

District Councillor's Report – April 2023

Homes for Ukraine

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude and thanks to all those who have contributed to the Homes for Ukraine support. It is heartwarming to see Buckden Towers become a focal point across the district, and I was delighted to hear that our volunteers were highly commended at a recent HDC Overview and Scrutiny meeting that I attended.

However, as the conflict in Ukraine continues, there is a growing concern that the number of people willing to share their homes with Ukrainian refugees is decreasing. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage anyone who is interested in volunteering for this scheme to get in touch. Your help could make a significant difference in the lives of those who are affected by this crisis.

Local Plan

A Local Plan sets out a plan for future sustainable development in the district. It performs two specific roles:

- It identifies key areas of land for development to deliver the homes, jobs and services needed in the district, and;
- Includes policies against which all planning applications are considered.

The Local Plan is the document by which all development in the district is judged, it provides the basis for what can happen, where it can happen and when it can happen.

The Local Plan website is now live at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-to-2036/local-plan-update/#:~:text=A%20Local%20Plan%20sets%20out,all%20planning%20applications%20are%20considered>. HDC encourages all towns, parishes, residents, and businesses to participate in the various consultations. Please take the time to visit the website. The consultations are genuine, and feedback from individuals and organisations on the documents is welcomed. HDC officers are producing shorter and easy-to-read documents to make it easier for you. Parish councils will be briefed at the Towns and Parishes meeting in April, and there will be dedicated meetings after that.

Place Strategy

The future of Huntingdonshire is in your hands. What are you going to do about it?

Huntingdonshire Futures is a new strategy that will shape a vision for the future of the area by incorporating People, Place, the Economy and Environment – this is a space for you to share your ideas and contribute to the future of Huntingdonshire.

Over recent months we have been out and about at pop-up events, resident focus groups, schools, community groups and dedicated stakeholder workshops to capture the views of people and organisations across the District.

From Huntingdonshire's greatest opportunities and big ideas and aspirations for the future, to the greatest challenges the District faces, we now want your opinions on what people have said so far.

What are you waiting for? Join the conversation to have your say on what you want the future to look like in Huntingdonshire.

The Place Strategy website <https://huntingdonshirefutures.net/> remains open, and we will update it as we move forward. We encourage you to visit it, as there will be more engagement opportunities in the coming weeks and months.

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan will have a series of short videos released soon to help our staff and the public understand HDC's goals.

A428 Improvements

Transport Action Network (TAN) submitted an application to the High Court for permission for a judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to grant the A428 Development Consent Order. They challenged the Secretary of State's decision on three grounds - biodiversity, need for the scheme and climate change.

The high court decision

A judge at the High Court has now reviewed the application and has refused permission for a judicial review on all three grounds.

While this is positive news, from a National Highways perspective, the legal process is not complete as Transport Action Network has now requested that its application for permission for a judicial review be heard at a High Court oral hearing.

What's next?

The High Court does not publish timescales and National Highways are awaiting a date for the oral hearing.

The website is a good source for those who have a direct interest in this scheme:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet/latest-news/>.

Wishing you well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

District Councillor for Buckden, Diddington and Southoe

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