



Hunsdon Area Neighbourhood Plan Group
c/o Carole Page
Rosemary Cottage
Acorn Street
Hunsdon
SG12 8PE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

19th March 2021 (by email)

Dear Neighbourhood Plan Group,

Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan- Pre-Submission Draft Jan 2021

Introduction

CPRE Hertfordshire supports the production of Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) and is grateful for the opportunity to comment. We congratulate the Neighbourhood Planning Group, Hunsdon Parish Council and participating residents on its production and appreciate the broad scope, and the extent of the work involved in the plan's preparation. The overall aims of calming traffic and improving the village centre are welcomed.

Strengths

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is professionally produced and well-written with a great deal of local information about Hunsdon the place and its heritage. In our view the value of a NP is greatest when it develops existing development management policy based on added local evidence and inputs and we welcome the treatment of :

- local views
- local non designated assets
- local hedgerows

Suggested amendments

The Action Plan contains a lot of tasks, and, arising from the investigations of footpaths, schools and health facilities and other issues, CPRE Hertfordshire makes the following positive suggestions for inclusion either as objectives, in policy wording or supported within the proposed action plan.

Public realm – the village centre

- A NP is a good vehicle for the promotion of positive public realm works that will often mean changes to the public highway. The centre of Hunsdon is attractive but the priority may be altered towards pedestrians and the de-prioritisation of vehicles.



- 'The Crown' and the village centre may be busier if the car park is transformed to be part of a local village green with seating to bring more people into the village and encourage them to stay longer.
- Some areas would benefit from additional greening and landscape design and general locations could be identified in the NP.
- The provision of landscaped 'gateways' to the village centre could signal a changed priority which could include the removal of road markings. A professional design advisor could assist the plan with this but relevant documents to consult are:
 - *Manual for Streets* 2007 (due to be revised)
 - *Traffic in Villages*. Dorset County Council, 2014. A good reference for ideas on the design of rural streets and village centres.
 - *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans – Technical Guidance Note*. Department of Transport 2017.
 - *Place Value and the Ladder of Place Quality*, Place Alliance 2019

Footpaths and cycleways

- St Dunstan Church on Church Lane is a beautiful walking destination, but unsafe. The NP should prioritise a new link between FP4 and FP1 with a path on the field edge west of Church Lane – a valuable missing link in the ROW footpaths network.
- Further examples of footpath and cycleway improvement should be included in the NP.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should ensure that there is a continuous cycleway link to Harlow as part of the Gilston Plans

To support delivery and monitoring

- Formation of a local Climate Action Group and / or Placemaking Group.
- Establishment of a local Design Review Panel should be established to advise regularly on important new applications, preferably with a mix of local and professional expertise.

Further issues to consider

A number of issues may be addressed which would broaden the scope of the NP, and respond to changes taking place in living and working conditions, local centres and wider environmental concerns. These may be addressed by posing questions for consideration either now or in the future:

- Could the NP include more detailed and positive steps to support village shops, better play facilities or footpaths as wanted?
- What scope is there to promote a central café meeting place and taxi rank for instance?
- Could the NP include a positive policy on home working and mixed use where a dwelling has a part change of use to provide a valued local service?
- Could the NP identify Assets of Community Value?



- How safe is it for children to reach play spaces independently and what can be done to improve this?
- Might one objective be to support local actions that reduce greenhouse gas (carbon)? emissions and align with climate goals, and how might these be addressed and monitored?
- Should the NP consider promoting ebikes, quasi taxi services or car share schemes?
- Should the NP include positive policies, even sites, for groups of local people seeking to develop a Co-Housing Scheme or a Local Community Land Trust?

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager