**
  - vii. Class F2 local community use.**
- C. Proposals that comprise one or more uses defined in Clause B may be delivered as ground floor units in a scheme with housing on upper floors if designed to manage any potential for conflicts in amenity between those uses.**
- D. Proposals that comprise one or more uses defined in Clause B must demonstrate that the site is located and accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport from established residential areas in a walkable community area in safe, convenient and pleasant ways.**

- E. Proposals to change the use of land or premises in a walkable community area that is in an established use defined in Clause B to another use will not be supported.**

5.20 The policy is inspired by the 20-minute neighbourhood concept which seeks to ensure that there is good access to a range of services and facilities within a 10-minute walk (800m) of home. Interest in the idea has grown as the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns put a spotlight on the importance of the liveability of neighbourhoods, perhaps working at home if possible, using public green space, cycling and walking instead of using cars and connecting with neighbours. There is generally a good coverage of services and facilities across St Ives and the policy therefore identifies broad locations within the town's suburban areas to protect established every day/convenience Class E and community uses from loss to other uses and to support the provision of new uses.

## **POLICY SI5: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN**

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, proposals in St Ives should deliver high quality design solutions which are distinctive to the site concerned.**
- B. Proposals must respond positively to the guidance set out in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022), Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017), and the St Ives Conservation Area Character Assessment 2007, or successor documents.**

5.21 National policy makes it clear that 'development that is not well designed should be refused' (NPPF §134). The policy brings together in one place the range of guidance published by Huntingdonshire District Council which has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance for development management purposes. It is expected that significant weight will be given to proposals which have demonstrated a positive response to this compendium of guidance.

5.22 Applicants will therefore be expected to have acknowledged, understood and responded positively to the content of these guidance documents as relevant to the location, scale and nature of their proposals. Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the guidance documents then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made, for example, because a scheme meets the Passivhaus, or equivalent, standard of Policy SI9 Passivhaus buildings requiring a design solution that cannot fully comply with the design guidelines.

## POLICY SI6: BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

- A. All major development with a residential component should apply the Building for a Healthy Life design assessment tool (or equivalent methodology) to inform design proposals, based on a traffic light system of scoring. As a guide, development should seek to achieve a score of no 'reds', design out all 'ambers' and achieve a majority of 'greens'.**
  
- B. A Building for a Healthy Life Assessment should be included within the Design and Access Statement and submitted with the application.**

5.23 The importance of high-quality design and healthy living were raised as important issues by the local community. High Quality Design is fundamental to the creation of high-quality places. The national Model Design Code H2 (para 187) reinforces this:

*"The built environment has a significant impact on people's health and wellbeing. This relates across the design code with regard to walkable neighbourhoods, access to greenery and recreation, attractive buildings and public spaces, space standards, and strong communities."*

5.24 The use of the BHL design assessment toolkit is of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of significant projects that are likely to be of public interest such as large-scale housing and mixed-use developments. Part of the intent of this policy is that there will be a design assessment and review panel for all major planning applications, as per Policy SI12 St Ives Design Panel. Importantly, the policy uses accepted means within the District Council's established 'major applications checklist' ([link](#)) to achieve its aims, rather than create an additional process.

## POLICY SI7: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. The Parish contains a variety of green and blue infrastructure that provides an environmental support system for the community and wildlife. The Neighbourhood Plan designates a St Ives Green Infrastructure network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of promoting nature recovery, improving health and wellbeing and helping mitigate climate change. The network comprises land with known biodiversity value, priority habitats, flood meadows, significant hedgerows and lines of trees.
- B. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the network are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving the functionality of the network, including delivering a net gain to biodiversity and improving connections to existing green infrastructure assets and the wider countryside, in the design of their layouts and landscaping schemes. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the network will not be supported.
- C. All development should embed Green Infrastructure in a way that helps to support nature recovery to reverse the decline in biodiversity and result in a net gain, including the placement of bird boxes and bricks and hedgehog holes between gardens and the external natural environment, avoiding openings onto roads. Development proposals that will lead to an extension of the network will be supported, provided they are consistent with all other relevant policies of the development plan.
- D. The Policies Map shows those parts of the designated Network that are known or likely to have biodiversity value either as habitat areas; as hedgerows or lines of trees; or as streams and rivers. For the purpose of calculating Biodiversity Net Gain requirements using DEFRA's latest metric, development proposals located within or adjoining that part of the Network should anticipate achieving at least a medium distinctiveness multiplier score.
- E. Any proposal that can demonstrate that off-site compensation to mitigate for biodiversity loss is necessary must follow a sequential approach to its delivery. The gain should be delivered within or adjoining the network where the land is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain. If this is not practical, then gain should be delivered on land within an adjoining Parish that is suited in principle for delivering the necessary gain. Only if it can be shown that this is not practical may the gain be delivered on other land.

5.25 Much of the southern half of the town is identified by Huntingdonshire District Council as a 'Green Infrastructure Priority Area'. The Great Ouse Valley flood meadows are a major landscape, nature conservation and recreational asset. The flood meadows are important in both landscape and nature conservation terms. The Meadow Lane Gravel Pits supports a number of nationally scarce species including dragonfly and vascular plant species. The Hemingford Grey Meadow also supports nationally scarce plant species, although lies outside of the designated neighbourhood area. The seasonal flooding helps maintain plant diversity along with traditional management of the meadows but flood meadows in general are vulnerable to changes in flow rate and water borne pollution both of which could be exacerbated by additional development. The area is also notable for an SSSI south of The Thicket to the west of St Ives and there are other smaller County Wildlife Sites around the River Great Ouse. Climate change is making this type of 'green infrastructure' more valuable in a variety of ways, as well as being important for the local community to enjoy. Green infrastructure serves to balance built development – it facilitates opportunities for people to access open space and provides habitats for wildlife. Improving the ecological, visual, heritage and recreational value of our town brings environmental, social and health benefits. Berman Park is a recent addition to the town's green infrastructure. By embracing these nature and biodiversity features it gives them more importance in the planning system and contributes to health and wellbeing.

