



STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

August 2026

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STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between the Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in relation to the developing Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2046 (HLP).

It has been prepared jointly by HDC and CCC in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to collaborate and identify strategic matters, documenting cross-boundary matters and progress in cooperating to address these matters.

The statutory provisions relating to the duty to cooperate were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and are set out in section 33A of the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#). It placed a legal duty on local planning authorities such as HDC to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with prescribed bodies as identified in Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 on strategic cross boundary matters to maximise the effectiveness of the local plan preparation. The Statutory Duty was formally revoked on 25 March 2026; Huntingdonshire District Council has however continued to cooperate and engage within the spirit of the regulations.

Huntingdonshire District Council is the Local Planning Authority for the Huntingdonshire administrative area. CCC is a Prescribed Body as defined in Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

HDC has engaged extensively with CCC on the development of the Local Plan from the outset and has been formally consulted and responded at consultations in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

This SoCG set outs the basis on which the parties have actively and constructively worked together to meet the requirements of future growth as a result of the Huntingdonshire's local plan. The statement sets out the agreement, outstanding matters between parties and where necessary areas of disagreement as appropriate and covers matters relating to education infrastructure.

2. PARTIES INVOLVED

The parties involved in this Statement of Common Ground are:

- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council

3. SIGNATORIES

The signatories on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council are:

Clara Kerr - Head of Planning Infrastructure and Public Protection



10/08/2026

Name

Date

The signatories on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council are:

Tim Watkins, Head of Planning



12/08/2026

Name

Date

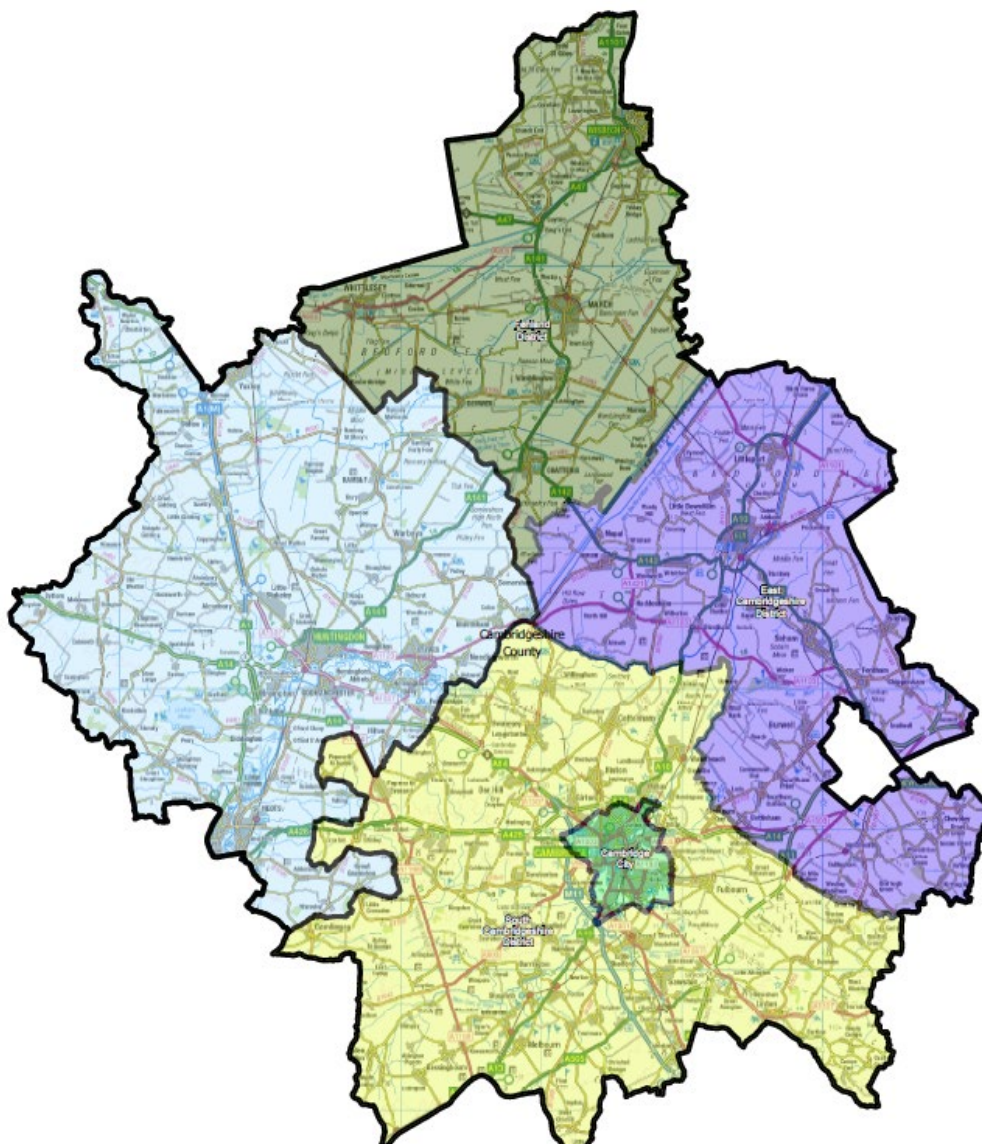
4. ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS COVERED/ STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHY

CCC is responsible for statutory education planning, school admissions, and special educational needs (SEND) support for children aged 0-19 (up to 25 for young people with SEND).

HDC and CCC recognise the cumulative impacts of growth on education infrastructure provision, and that growth occurring both within Huntingdonshire and in neighbouring Local Planning Authorities need to be considered as a whole to ensure a coordinated approach to education provision. This consideration has been assessed and taken into account through HDCs Infrastructure Delivery Studies.

The strategic area identified as relevant to this Statement of Common Ground is the Cambridgeshire County Council upper tier local authority area, which Huntingdonshire District Council sits within.

Figure 1: Area Covered by Statement of Common Ground



5. EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

Background

On 24 January 2023, Huntingdonshire District Council's [Cabinet](#) agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan.

Engagement in relation to infrastructure requirements and capacity has been ongoing since 2022 across a number of departments within CCC. Cambridgeshire County Council – Children Education and Families and HDC - have worked collaboratively throughout the process, with a record of engagement included within Table 1.

The methodology for the Sustainability of Settlements Report was consulted on as the 'Settlement Hierarchy Methodology' between 29 March and 10 May 2023. As a result of the responses to the consultation Huntingdonshire District Council arranged a series of meetings with Cambridgeshire County Council's Children, Education and Families Directorate to work towards developing an agreed set of indicators and data to assess sustainability in respect of Education. This provided an assessment of access to and capacity of primary and secondary schools by settlement across the district at a specific point in time.

Detailed evidence relating to capacity and education infrastructure was also provided on a site-by-site basis to HDCs Land Availability Assessments consultation (2024), additional sites Land Availability Assessments consultation (2025) and Additional Proposed Site Allocations (2026).

As part of the development of the local plan the council undertook a Stage 1 Infrastructure Delivery Study Baseline Report 2025. This assessed a series of growth options and strategic sites to inform the final growth strategy for the local plan and the selection of strategic sites alongside a baseline assessment of infrastructure provision within the District including early years, primary and secondary, further and higher and SEND education infrastructure.

Prior to consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan a Stage 2 (final) Infrastructure Delivery Study (IDS) was conducted to identify the infrastructure required to support growth across the district. Cambridgeshire County Council – Children Education and Families and HDC have been engaging throughout the development of these evidence bases, through the provision of information, calculations and costs required to support new education provision and open discussion on capacity and need.

Strategic Matter

As part of the development of the Local Plan, Huntingdonshire must demonstrate that it has identified the infrastructure required to support growth. This includes education (set out in paragraph 20 of the NPPF) and the need to ensure that adequate education provision can be accommodated to support growth as a result of the Local Plan. CCC oversees education provision across the county of Cambridgeshire, the NPPF requires that “Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.”

Through the findings of the Infrastructure Delivery Study and ongoing engagement with CCC the following was identified with regard to education:

- The scale and distribution of planned growth across the District will generate additional demand for early years provision with an estimated total cost of £27,450,684. This provision is split between on-site and off-site provision, with all strategic sites delivering early years provision co-located alongside primary provision, and delivering a standalone nursery, where required, to ensure the full range of funded entitlements can be met with delivery phased to coincide with new housing development and occupation.
- Since the publication of the Baseline Assessment in October 2025 several schools are now in the process of consulting on reducing their published admission number (PAN) due to low pupil numbers. This means that, if approved, they will have less resource and intakes will be smaller, but physical capacity at these schools will remain the same. Schools currently consulting on a Published Admission Number (PAN) reduction include:
 - Abbots Ripton C of E Primary School - reducing their PAN from 17 to 15.
 - St John’s Primary School, Huntingdon- reducing their PAN from 60 to 30
 - Thongsley Fields Primary and Nursery School, Huntingdon - reducing their PAN from 60 to 30
 - Winhills Primary Academy, St Neots - reducing their PAN from 45 to 30
 - Offord Primary School, Offord D’Arcy – reducing their PAN from 17 to 15
- The expansion of Abbey College, Ramsey will deliver an additional 150 secondary places and is expected to be completed by September 2027. This will enable the school to operate with a PAN of 240 in Years 7 to 11.
- The scale and distribution of planned growth across the District will generate additional demand for primary provision with an estimated total cost of £187,477,580. Additional demand for secondary provision generates an estimated total cost of £143,587,656. This provision is split between on-site provision and contributions towards expansion of existing provision. All strategic sites are

expected to deliver primary provision on-site. All strategic sites identified within the Pre-Submission Local Plan are expected to deliver secondary provision apart from Needingworth 1 (Giffords Park, East of B1040) and St Neots 1 (East of Loves Farm (Tithe Farm)) which will provide developer contributions.

- It is acknowledged that there is already a pressure on further and higher provision within the district. As a result, it is likely that any new secondary school would be designed to cater for the 11-19 age range.
- A new Area Special School, Prestley Wood Academy, opened in Alconbury Weald in September 2024 for ages 4 to 19.
- A new secondary school, Alconbury Weald Church Academy, is currently under construction. The school, which will serve the Alconbury Weald and Grange Farm developments, is due to be completed in 2027.
- A new Area Special School located in Fenland is planned to be delivered by the DfE and in line with the county's *Inclusion for All* agenda. It is expected to support current SEND requirements county-wide.
- Smaller enhanced resource bases are being developed across county schools, and accessibility adaptations are being supported in mainstream schools to ensure they are Inclusive Places able to support more SEN and SEND students within local mainstream settings.
- The scale and distribution of planned growth across the District will generate additional demand for SEND provision with an estimated total cost of £34,428,860.
- SEND provision does not operate on catchment areas and places are allocated based on the school/setting most able to meet a child's needs, taking into consideration parental preference at all times. Therefore, effort is made to ensure that suitable provision is available across county. Contributions will be requested from developments towards countywide schemes.

Areas of agreement / Disagreement

Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council agree that:

- HDC and CCC have had ongoing cooperation and engagement throughout the development of the local plan.
- HDC and CCC have been actively engaged in the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Study and the assessment of sites and settlements.
- The cumulative impact of growth as a result of the Local Plan and growth in neighbouring areas have been adequately addressed and identified through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Studies.
- Any existing deficits in education infrastructure provision is not the remit of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2046.
- CCC are the responsible body for the provision of educational infrastructure across Huntingdonshire which meets basic need requirements. Monies levied through

developer contributions will assist in the delivery of future infrastructure provision to meet the needs of growth across the plan period. However, where section 106 funds have not been secured, and demand for expansion can be evidenced, Cambridgeshire County Council will be encouraged to apply for funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

- Schools and academy trusts are responsible for managing the maintenance and condition of existing infrastructure.
- Strategic sites North Huntingdon 3: Lodge Farm, North of A141, North Huntingdon 4: Wyton Airfield and Hemingford Abbots 1: The Lattenburys identified within the Pre-Submission Local Plan are expected to deliver primary and secondary education provision. This is adequately addressed within the relevant site allocation policies, the Infrastructure Delivery Study and accompanying Schedule with specific detail to be agreed at planning application stage.
- Strategic sites Needingworth 1: Giffords Park, East of B1040 and St Neots 1: East of Loves Farm (Tithe Farm) identified within the Pre-Submission Local Plan are expected to provide developer contributions to contribute to educational infrastructure delivery with specific detail to be agreed at planning application stage. This is adequately addressed within the relevant site allocations policies, the Infrastructure Delivery Study and accompanying Schedule.
- The expansion of Abbey College, Ramsey will deliver an additional 150 secondary places and is expected to be completed by 2027, which will provide additional places for the wider catchment and contribute, alongside the provision of developer contributions, to meeting future growth needs.
- SEND provision does not operate on catchment areas and places are sorted by the type of facility across Cambridgeshire that best meet a child's needs, taking into consideration parental preference at all times. Contributions will be requested from developments towards countywide schemes.
- On smaller sites, off-site developer contributions will be determined at application stage and guided by the Infrastructure policies and the Developer Contributions Appendix as set out in the Local Plan in consultation with CCC.
- HDC and CCC will continue to engage and share information including delivery rates and housing trajectories including through the negotiation and calculation of site-specific developer contributions to enable CCC to forward plan for future education infrastructure provision.

6. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

HDC and CCC have been cooperating closely and engaging on an ongoing basis through meetings, document reviews and collaboration, as well as through written consultation representations. A record of key engagement can be found in Table 1.

HDC and CCC agree to the following governance arrangements:

- Ongoing engagement and cooperation through meetings and discussions and data provision on matters relating to education infrastructure
- Agree to review this SoCG and update as relevant

Table 1: Record of Meetings and Correspondence with CCC

The key areas of collaboration to date have been identified below (these exclude on the most part email exchanges and consultation responses). The parties have worked collaboratively within a close working relationship to recognise, raise and remedy arising issues.

TABLE 1: Record of Meetings and Correspondence with CCC Children Education and Families

Date	Format	Remit	Attendees/ recipients / contacts	Summary
02/03/2023	Consultation Response	Response to consultation on the Statement of Consultation	Cambridgeshire County Council (all)	Response to consultation on the Statement of Consultation
02/03/2023	Consultation Response	Response to Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology consultation	Cambridgeshire County Council (all)	Response to Draft Settlement Hierarchy Methodology consultation
04/07/2023	Consultation Response	Response to Issues Engagement Paper	Cambridgeshire County Council (all)	Response to Issues Engagement Paper
2023	Continued engagement – multiple formats including meeting and emails	Sustainability of Settlement Indicators and methodology	- Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families - Huntingdonshire District Council	Continued discussion and sharing of information to inform the sustainability of settlements indicators and approach to methodology, resulting in an agreed approach that assesses, access to and capacity of primary and secondary education.
27/11/2024	Consultation Response	Response to consultation on Land Availability Assessments	Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families	Response to consultation on Land Availability Assessments

Date	Format	Remit	Attendees/ recipients / contacts	Summary
22/05/2025	Consultation Response	Response to consultation on Additional Sites Land Availability Assessments	Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families	Response to consultation on Additional Sites Land Availability Assessments
12/06/2025	Consultation Response	Responses to stage 1 Infrastructure Delivery Study questionnaire	Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families	Review of baseline assessment. Identification of relevant strategies or plans including the 'Review of Policies and Working Practices', Nearly Zero Energy Buildings Requirements for new public buildings, Estimating demand for education provision arising from new housing developments, Child yield multipliers for early years and children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), Childcare motion, DfE scorecards. Identification of current or planned infrastructure projects including expansion of Ermine Street Church Academy and project for additional capacity at Abbey College. Identification of infrastructure constraints. Comments on Strategic Growth Options.
17/12/2025	Consultation Response	Response to Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 consultation	Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families	Response to Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046 consultation including sites and policies.
05/01/2026	Meeting	Discussion on Infrastructure Delivery Study – Stage 2 questionnaire	- Coordinator Cambridgeshire County Council - Principal Planning Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council - Area Education Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council - Library Support Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council - Implementation Team Leader, Huntingdonshire District Council - DAC Planning	Discussion on education, updates to baseline report. Identification of site size and educational requirements for Primary and Secondary Schools, costs and developer contributions. Request from HDC for more information on SEND provision. Discussion on Library provision infrastructure requirements in relation to population increase including upgrades to static libraries or increased mobile library provision. Discussion on provision of community infrastructure including the aim for a shared use Family Hub for each authority and identification of an emerging policy on youth provision.

Date	Format	Remit	Attendees/ recipients / contacts	Summary
			- DAC Planning - DAC Planning	
09/01/2026	Consultation Response	Responses to Infrastructure Delivery Study – Stage 2 questionnaire	- Cambridgeshire County Council - Children, Education and Families - Huntingdonshire District Council	Response to Stage 2 Infrastructure Delivery Study questionnaire including review of the baseline study, update on scorecard costs. Provision of a summary of the education position for each site, and outline of the infrastructure, which is likely to be required, based on current projected demand. Provision of costs and funding sources. Update on funded projects in the last 5 years including the expansion of Ermine Street Church Academy, Alconbury Weald (providing a further 1FE/210-places), capital works at Sawtry Infant School to enable the infant school to accommodate the increase in children until Saltbrook Academy opens and a new Area Special School at Alconbury Weald, known as Prestley Wood Academy.

7. NEXT STEPS

The parties have also agreed to:

- Keep dialogue open on matters arising which are likely to significantly impact on the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2046.
- Continually review and update this SoCG in light of any changing circumstances; and
- Maintain positive principles of cooperation.

Main points of Contact

The main points of contact for day-to-day collaboration are established as:

- Huntingdonshire District Council: Principal Planning Policy Officer
- Cambridgeshire County Council: Development and Policy Manager