



Chapter 6

Buntingford

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6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Buntingford is the only town in the District not constrained by Green Belt. Two urban extensions are proposed to the north and the south of the town. The principle of development at Buntingford is established through the District Plan, but housing land supply pressures arising from national policy requirements mean that development in the town is likely to be well underway prior to 2015. For this reason it is likely that many planning issues will be tested through the planning application process.

6.1.2 Buntingford is the District's northern-most town, where the lack of a railway connection has resulted in a reliance on the private car as a means of transport. This relative remoteness has helped the town to retain its compact Market Town character. There is a growing need for more homes, which has resulted in new development pressure around the town. This does however provide an opportunity to enhance the role and function of Buntingford as a service centre for its large rural hinterland; to make effective use of previously developed sites; provide improved access and improvements to education facilities; and to reinforce the valley setting of the town.

6.1.3 The main components of the development strategy for Buntingford are as follows:

6.1.4 **Housing:** additional homes will be provided which will consist of a mix of dwelling types and sizes that will have been constructed in appropriate locations to ensure that Buntingford's population is able to access a balanced housing market catering for all life stages. The amount of dwellings provided will support the need identified for the Housing Market Area. The provision of affordable housing as part of any new residential or mixed use development scheme/s will allow emerging households to be able to remain living in Buntingford in accommodation suited to their needs.

6.1.5 **Education:** secondary education provision will be enhanced via the expansion of Freman College along with new playing fields, which will be enabled through the development of an urban extension to the north of the town to provide for existing and new residents. This in turn will enable improvements to be made to Edwinstreet Middle School. Primary education enhancements will be achieved via the expansion of existing facilities, as appropriate.

6.1.6 **Transport:** the provision of enhanced bus services to support travel to and from new urban extensions to the town will provide links to neighbouring towns. New developments will support improved green travel and will aid delivery of initiatives contained in Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan and daughter documents. Walking and cycling will be promoted with the provision of better signposting and a network of trails into and around the town centre and towards the River Rib.

6.1.7 **Other Infrastructure:** improved utility infrastructure such as wastewater networks and enhanced broadband connectivity will support existing and new developments.



6.1.8 Employment and Retail: the large rural hinterland surrounding the town makes Buntingford an ideal base for small businesses that have links to the town itself rather than those that rely on a proximity to major road networks. Additional employment land in the town will replace that lost through development proposals with modern units with good access to the A10, providing opportunities for small and medium businesses.

6.1.9 The town centre of Buntingford will retain its role as a minor town centre with a secondary shopping frontage which will continue to function as an important service centre for its large rural hinterland, whilst retaining its market town characteristics. Economic and housing development will generate additional wealth to help support a good range of services including jobs, shopping, leisure and education, to meet the needs of residents of the town and surrounding villages.

6.1.10 Character: Buntingford will preserve its market town character and the quality of the town's historic core will be respected in new development proposals. Where development occurs this will ensure that the sense of place is respected and allows for successful integration with existing features, including the valley landscape. Development to the north and south of the town will enhance primary routes into the town, providing a visual transition between rural and urban, providing a gateway to the town, whilst minimising the impact on the valuable landscape which surrounds the town.

