Journey Two

Talented, trained and confident — by 2050 Huntingdonshire will champion upskilling and provide inspiring job opportunities for residents in a variety of industries. We will nurture start-ups, enable businesses to grow, and build a strong local economy.

You said...

‘There are communities of like minded people, like here in St Neots. How will this support those of us who are already here?’

‘What if we make market towns work as market towns?’

‘Don’t put me on a kids’ table. If you want to work with us, take us seriously’

inclusive
economy
WHAT IF?
we created a place where our businesses could flourish?
our businesses and organisations worked hand in hand with young people?
we chose to buy more local?
we could learn new skills at all life stages?

What if... we created a place where our businesses could flourish?

In a world where... resilience and cash reserves of businesses have been hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and where small to medium enterprises often prefer to cluster in areas outside of the district, like Cambridge.

There is a place... that has a truly entrepreneurial spirit with 150 start-ups per month, and a strong economy worth £10billion/year led by manufacturing. With strategic road and rail infrastructure and land prices which are attractive to investors and companies looking to seed, develop and scale. With Cambridge and its world-leading science and research industries and cluster of incubating Uni spin outs on its doorstep.

Which could become... a place where businesses choose to locate and grow thanks to strategies and infrastructure that attract inward investment and high value jobs. Where both start-ups and established industries are supported by the right affordable spaces, whether that be in innovative incubators or large-scale environmentally friendly developments.

But only if... the district throws its weight behind fledgling new businesses — establishing more support networks such as the St Neots Initiative, and only if it ensures its high performing sectors are supported and taps into the potential arising from Cambridge.

Source: "Ready to Recover" Economic Growth Strategy For Huntingdonshire District 2020-2025, Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014)

Guiding Lights

Alconbury Enterprise Campus

The Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus is a multi-use development backed by Enterprise Zone status. It facilitates the co-location of research and development production spaces for small and medium-sized businesses in addition to flexible office incubators, as well as bespoke large buildings. The campus is home to a growing number of companies implementing technology solutions including AI, robotics and automation that supports its manufacturing, cleantech and engineering base. It hosts regular business support seminars including expertise from HDC's Invest in Huntingdonshire team.

Source: Space to make and grow your business - Alconbury Enterprise Campus

What could we do?

inclusive economy

1. Promote Made in Huntingdonshire

Designed to celebrate all that is positive about the Huntingdonshire Business landscape, 'Made in Huntingdonshire' will provide the platform to help celebrate our amazing businesses and their fantastic achievements, which include the diversity of the products that are designed, prototyped and produced en-mass and the service excellence offered by local companies. As well as our people and residents who make all of the above happen, including our rich base of entrepreneurs, heavyweight business leaders and all of the unsung heroes whose combined industry helps underpin our £10 billion/year economy.

2. Foster business development programmes

The setting up of a new business can be daunting and complex. A digital platform with essential guidance to navigating the process can help many entrepreneurs. They might provide guidance on funding, regulation, finding suppliers and marketing, the right premises and much more.

An organisation could be set up as an intermediary who brings into contact the ambitious entrepreneurs with established or larger businesses, suppliers and other experts in the field.

3. Secure the right workspaces

The right space which responds to a business' needs, lies at the heart of a healthy operation. Affordable and flexible incubator clusters where start-ups can flourish, versatile offices which enable hybrid work, and innovative green R&D, warehousing and production facilities with easy distribution access, are all necessary for the district's economic growth. With the right policy and processes, we can deliver and promote spaces, which are accessible by public transport and situated at strategic locations, supported by targeted lower business rates and green grants.

What if... our businesses and organisations worked **hand in hand with young people?**

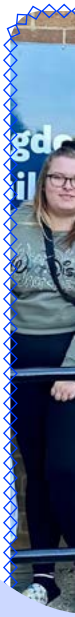
In a world where... young people want to change the world, they also simply want meaningful work that reflects their values. At the same time businesses struggle to recruit the right staff with the knowledge and skills needed by that particular industry. In Huntingdonshire, the working age population is expected to decrease from 61.8% aged 16-64 in 2020 to 57% in 2043, in part due to people moving away.

There is a place... that has a strong and friendly business community, including a high proportion of Small to Medium Enterprises, with plenty of manufacturing, construction, science and tech businesses. With independent initiatives such as Shift Momentum and collaboration potential with Cambridge's world-class economy.

Which could become... a place where businesses, educators and young people work together and listen to each other to match skills with industry needs. Where the younger generation is aware of local opportunities available, the skills they need to get there, and feel motivated by the potential to do what they love. Businesses can become more sustainable in the long run, future proofing their workforce and being exposed to new ideas from our bright young thinkers.

But only if... there is the time, space and networks available to facilitate exchange, relying on a culture of openness. We look to develop a choice of the right training programmes with apprenticeships and short courses providing different ways to get those valuable qualifications.

Source: Cambridgeshire Insights. Top image: Huntingdonshire Youth Work Forum



What could we do?

1. Define Huntingdonshire as a District of Learning

Huntingdonshire could be inspired by European Cities of Learning to integrate learning and training into everyday life, and make participation easier and more engaging.

Local businesses could help design these small scale training programmes, so they reflect local specialisms and industry needs and raise the awareness of local opportunities.

Source: Cities of Learning

2. Create a culture of work experience

Work experience programmes are a great way for young people to understand opportunities available to them or learn first hand about a job they might be interested in but may not have the access to. Businesses gain access to a young pool of labour, who are eager to learn and build a career as well as share their ideas.

Businesses could be encouraged to initiate apprenticeship and work placement programmes across the district. Schools and students could also be supported through a programme that helps find students a place and assists handling their concerns or developing additional skills.

Guiding Lights

Cities of Learning

Many European cities have become Cities of Learning, where learning opportunities are more visible and accessible to young learners. Each city or region uses digital technology to map the learning opportunities, compile online learning ‘playlists’ and provide ‘open badges’. Young people are encouraged to find events and experiences that match their ambitions, either digitally or locally, and build a digital portfolio of their learned skills and achievements. The learning opportunities are contemporary and broad, ranging from game design and entrepreneurship to architecture.

Source: Cities of Learning
Bottom image: Shift Ignite Programme

3. Build a professional network

Planning for the future and ensuring that the current young workforce has the right knowledge and skills is imperative both for their own development and the district’s economic growth.

In order to match demand with supply, a network could be established that links education and training providers, job seeker organisations and youth groups with local businesses.

This could be a combination of a digital platform and events to support information sharing, foster the closer collaboration of educators and employers, advertise opportunities and training, and bring young people into contact with a pool of professionals.

Source: Blueprint for All

What if... we chose to buy more local?

In a world where... what we consume is increasingly expensive and reliant on vulnerable global supply chains, while our high streets are struggling. We are seeing a rise in obesity and diabetes because we aren't eating good quality, healthy food like we used to. In Huntingdonshire, 65.3% of adults are classed as overweight or obese, higher than the England average.

There is a place... with a strong local agricultural economy, a network of diverse local businesses and makers, supported by a wealth of independent retailers. With vibrant market towns which host numerous street markets with local produce and other goods.

Which could become... a district with a revitalised food and goods network where local choices are always the most convenient and cost effective. Local food producers, makers, residents, businesses, supermarkets, schools and community groups can use physical spaces and digital tools to make local products the go-to option. A place with easier routes for businesses to trade and contract with each other locally across all industry sectors.

But only if... farmers and other local producers are encouraged to supply what local people need and sell it in the region. If appropriate physical space and distribution infrastructure are put in place and consumers are informed about the health, sustainability and economic benefits of buying more locally.

Source: Cambridgeshire Insights

Guiding Lights

Totally Locally

Totally Locally is helping towns around the UK and the world support their independent retailers and producers. Volunteers and groups of businesses receive the 'Town Kit', which includes marketing material and a guide on how to launch the campaign. Local businesses are the 'Hidden Gems' who learn how to celebrate their unique products and inform local consumers. This is all centred around the concept that if each person spent £5 per week in local shops, £13.5 billion would go directly to the local economy.