5.26 The policy refines adopted HLP Policy L3 on Green Infrastructure by identifying the Green Infrastructure Network of St Ives. Green infrastructure can be broadly defined as a network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings. This includes parks, public open spaces, allotments, watercourses, play areas, playing fields as well as informal open land and associated features such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, green roofs and green walls. The Policies Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applications to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account.

5.27 The policy requires that all development proposals that lie within the network, or that adjoin it, should consider how they may improve it, or at the very least do not undermine its integrity of connecting spaces and habitats. This may mean that development layouts are designed to contribute to the network's effectiveness. The local community has been particularly supportive of more wildlife/wildflower areas and hedges to allow birds to nest as well as taking active measures to address biodiversity loss/climate emergency. The policy therefore also requires a biodiversity net gain to be delivered. This is expected to be in line with national provisions which is expected to be a minimum of 10% as identified in the Environment Act 2021. Net gain will be measured using DEFRA's latest biodiversity metric.

5.28 Clauses D and E respond to the biodiversity net gain (BNG) provisions of the Environment Act 2021, which will become a statutory part of plan making and development management in November 2023, April 2024 for small sites. The BNG Metric (currently in its 4.0 version and includes a Small Sites Metric which is a simplified version of

the 4.0 Metric) will provide the means for applicants to calculate the baseline biodiversity value of the application site in determining the net gain requirement of their proposals. The Policies Map makes a distinction between those parts of the Network that have, or are likely to have, existing biodiversity value, based on published mapped data and observation, and those that do not. Green infrastructure is multi-functional but some features – for example amenity and formal recreational land – are unlikely to have biodiversity value, or will be suited to improving that value by the nature of their use.

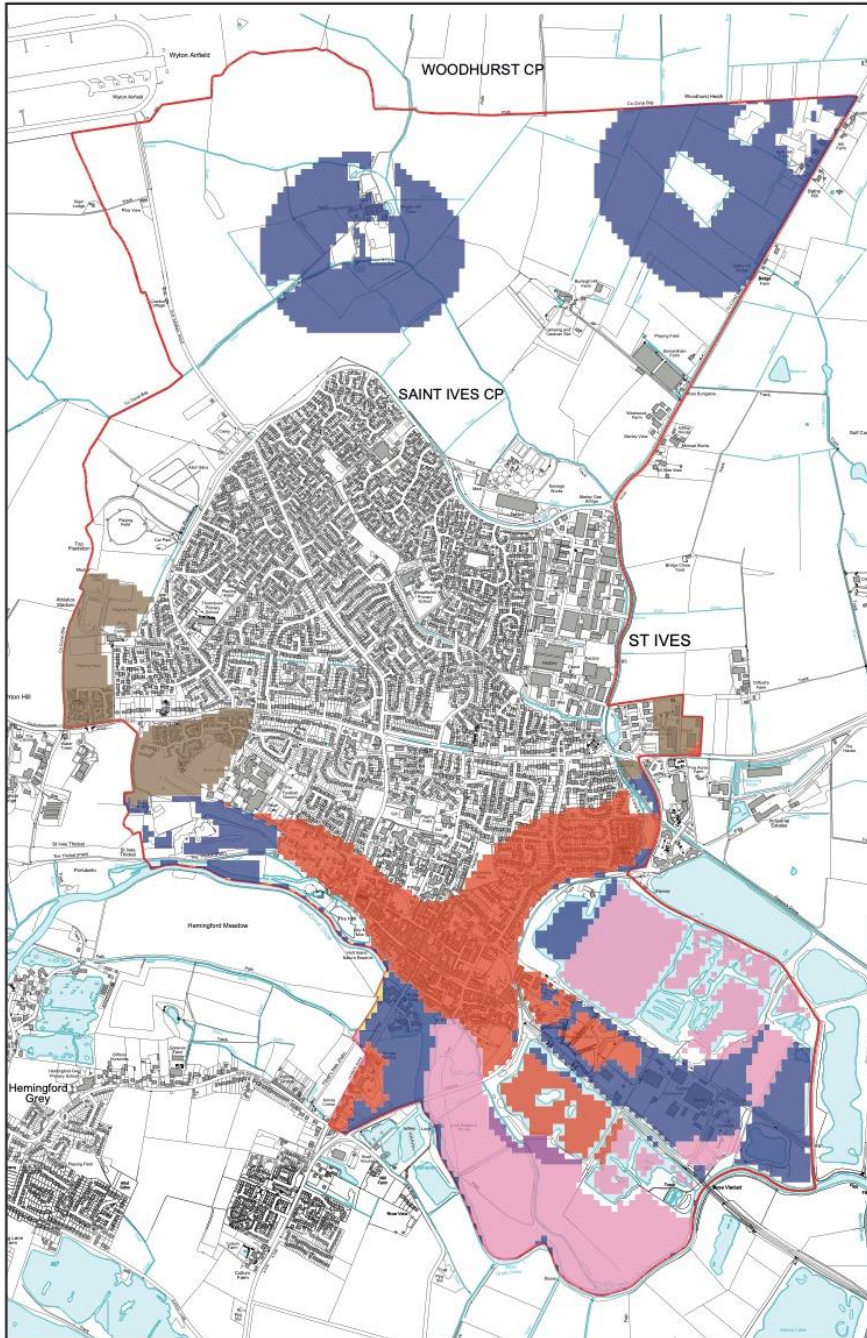
5.29 Clause D relates to those parts of the Network of biodiversity value. Given it includes all defined Priority Habitats and semi-natural habitats, native hedgerows and trees and natural water bodies, the clause anticipates that the distinctiveness multiplier score of the BNG Metric (from very low to very high) will be at least medium.