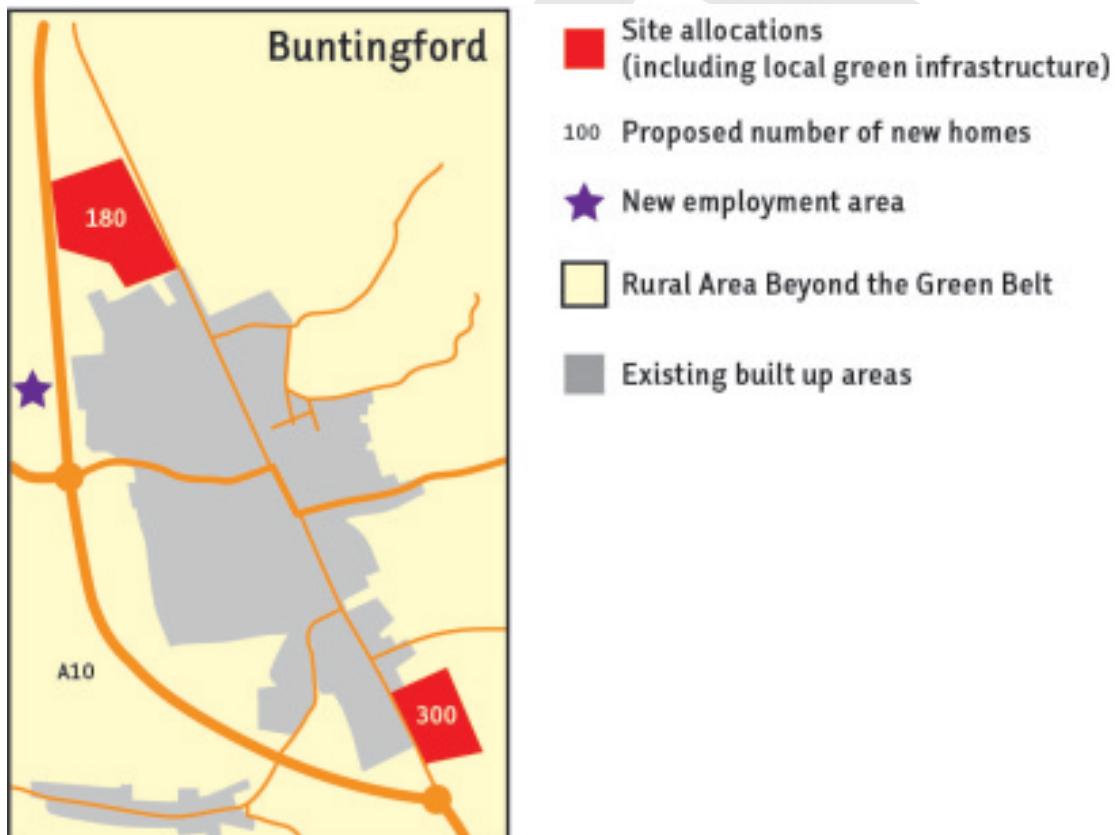
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6.2 Development in Buntingford

6.2.1 The main features of the policy approach to development in Buntingford are shown on Figure 6.1 below:

Figure 6.1 Buntingford Key Diagram



6.2.2 In addition to other policies within this Plan, in order to reflect the District Plan Strategy, development in Buntingford will be delivered in accordance with the following policies:

BUNT1 Development in Buntingford

In accordance with Policy DPS3 (Housing Supply 2011-2031), Buntingford will accommodate at least 493 new homes within the town boundary as defined on the Policies Map, which will include:

- (a) Identified SLAA sites amounting to 13 homes;
- (b) 300 homes to the south of the town on land to the east of London Road, as set out in Policy BUNT2 (South of Buntingford); and
- (c) 180 homes to the north of the town to the west of Ermine Street, as set out in Policy BUNT3 (North of Buntingford);



(d) a proportion of the overall windfall allowance for the District.

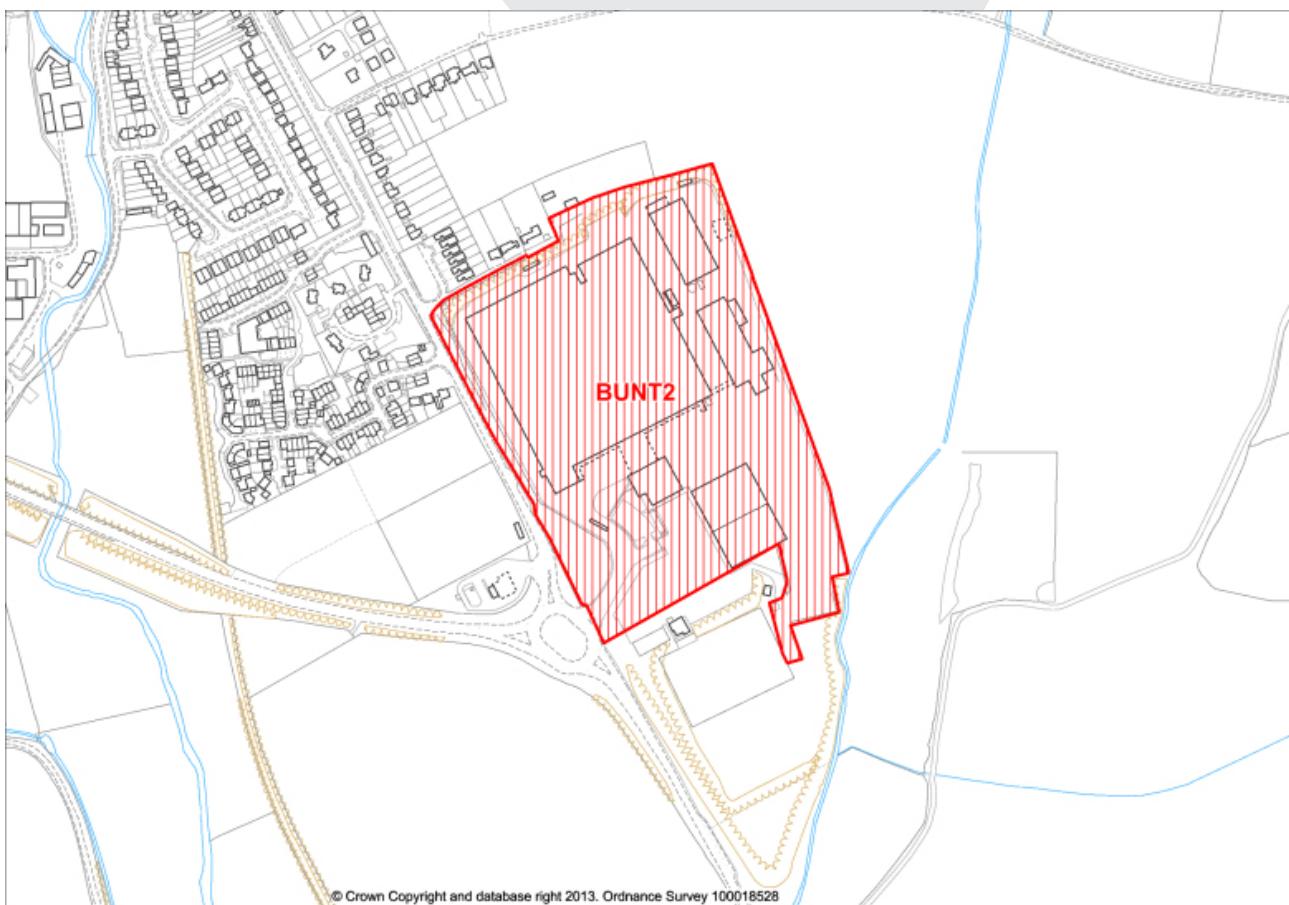
6.2.3 Within Buntingford's urban area 13 dwellings are identified for development through the SLAA process. In addition, it is expected that a proportion of the overall windfall allowance for the District will be accommodated in Buntingford. These sites will be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the policies of the Plan.

6.2.4 For the allocated sites, the following policies will apply in addition to general policies in the Plan:

Land South of Buntingford

6.2.5 In order to meet the District's short term housing requirement and to provide for the housing needs of Buntingford, development is proposed to the south of Buntingford on land to the east of London Road on land formerly known as the Sainsbury's Distribution Depot site. Given the sites connections to the A10, development to the south of the town will need to provide a mix of uses, including residential and employment development.

Figure 6.2 Site Location: Land South of Buntingford



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BUNT2 South of Buntingford

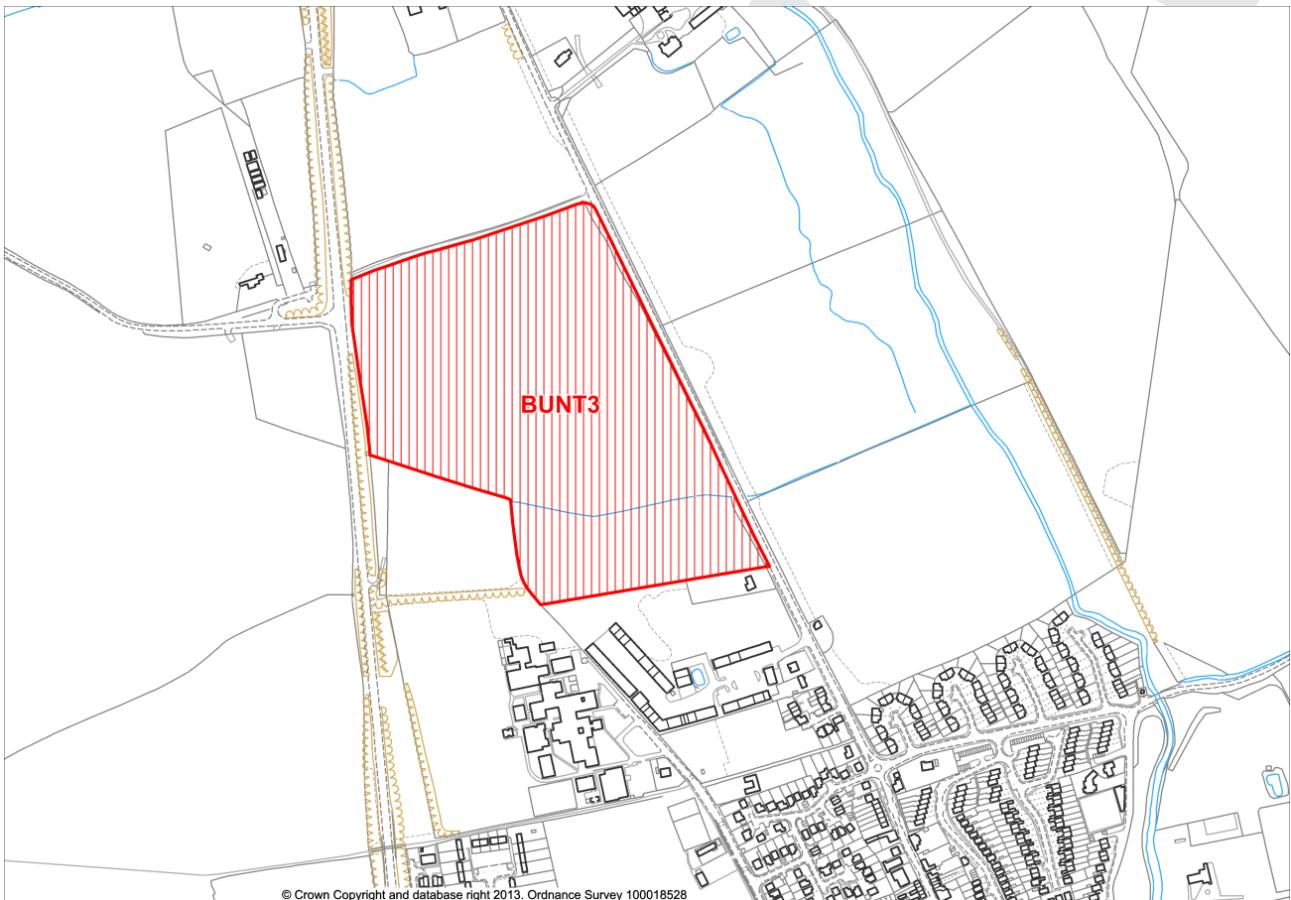
- I. Land to the east of London Road, south of Windmill Hill (the former Sainsbury's Distribution Depot) is allocated as a residential-led mixed-use site to include approximately 300 homes by 2021.
- II. The development of the site is expected to be subject to a development brief or masterplan prepared by or approved by the District Council. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:
 - (a) the key design and layout principles of development, which should include a visual transition from rural to urban where it fronts onto London Road;
 - (b) the need to set aside a proportion of land for employment uses and to facilitate improvements to the Bury Football Club;
 - (c) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
 - (d) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);
 - (e) quality local green infrastructure through the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhance biodiversity;
 - (f) necessary new utilities infrastructure, such as a new sewer to link from the development to existing infrastructure in the town;
 - (g) sustainable urban drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
 - (h) access arrangements and wider strategic and local highways mitigation measures including access serving the Bury Football Club grounds;
 - (i) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, and enhanced passenger transport services;
 - (j) social infrastructure including contributions towards education and other community facilities;
 - (k) financial viability and the delivery of all necessary infrastructure;
 - (l) planning obligations including on and off-site developer contributions; and
 - (m) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.