Source: Totally Locally

What could we do?

inclusive economy

1. Support local food hubs and markets

Local Food Hubs could be established at various central locations in the district and rural locations close to their production. The Hubs will aggregate, store, sell on-site and also distribute and market the food products which have been locally produced.

Hubs can play an essential intermediary role between producers who may not have access to warehouses and transport, and the consumers. Farmers Markets, which already exist in the district, are another way of promoting locally sourced products.

Source: Getting to Scale with Regional Food Hubs

2. Support local business networks

In order to foster the local making, growing and producing, our businesses should be effectively supported. The council should work with the business community and other stakeholders to boost existing networks, forums and associations to enhance local trading and contracting.

Support could be in the form of promoting networking platforms and events, where businesses can come into contact with other potential business partners and exchange services. Other mechanisms could include incentives and grants to contract with other local businesses and establishing a district-wide database of businesses and associated service providers.

3. Launch marketing campaigns

Marketing is vital to help local producers, makers, growers and retailers reach their local target market and establish a client base. Digital advertising, news articles, press coverage, email marketing and social media are all effective marketing tools that could be utilised.

We can provide support to businesses through free material, training and guidance, taking advantage of opportunities such as Totally Locally. Local volunteer and community groups could join forces with businesses to become the pioneers who will celebrate the unique local products and make sure the district is informed about them.

What if... we could learn new skills at all life stages?

In a world where... educational attainment in the district is below the national average. Where people aged 65 and above are forecast to grow to 26.7% in 2043, from 20.4% in 2020. But also where digital advancement means that the knowledge and skills attainment methods become more versatile.

There is a place... where 79% of the working age population are economically active, with a robust business network and education providers. This includes good local schools and colleges, and strong links to nearby world-class education at Cambridge University.

Which could become... a place where all residents have access to lifelong learning. Where potential is nurtured from the first thousand days at outstanding schools and early years facilities, and everyone independent of their background and age can reach their full potential at any stage — allowing them to discover fulfilling work or productive new hobbies.

But only if... the public, private, community and academic sectors come together to raise collective ambitions and provide useful training and education in a range of accessible formats, including both physical and digital classrooms.

Source: Huntingdonshire Futures Stakeholder Engagement. Top image: Trumpington Community College, Richard Ellis

What could we do?

1. Reinforce the first years of education

The first thousand days of a child's life are crucial in setting the foundations for future growth. Therefore, it is important to have high quality Early Years facilities and nurseries which nurture and stimulate our young residents.

High quality teaching and learning should continue from primary through to post-16 education. Students should be given opportunities to fulfil their educational potential, including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and socially vulnerable students.

Sufficient supply of high quality school places, physical space enhancements to facilities, and incentives to retain students in education should be provided.

2. Establish community learning centres

Community learning centres are service providers or physical spaces that provide functional literacy, vocational skills, and work-related skills to youth and adults not in education, employment or training. This helps to get people into work, improving skills and confidence.

Huntingdonshire could work in partnership to deliver initiatives and make use of existing spaces, facilities and networks such as libraries, vacant shop units or community centres. The training programmes should respond to the needs of the community and could include English skills, vocational courses, business skills and female-focused upskilling, whilst identifying the types of employment opportunities available through engagement with business networks.

Guiding Lights

Lifelong Learning

Post-pandemic, we have expanded our definition of traditional schooling, including online, shorter, and more specialised courses in our library of learning. Attitudes are still changing. It's not just teaching methods but also subjects and student demographics that are being rewritten. Learning becomes a life-long activity, with no traditional university age, as schools and businesses encourage people of every generation to continue in education. Specialist lifelong learning centres and initiatives are being set up across the UK to widen participation for people of all life stages and demographics.

Source: Lifelong Learning

3. Support the University of the Third Age

The University of the Third Age is a network of local groups across the UK that provide opportunities for people to learn together for fun. Starting in 1982, the approach encourages groups of people no longer in full-time work to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them. University of the Third Age groups already exist in Huntingdonshire, focussed in the market towns. These could be supported to raise awareness and expand their reach, particularly to rural areas and diverse new communities. Collaboration between the existing groups and businesses and education providers could also be supported to facilitate knowledge sharing and community cohesion.

Source: University of the Third Age