

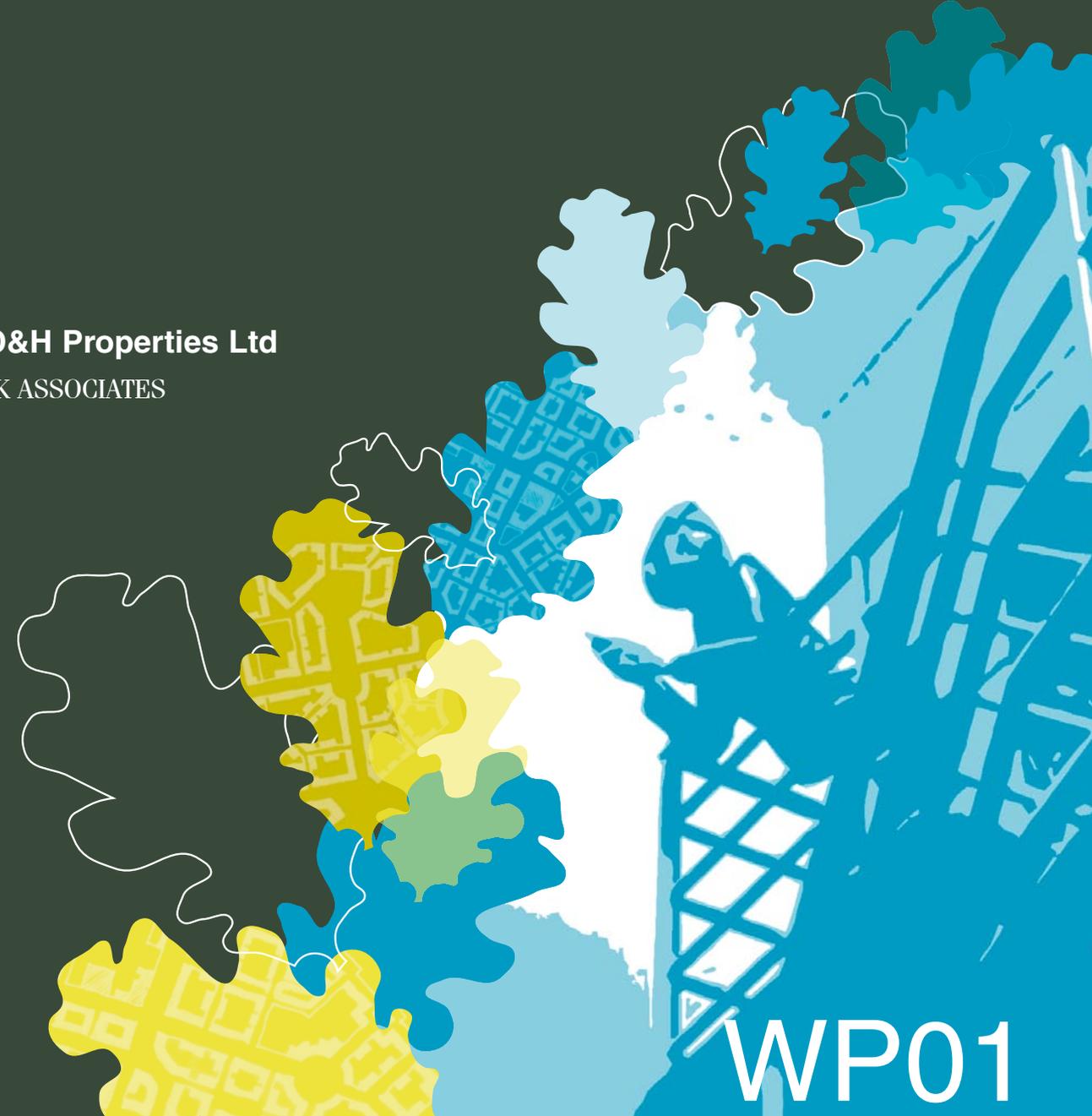
Strategic Southern Expansion of Peterborough

WORKING PAPER 01: SETTING THE SCENE

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WP01

A stylized graphic on the right side of the cover. It features a silhouette of a person wearing a hard hat and safety glasses, standing on a construction site. The person is holding a tool or a piece of equipment. The background is a light blue gradient. Overlaid on the scene are several interlocking gears of various colors: yellow, green, and blue. The gears are semi-transparent, allowing the construction site elements to be seen through them. The overall aesthetic is modern and industrial.

Working Paper 1: Setting the Scene

In February 2003 the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan was published, outlining a strong commitment to accommodate the economic success of London and the wider South East while detailing action for areas of low demand and abandonment in the Midlands and North.

As part of the Communities Plan, four Growth Areas were identified for investment, one of which was the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor. A year later, this Growth Area was expanded northwards, to include Peterborough and parts of north Cambridgeshire.

This series of Working Papers examines some of the implications for Peterborough of increased long term growth, and looks at ways in which this growth could be met in a sustainable manner as part of the emerging vision for the area.

Final conclusions have not been reached on the issues raised in the first three Working Papers: rather, the views expressed in the Working Papers are intended to stimulate debate about the growth options for Peterborough which the City Council and other decision makers will need to consider as part of the formulation of the Vision, Community Strategy and Local Development Framework (LDF) for Peterborough.

The allocation of the Growth Areas means that a re-think on previously proposed levels of growth is needed, to see how best to deliver increased long term growth in the most sustainable way. A series of government-commissioned studies are already underway, looking at the Growth Areas as a whole and some of their component parts.

The recent inclusion of Peterborough within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area means that another set of issues need to be examined, including the City's relationship with other parts of its Growth Area and the ability of the area to accommodate higher levels of growth over the long term.

As the centre of an emerging sub-region, Peterborough is already embracing this opportunity for growth. The Greater Peterborough Partnership (the local strategic partnership for Peterborough), which includes the City Council, is embarking on setting a vision for the city and rural areas through its Community Strategy¹, and a 20-year vision has been created for the revitalisation and growth of the City Centre².

Why Now?

The designation of the Growth Areas means that a review of the levels of development as set out in emerging regional planning guidance (RPG14) is necessary. In terms of increased housing numbers, the government's figures indicate that land for an additional 18,000 houses should be allocated within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area over and above the 478,000 dwellings already needed for the East of England to 2021.

Government has made it clear that just allocating land for new housing is not appropriate: instead, the aim is to secure long term growth for the Growth Area in a way which is sustainable both environmentally and economically. In order to create real communities and proper places, priority must be given to delivering jobs with new housing; basing patterns of development around sustainable forms of transport and reducing the need to travel; supporting the regeneration of existing centres; and providing social infrastructure and support services in tandem with new development.



Strategic Location

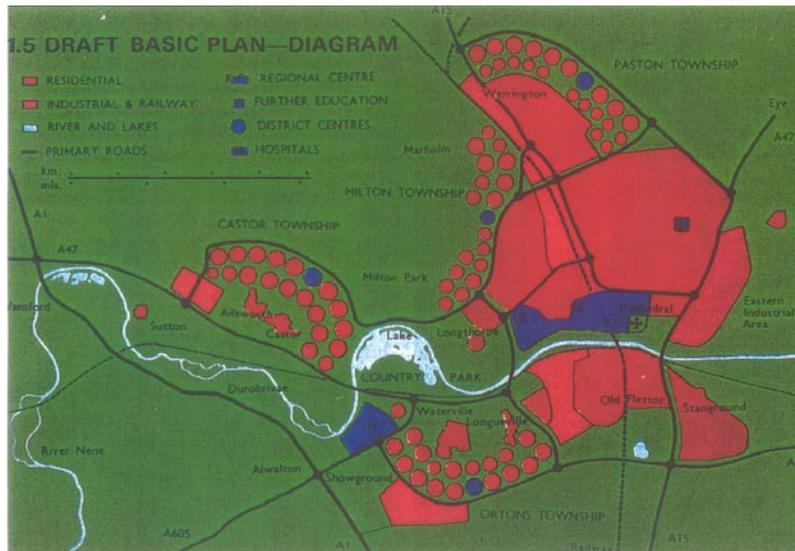
¹ 'Growing the Right Way: Peterborough's Community Strategy' Spring 2004. Further details at <http://www.gpp-peterborough.org.uk>

² 'The Plan for Peterborough City Centre' November 2003. Further details at <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/masterplan>

Why Peterborough?

Peterborough has a legacy of planned growth. More importantly, the city has consistently been supportive of and proactive in delivering this growth.