5.30 Finally, the policy sets out how the loss of biodiversity value will be addressed through a sequential approach. The new biodiversity net gain requirement of at least 10% (as set out by the Environment Act of 2021) should be delivered either onsite or within or adjoining the Network so that the benefits of development are accrued as close as possible. However, it is accepted that the Network in the Parish may not be suited to delivering every type of required off-site gain. In such cases Clause E allows for the gain to be delivered in adjoining Parishes to St Ives or, as a final resort, on land elsewhere.

5.31 Whilst much of the open countryside in the neighbourhood area already has Countryside Stewardship Agreements for proposals seeking to extend the existing Network, and delivering biodiversity net gain within the Parish, as per Clauses C and E in the policy, Plans G and H indicate where land has been identified as suited in principle for achieving these improvements. Plan G indicates National Habitat Network expansion, action, enhancement and restorable habitat zones using the National Habitat Network Maps evidence base by Natural England in May 2020 ([link](#)) and Plan H additional catchment woodland, riparian woodland and floodplain woodland planting opportunities using the 'Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk' evidence base by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Programme and Environment Agency in February 2021 ([link](#)). The Town Council will seek to work with landowners to realise such opportunities where possible avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.



**St Ives Neighbourhood Plan  
Green Infrastructure Network  
(National Habitat Network) -  
May 2023**

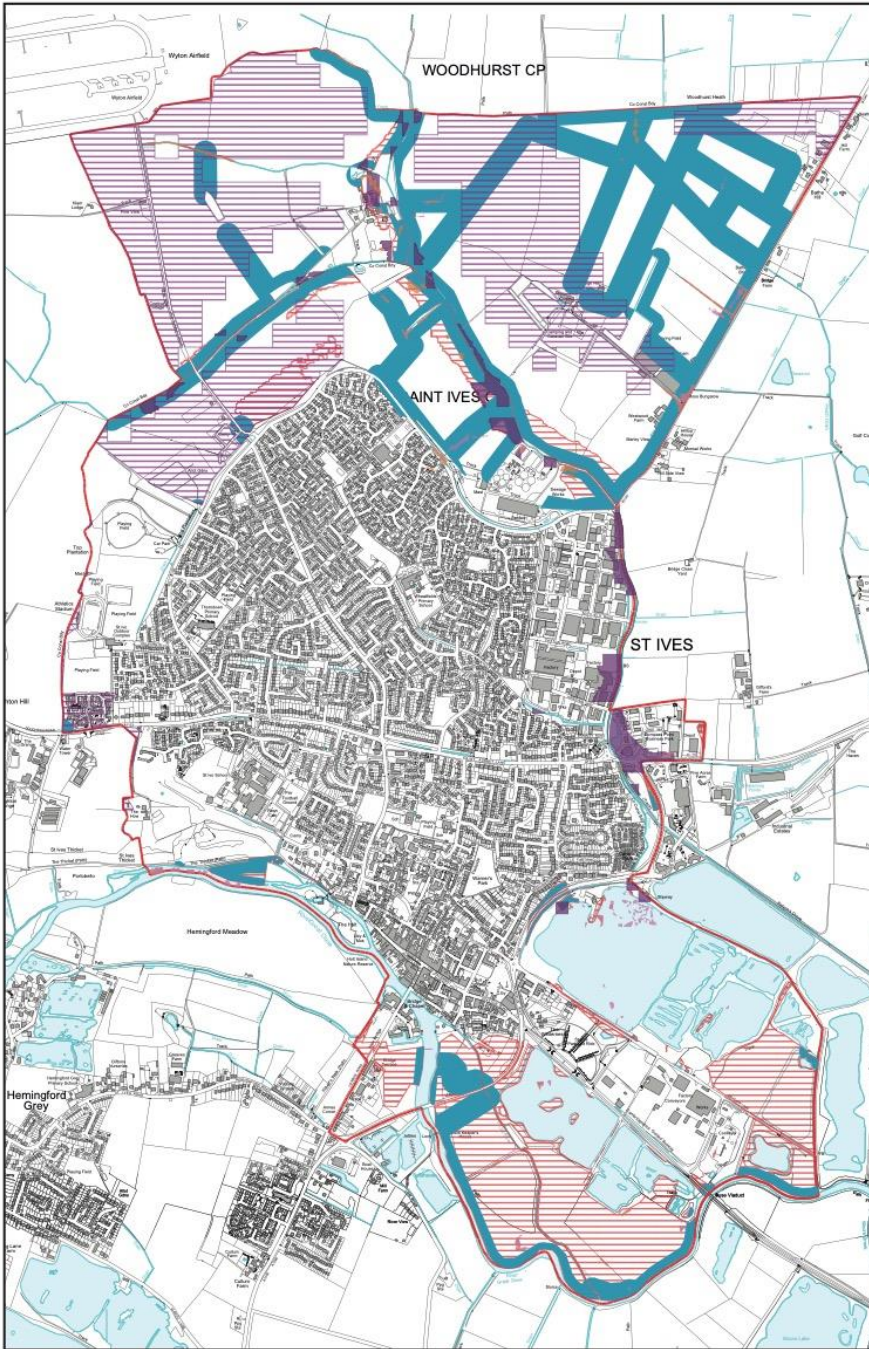


-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Existing Green Infrastructure
-  Existing Blue Infrastructure
- National Habitat Network:**
-  Habitat Restoration-Creation
-  Fragmentation Action Zone
-  Network Expansion Zone
-  Network Enhancement Zone 1
-  Network Enhancement Zone 2
-  Restorable Habitat