Land North of Buntingford

6.2.6 In order to meet the District's long term housing requirement and to provide for the housing needs of Buntingford, development is also proposed to the north of Buntingford. Development to the north of the town will need to ensure that future expansion needs of Freman College are secured.

Figure 6.3 Site Location: North of Buntingford



BUNT3 North of Buntingford

- I. Land between Ermine Street and the A10 to the north of the town is allocated as a residential-led mixed-use site, to include approximately 180 homes after 2021.
- II. The development of the site is expected to be subject to a development brief or masterplan prepared by or approved by the District Council. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:
 - (a) the key design and layout principles of development, which should include a visual transition from rural to urban where it fronts onto Ermine Street, acting as a gateway to the town from the north.

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- (b) the need to protect the historic landscape of Corneybury in accordance with Policy HA2 (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) and Policy HA7 (Listed Buildings);
- (c) the need to set aside a proportion of land for employment and education uses and to facilitate improvements to Freman College;
- (d) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
- (e) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);
- (f) quality local green infrastructure through the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhance biodiversity;
- (g) necessary new utilities infrastructure, such as a new sewer to link from the development to existing infrastructure in the town;
- (h) sustainable urban drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
- (i) access arrangements and wider strategic and local highways mitigation measures including access serving Freman College;
- (j) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, and enhanced passenger transport services;
- (k) social infrastructure including contributions towards education and other community facilities;
- (l) financial viability and the delivery of all necessary infrastructure;
- (m) planning obligations including on and off-site developer contributions; and
- (n) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.



6.3 Employment in Buntingford

6.3.1 The relative isolation of Buntingford makes it an attractive place for new small scale employment allocations in order to provide opportunities for local businesses to serve the town and nearby settlements in the rural area surrounding. The town centre will be strengthened by the additional wealth generated by the growing population of the town.

6.3.2 The strategy is to protect and enhance the existing employment areas in the town, and supplement these with small-scale extensions to existing employment areas.

BUNT4 Employment in Buntingford

I. In accordance with Policy ED1 (Employment), the following locations are designated as Employment Areas:

- (a) Park Farm;
- (b) Buntingford Business Park;
- (c) Watermill Estate.

II. In accordance with Policy ED1 (Employment), the following Employment Area has been extended to accommodate B1, B2 and small-scale B8 Uses:

- (a) Buntingford Business Park (approximately 3 hectares).

III. In accordance with Policy ED1 (Employment), new small-scale employment development will be supported as part of mixed use schemes at:

- (a) Land South of Buntingford;
- (b) Land North Buntingford.

6.4 Retail in Buntingford

6.4.1 Buntingford has a small town centre, consisting of small units in a linear High Street, with two small supermarkets. Despite its size, the town centre provides a vital role for the residents of the town and for the rural hinterland. Recognising its size and its relatively limited retail offer, the High Street is designated as a minor town centre with only a secondary frontage. Within this frontage, it is necessary to retain a suitable mix of retail units and appropriate town centre uses in order to ensure the longer term viability and vitality of Buntingford's town centre. As such, retail development in Buntingford will be considered in accordance with Policy RTC1 (Retail and Town Centres) and RTC4 (Secondary Shopping Frontages).



6.5 Leisure and Community Facilities in Buntingford

6.5.1 Despite its rural setting, Buntingford has a relative lack of Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG), open spaces for sport and recreation and play spaces for children. It is therefore important that improvements are made to existing open spaces and that new open spaces are provided to support existing and new communities in the town. Developments will be considered in accordance with Policies CFLR1 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation) and CFLR2 (Open Space Standards).

6.5.2 All new developments will increase demand for local services and community facilities including healthcare and education. It is important that developments in Buntingford enhance existing and provide new community facilities in order to ensure existing and new communities can access vital services within Buntingford without the need to travel to neighbouring settlements. Developments will be considered in accordance with Policies CFLR7 (Community Facilities), CFLR8 (Health and Wellbeing) and CFLR9 (Education).