Following its New Town designation in 1967, an area of around 6,000 hectares centred on the historic cathedral city was designed for planned development. The master plan for the new town envisaged four townships clustered around the historic core;



1967 Master Plan for Peterborough's New Townships

The townships - Castor, Milton (later Bretton), Orton and Paston (later Werrington) - each had a planned population of between 20,000 and 30,000 and its own district centre. The townships were linked to each other and to the historic core of the city by parkways (city roads), and were designed as predominantly residential: employment areas were generally separated from housing by roads, railways and 'green buffers'.

Today, the population of Peterborough is 156,500, and has seen an increase in population growth of 16.6% in the period from 1981-2001 compared with a growth rate for Cambridgeshire of 21.3% and a national population growth rate of 4.3% over the same period. Interestingly, the city's current population remains short of the city's original 'target' population of 187,900.

Three of the four townships envisaged in the Master Plan are substantially complete. The development of the township of Castor west of the city was repeatedly postponed and eventually excluded from the designated area by the government in 1980. Castor's role is now fulfilled by Hampton, the fourth township, developed on former clay extraction areas and brick working land to the south of the city, which at the time it was conceived and implementation started, straddled the administrative boundary between Peterborough and Huntingdonshire.

Strenuous efforts of the Peterborough Development Corporation, the City Council and others to attract employment to the city have met with reasonable success: there is continuing strong support for employment promotion in Peterborough in regional planning guidance and in structure and local plans.

Peterborough has recently been defined as the centre of an emerging defined sub-region³, and now needs to capitalise on this status. Past successes and ongoing efforts to attract employment to the city need a corresponding emphasis on residential development to enable the city to make the most of its accessible location - centred on the A1, East Coast Main Line and Holyhead-Felixstowe Trans-European Route - and its past investment in infrastructure; and to realise its potential to grow from a sub-regional to a regional centre; crossing the 200,000 population threshold; broadening its range of facilities and enhancing the quality of life of its citizens.

Working Papers 2 and 3 set out some of the issues that Peterborough will need to consider if its emerging role in the Growth Area is to be fulfilled

³Peterborough Sub-Regional Study (Final Report)', Llewellyn Davies November 2003

WORKING PAPER 1: TECHNICAL APPENDIX- BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area has been awarded government funding of £164 million to facilitate growth and development in the next three years, plus £22 million for further schemes in those parts of the Growth Area outside the Cambridge Sub Region, which could include schemes in Peterborough as well as the London, Essex and Hertfordshire parts of the Growth Area.

Under related initiatives, Peterborough has also been allocated:

- £3.24 million for sustainable travel to develop a package of measures to promote walking, cycling and bus use. Peterborough will have the opportunity to implement an intensive and strategic package of alternative travel choices aimed at reducing car journeys and combating congestion in the city, and will act as a model for other local authorities of what can be achieved through a combined package of measures to increase travel choices (funding announced on 26 April 2004)
- As part of the funding package to help deliver more affordable homes, jobs and growth in the South East, almost £10 million has been allocated to revitalise dilapidated areas of Peterborough's centre and to enable the more rapid delivery of at least 2,000 new homes. (funding announced on 9 March 2004)
- £2.2 million to repair local roads damaged by the hot dry weather of summer 2003 (announced on 25 February 2004)

A previous initiative to fast-track more than 1,600 new affordable homes on surplus public land in South East and East England will also be given priority. It is envisaged that Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association will acquire 27 sites in Milton Keynes and Peterborough (announced on 29 September 2003).

The intention to expand the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth area to include Peterborough and parts of north Cambridgeshire means that Peterborough will be eligible for financial assistance to deliver increased levels of growth through the ODPM's Planning Delivery Grant (announced on 2 February 2004).

Evolution of Housing Numbers

Including the additional housing numbers allocated for the Growth Area, a total of almost 500,000 new homes are needed in the East of England to 2021.

The adopted Cambridgeshire Structure Plan has already increased its housing numbers beyond approved RPG14 figures of 158,000 to 181,000 by 2021.

The Regional Planning Body has identified a need for an additional 5,000-6,500 dwellings in Peterborough above the Structure Plan levels, bringing the total to 187,500. The RPB is now funding a study to assess whether more than the 6,500 dwellings can be accommodated within the Peterborough area.