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**Plan G: National Habitat Network opportunities in St Ives**

## St Ives Neighbourhood Plan Green Infrastructure Network (Natural Flood Management) - May 2023



-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Existing Green Infrastructure
-  Existing Blue Infrastructure
- Natural Flood Management:**
-  Additional Floodplain Woodland
-  Additional Riparian Woodland
-  Additional Catchment Woodland
-  Enhanced Floodplain Reconnection
-  Runoff attenuation features to reduce 1/30 annual probability flows
-  Runoff attenuation features to reduce 1/100 annual probability flows

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**Plan H: Natural flood management planting opportunities in St Ives**

## **POLICY SI8: ACTIVE TRAVEL**

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active Travel Network and opportunities for improvements as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of prioritising active travel.**
- B. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should sustain, and where practicable, enhance the functionality of the Network by virtue of their layout and means of access and landscape treatment.**
- C. Proposals to avoid harm to the functioning or connectivity of the Network, or opportunities for improvements to the Network, links to the riverfront of the River Great Ouse and the wider countryside, will be supported.**
- D. Where relevant, proposals will be required to make a direct and proportionate contribution to delivering improvements to the Network.**

5.32 The climate emergency demands a radical approach to active and healthy travel by encouraging more people to move around the town by foot and by bike and to make it safer for young people to walk and cycle to school. While St Ives has a far more comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes than many other towns of its size and is fortunate in having access to the Greenway towards Cambridge, it is recognised that new development is too often built around car use with residents having little choice but to drive for almost every journey. There is also room for improving links to the riverfront and the wider open countryside. Through community consultation it also became clear that linking existing routes, adding more cycle routes, diverting the Ouse Valley Way and improving links to neighbouring villages was also important in thinking about improving active travel.

5.33 The policy therefore seeks to encourage safe, accessible, convenient and enjoyable means of walking and cycling in the parish. It refines HLP Policy LP16 by providing a local element to its provisions in defining the existing walking and cycling routes. The Policies Map shows the full extent of the Network, which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. The policy requires all development proposals that lie within or adjacent to the Network to consider how they may improve connectivity, or at the very least do not undermine the existing value of the Network, or the opportunities for improvement.

5.34 Where proposals include provision for amenity spaces, landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness and connectivity of routes. Proposals should

therefore consider this in the design of schemes without undermining other planning policy objectives.

5.35 The Town Council also continues to liaise with Huntingdonshire District Council on its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and LCWIP proposals are also identified on the Policies Map. These are considered to form part of the Network and its opportunities. In some cases, proposals will enable the creation of new connections and/or the delivery of opportunities for improvement that extend the benefits of the Network. They will be supported provided they are appropriate in other respects. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network, or opportunities for improvement, will be refused permission. The policy also seeks additional developer contributions for the improvement to the Network where relevant.

## POLICY SI9: PASSIVHAUS BUILDINGS

- A. All development must be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.
- B. Wherever feasible, all buildings should be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.
- C. All planning permissions granted for new and refurbished buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation Report to the Local Planning Authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause B. Where the Report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.
- D. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emission Assessment, using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.
- E. A Sustainability Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy (except for householder applications). The statement will include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of buildings over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

5.36 One of the most important measures that can be taken to tackle climate change is in how buildings are designed to ensure they are 'zero carbon ready' now, so they don't have to be expensively retrofit in only a few years' time (at an estimated cost per dwelling of between £15K/£25K). PassivHaus is the most common and rigorous design approach, although the build cost is slightly higher than normal, the ongoing energy cost to occupiers is a fraction of the cost now (so avoiding fuel poverty). This design approach also avoids the 'performance gap'. Not every site can be designed in this way, but many can should be, to avoid adding to the retrofitting costs of the existing building stock.

5.37 The policy is in five parts, the combination of which is intended to deliver a step change in the energy performance of all new developments in the Town and, in doing so, encourage and incentivise the use of the Passivhaus or equivalent standard of building design. Along with the passive design capacity assessment, it is anticipated that designers will demonstrate compliance using a design for performance methodology such as the Passivhaus Planning package or CIBSE TM34 Operational Energy. Achieving this level of performance will make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change that the SINP can deliver.

5.38 Clause A of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design. 'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial decisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost. Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, WODC and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt ([link](#)).

5.39 Its Clause B requires all schemes, no matter what their intended use or size other than householder extensions, to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology for all buildings where it is feasible to do so. It is acknowledged that it may not be feasible to do so on some sites, for practical or cost reasons, and if that is the case it should be fully explained in the planning application.

5.40 In respect of scheme viability, any extra-over cost of building to the 'zero carbon ready' Passivhaus standard (now less than 5%) will diminish to zero well within the period of this Plan, as per both the Governments Regulatory Impact Assessments, research by the Passivhaus Trust, and viability assessments published by a number of Local Planning Authorities. The policy will also ensure that expensive and unnecessary retrofit costs are not passed down to building occupiers in the future, particularly in an area which has relatively high property values. Scheme viability will not therefore be acceptable as a reason for not using the Standard, unless the applicant can demonstrate the scheme has abnormal costs to accommodate.

5.41 The policy requires that the scheme density (measured by dwelling units/Ha) is assessed against that of the local 'character area', as set out in Appendix C of the SINP, in the Design & Access Statement. Outside of such areas, the applicant may define the 'character area' that is relevant for the purpose of this exercise.

5.42 Proposals seeking to apply the PHPP must be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'pre-construction compliance check' completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.

5.43 Clause C requires the developer of a consented housing development scheme of any size to carry out a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) including actual metered energy use, and to submit the report to the local planning authority. It will be implemented by attaching a planning condition, which will only be discharged once the report has been submitted and any recommended actions to rectify any performance gap with the design stage assessment are carried out by the developer. Passivhaus certified schemes will not fail in this way and they are therefore exempted from this policy requirement. In the absence of supplementary guidance from Huntingdonshire District Council on POE, guidance has been included in Appendix C.

5.44 The policy complements HLP Policy LP12 on sustainable design. However, in the absence of any current adopted policy in Huntingdonshire District covering the energy performance of new buildings, Clause D requires all development proposals that are not householder applications to be accompanied by a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Emissions Assessment, RICS methodology is preferred ([link](#)). The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequences of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly; contributing to resource efficiency (Clause A) and contributing to the 'circular economy'.

5.45 This requirement will be added to the Huntingdonshire District Council Validation Checklist for outline and full planning applications applying to proposals in the SINP area until such a time that there is a district-wide requirement.

5.46 Clause E requires the Sustainability Statement for applications already required to be submitted to cover the following:

- an assessment of the proposal to minimise regulated and unregulated emissions, the embodied emissions and the emissions associated with maintenance, repair and replacement of the new building(s), as well as its dismantling, demolition and eventual material disposal
- a calculation of the energy and carbon emissions covered by the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from any other part of the development that are not covered by the Future Homes Standard or Building Regulations

- the proposal to reduce carbon emissions beyond the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations through the energy efficient design of the site, buildings and services
- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low emission decentralised energy where feasible
- the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site, utilising storage technologies where appropriate
- the proposal for a demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage
- an analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy

5.47 Every new build or redevelopment project in the SINP area provides an opportunity to make a difference and a contribution towards meeting our climate change targets for 2050. This new information requirement need not be an unreasonable expectation of even the smallest schemes for new buildings.

## **POLICY SI10: URBAN GREENING AND TREE CANOPY COVER**

- A. Save for householder applications, development proposals on sites outside the Town Centre as defined in Policy SI2 and on the Policies Map, and 0.5 ha or more, are required as a minimum to achieve a future canopy cover of 20% of the site area principally through the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees. Where it can be demonstrated that this is impracticable, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs and walls) can be used where they are capable of offering similar benefits to trees.**
- B. Development proposals in the Town Centre as defined in Policy SI2 and on the Policies Map, and on sites below 0.5 Ha, are required to maximise the opportunities available for canopy cover, including tree retention and planting or the provision of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, walls and rain gardens).**

5.48 The Canopy Cover of England's Towns and Cities: baselining and setting targets to improve human health and well-being (Trees People and the Built Environment 3, 2017) ([link](#)) records a canopy cover of various cities across the UK. The i-Tree Canopy tool was created by Forest Research as part of this baseline study. Forest Research is currently undertaking a mapping exercise to build an urban canopy cover map of the UK. It indicates that St Ives currently has <5-15% of canopy cover.



5.49 Canopy cover is the layer of leaves, branches and tree stems that cover the ground. Trees help mitigate the environmental and social challenges our built-up areas, especially our Town Centre, face in a quantifiable way. This is supported by the Government's Net-Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener October 2021 ([link](#)) which recognises the role of green and blue infrastructure, including trees, in providing an opportunity to benefit local economies and bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing. The policy therefore draws inspiration from others, like Wycombe District Council, Cornwall Council, and Wokingham Borough Council through the Twyford Neighbourhood Plan, who are operating planning policies which require new development (excluding householder applications) to achieve a quantifiable future canopy cover, with many others in the process of developing this type of policy, including the London Plan equivalent using the urban greening factor.

5.50 The policy refines HLP Policy LP31 which seeks to avoid the loss of trees unless suitable mitigation measures are incorporated. Doick et al suggests that "towns and cities should set an average target to increase cover to the minimum standard of 20% within ten to twenty years" ([link](#)) and given that St Ives's canopy cover is well below the minimum standard of 20% the policy requires new development to achieve a minimum of 20% canopy cover of the site area to start to bring St Ives's canopy cover in line with minimum standards. In doing so, a wide range of benefits are expected including storing carbon, reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality. Planting more trees was very important to the local community as highlighted by informal consultations.

5.51 As Huntingdonshire District Council does not currently have guidance for applicants to calculate canopy cover, the adopted Wycombe Tree Canopy Cover Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides a Canopy Cover calculator, developed in partnership with Treeconomics, Forest Research and Wycombe District Council ([link](#)). This guidance will assist applicants in calculating how their proposed scheme should seek to meet the requirements of the policy, until such a time that Huntingdonshire District Council adopts its own guidance.

## POLICY SI11: FLOOD RISK AND WATER MANAGEMENT

**A. Development proposals will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that, where appropriate:**

- i. Any development proposed in either flood zone 2 or flood zone 3, on sites over 1ha in flood zone 1, or in a dry island, must be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment that demonstrates that proposals will not increase flood risk from any form of flooding and takes opportunities to reduce flood risk where possible in accordance with national requirements;**
- ii. Managing flood risk must take account the impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development and have full regard to development plan requirements on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);**
- iii. The Water Efficiency Standard of 110 litres per person per day as set out in the National Technical Standards will be achieved in new development;**
- iv. The sewer network can accommodate the additional demand for sewerage disposal either in its existing form or through planned improvements to the system to ensure sufficient wastewater treatment is in place in advance of the first occupation of the development.**

5.52 The River Great Ouse runs along the south of the SINP area and approximately one quarter of land lies within a flood risk area. Climate change has been shown to increase the likelihood of floods in the future. The East of England is in water stress and the HLP Policy LP12 requires new homes to comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency of 110 litres per person per day. Given these characteristics and requirements the policy serves a number of purposes.

5.53 Firstly, due to the risks associated with development on flood risk areas, the policy requires proposals to be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment which must demonstrate that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of climatic factors and vulnerability of users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere incorporating SuDS. This is in line with the requirements of national policy and advice.

5.54 Finally, the policy highlights the requirement for meeting the optional building regulations standard on water efficiency and requires all proposals to demonstrate that there is sufficient sewage capacity to accommodate an increase in demand. The policy is intended to draw greater attention to these issues given the characteristics of the designated neighbourhood area when determining planning applications.

## **POLICY SI12: ST IVES DESIGN PANEL**

- A. Applicants should demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the St Ives Design Panel particularly with regard to design issues.**
  
- B. Proposals for major development should demonstrate in a Statement of Community Involvement how the applicant has engaged in a meaningful way with the St Ives Design Panel prior to submitting a planning application. Where appropriate, the Statement should describe how the knowledge and opinions of the St Ives Design Panel have been sought, positively considered, and responded to in formulating proposals set out in the separate Design and Access Statement. Where a proposal has not accommodated that knowledge or opinion, then the Statement should explain the reasons for not doing so.**
  
- C. Proposals for the approval of detailed matters, including Reserved Matters applications and the discharge of design-related planning conditions, must be scrutinised and recommended for approval to the local planning authority by the St Ives Design Panel prior to their determination by the Local Planning Authority.**

5.55 The policy refines the way in which the process of engaging the local community in the design of major development proposals is carried out.

5.56 The NPPF (paragraph 40) encourages 'any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community...before submitting their applications'. This policy also has regard to paragraph 133 of the NPPF and the way in which the process of engaging the local community and assessing the design of major development proposals, as defined in the NPPF ([link](#)), is carried out. Importantly, it uses accepted means within the District Council's established 'major applications checklist' ([link](#)) to achieve its aims, rather than create an additional process.

5.57 The importance of high-quality design was raised as an important issue by the local community and the Town Council is committed to ensuring that the local community's knowledge and opinions of how the area functions, and their understanding of the essential features of the local character, and their views on the merits of emerging proposals are given proper weight in the consideration of planning applications. The Town Council has therefore committed to setting up a St Ives Design Panel, as provided for by Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 022 Reference ID: 26-022-20191001).

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies will be implemented through the determination of planning applications for development in the Parish by Huntingdonshire District Council.

6.2 In addition to the statutory monitoring that will be undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council, the Town Council will seek to track whether the SINP has a positive impact on planning decisions and whether its objectives are being realised. The Town Council will carry out a more substantial review of the vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the SINP at an appropriate time in the future to take account of the reasoning and evidence base of the emerging Local Plan. Not enough is known at present to inform and shape this neighbourhood plan.

### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

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6.3 The planning authority will use a combination of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the Parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by Huntingdonshire District Council. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

6.4 Where necessary, the Town Council may seek to persuade the Secretary of State to call-in a planning application that it considers is in conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan but which the planning authority has deemed to consent. Similarly, it may also seek to persuade the Secretary of State to recover an appeal of a refused application, where the conflict with one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies has been important in the reasons for refusal. In both cases, the Town Council will do so if it considers matters of national policy significance (for neighbourhood planning) are raised.

### LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

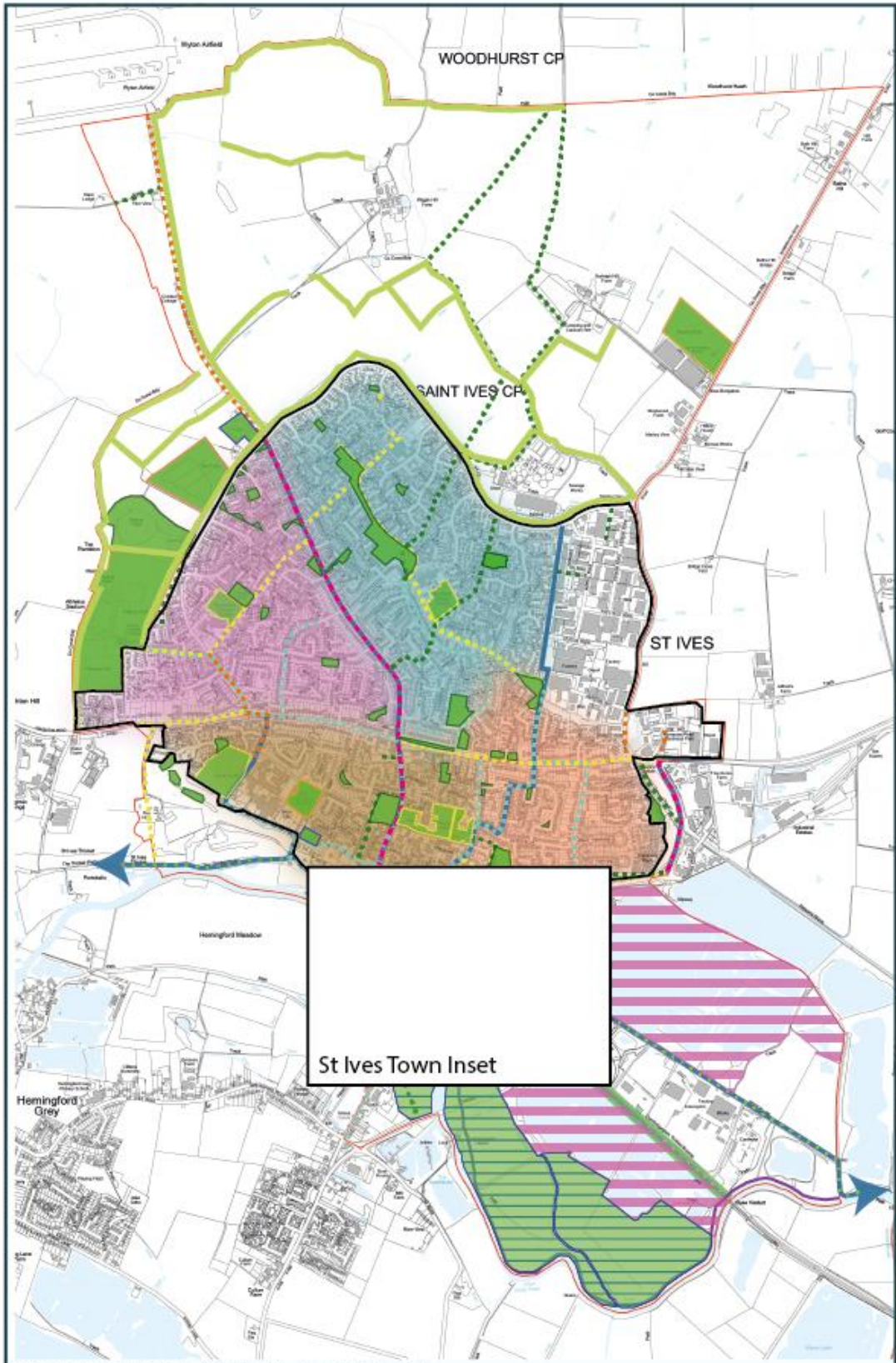
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6.5 Where opportunities arise through S106 agreements (or through the Community Infrastructure Levy) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Should an opportunity arise, the Town Council will review the evidence base and community consultations for the neighbourhood plan to inform its view in liaising with Huntingdonshire District Council. This is in addition to the infrastructure projects that are proposed to be delivered through site specific policies in this Neighbourhood Plan. A preliminary list has been set out below:

- Walking and cycling route improvements
- Warner Park Environmental Enhancements
- Ouse Valley Way diversion and improvements
- Doubling nature projects

6.6 During the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, there have been many ideas for improving or addressing current problems in the parish that lie outside the scope of the land use planning system to control. The Town Council has noted these issues and will take them forward through its day-to-day business and in partnership with the local community and relevant parties. These include the preparation of a Community Action Plan.


POLICIES MAPS & INSETS



# St Ives Neighbourhood Plan

## Pre-submission version


July 2023

-  Neighbourhood Plan Area
-  Policy S11 'A Spatial Plan for the Town'  
Built up Area of St Ives

### Policy S14: 'Walkable Communities'

-  Saint Audrey Lane
-  Hill Rise/Ramsey Road
-  Houghton Road
-  Marley Road/Ramsey Road

### Policy S17: 'Green and Blue Infrastructure Network' Likely to have biodiversity value

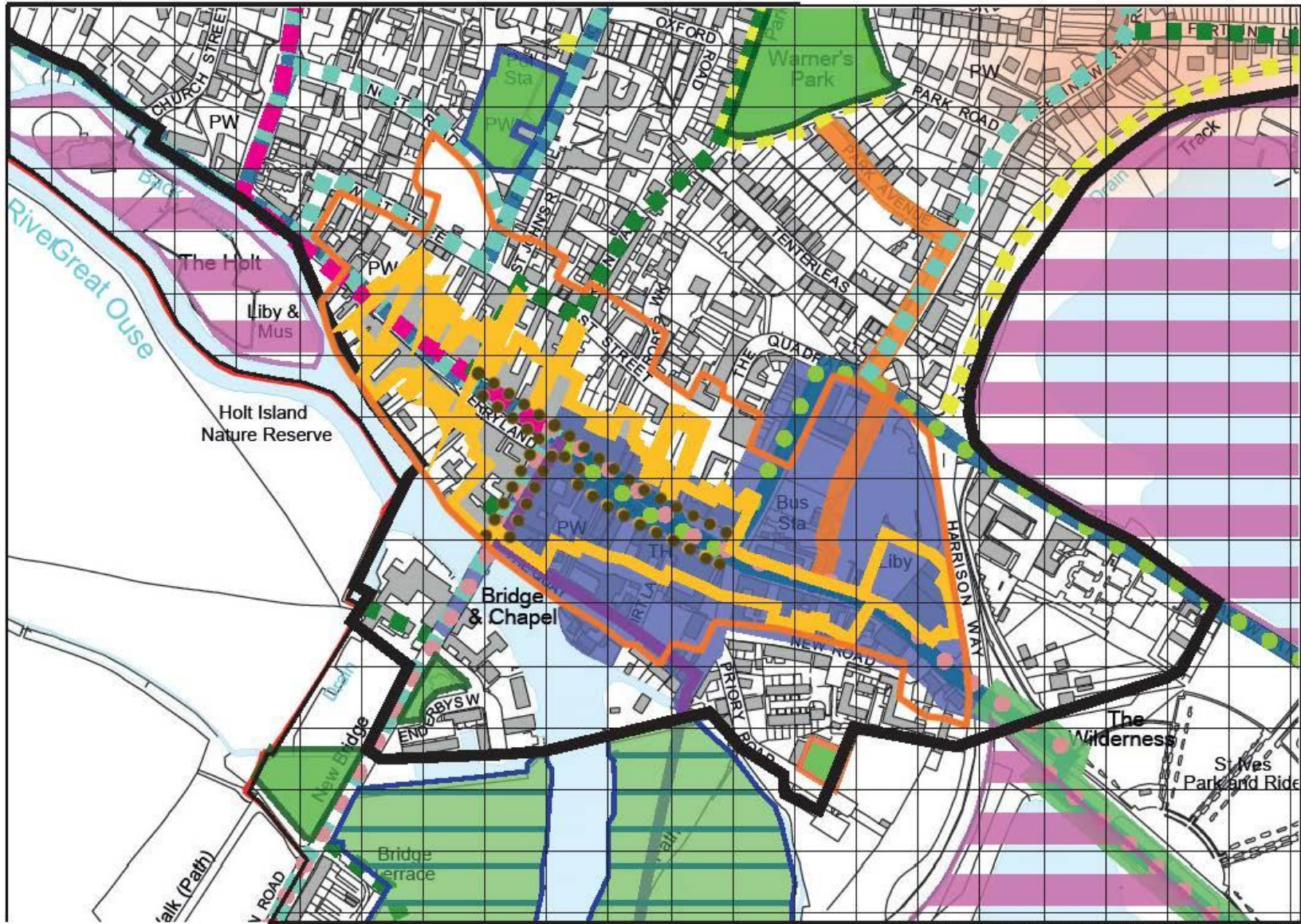
-  County Wildlife Sites
-  Significant trees and hedgerows
-  Water Meadows

### Policy S17: 'Green and Blue Infrastructure Network' Unlikely to have biodiversity value

-  Allotments
-  Parks & Informal Open Spaces  
& Amenity Space
-  Cemeteries
-  School Playing Fields
-  Outdoor Sports

### Policy S18: 'Active Travel Network'

-  LCWIP Strategic Cycle Routes
-  National Cycle Network Route
-  LCWIP Strategic Walking Routes
-  Rights of Way
-  Priorities for LCWIP funding
-  Traffic free/segregated routes
-  St Ives Greenway
-  SINP Proposed Cycle Routes
-  Ouse Valley Way
-  Ouse Valley Way  
Diversion Route
-  SINP Proposed Town Centre Routes







# St Ives Neighbourhood Plan

## Town Centre Inset Pre-submission version

### August 2023

 Neighbourhood Plan Area


Policy S11 'A Spatial Plan for the Town'


 Built-up area boundary

 Great Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Priority Area

Policy S12 'A Successful and Prosperous Town Centre'

 St Ives town centre boundary


 Primary Shopping Area

 Primary Shopping Frontage


Policy S13 'Town Centre East - Regeneration Opportunities'

 Town Centre East Masterplan Area

Policy S14 'Walkable Communities'


 Saint Audrey Lane


Policy S17 'Green and Blue Infrastructure'  
Known or likely to have biodiversity value

 County Wildlife Sites

 Water Meadows

Policy S17: 'Green and Blue Infrastructure'  
Other


 Allotments

 Parks & Informal Open Spaces & Amenity Space


 Cemeteries


Policy S18: 'Active Travel Network'


 LCWIP Strategic Cycle Routes

 National Cycle Network Route


 LCWIP Strategic Walking Routes


 Rights of Way


 Priorities for LCWIP funding

 Traffic free/segregated routes

 St Ives Greenway

 Ouse Valley Way Diversion Route

 Ouse Valley Way

 SINP Proposed Town Centre Routes

## APPENDIX A – INFORMAL CONSULTATION REPORT

Provided as a separate file

## APPENDIX B – TOWN CENTRE EAST MASTERPLAN AREA STUDY

Provided as a separate file

## APPENDIX C – POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION GUIDANCE NOTE

Pulling on latest guidance and best practice, this guidance note sets out how Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) should be undertaken.

1.01 Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is the method of obtaining feedback on a building's energy performance 'in use', to ensure it measures up to the commitments made by the team that designed and built it. It offers significant potential to address the performance gap and occupant satisfaction.

1.02 Where a monitoring regime to ensure the 'as designed' building performance targets are achieved in practice for all new and refurbished buildings is required, it is important that data is collected robustly, following good practice POE principles. It is therefore recommended that for residential development the POE methodology in section 11.4 of the Home Quality Mark ONE: Technical Manual: England, Scotland & Wales SD239 (2018)58, or as updated, is used as a guide for meeting this requirement. For non-residential buildings the BSRIA Soft Landings and Design for Performance framework (BG 76/2019), or as updated, may be used.

1.03 Applicants are required to set out in their Sustainability Statement how their monitoring regime, based on the HQM, BSRIA or similar methodology, will work in practice and be independently verified by a third party. The Sustainability Statement to be submitted with the planning application.

1.04 As each new or refurbished building comes into use, the developer must ensure performance monitoring and data collection for all relevant parameters for one whole year is carried out once the building is substantially occupied, in line with good POE practice for residential or non-residential uses. This verification process should entail, after appropriate commissioning has taken place, comparison of the 'as designed' parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) to monitoring data under the same categories, to assess and compare actual performance.

1.05 In order to account for seasonality, a minimum of 12 months monitoring data is required. On the other hand, to account for actual weather, the modelling results can be adjusted with degree days for the relevant year.

1.06 A 'performance gap metric', which will compare designed and actual performance (e.g. a percentage difference) for each of the 4 required parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) should be issued at POE stage. This needs to be issued for both the 'central' scenario and the 'lowest acceptable performance /reasonable worst-case scenario' as a minimum, with multiple scenarios considered if at all possible.

1.07 The process and reporting methodology used for the POE will need to be repeatable, so that performance can be monitored for at least 2 annual space heating cycles.

1.08 A report will then be required to be submitted to both building owners/occupiers and to Huntingdonshire District Council, which states the performance gap metric and identifies any reasons for deviation from predicted energy usage, carbon emissions, indoor air quality and overheating performance, as well as recommendations for reasonable corrective action that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the performance gap.

1.09 The submission of the monitoring report to owners/occupiers and the council must be secured by planning condition, to be determined at the time of application based on case-specific factors. The applicant must demonstrate that the reasonable corrective actions committed to in the monitoring report, and subsequently agreed by Huntingdonshire District Council, have been implemented through another annual heat cycle before the condition will be discharged.