

1.0 An Economically Sustainable Community Now and into the Future

Gamlingay is unlike many more affluent villages within South Cambridgeshire. It has above national average levels of people living in fuel poverty and identified pockets of deprivation amongst its young people. There are a wide variety of established businesses in the village including manufacturing industry. The area has a long history of market gardening and small holdings some of which still remain. Gamlingay has its own micro economy and unlike many other villages locally is not just a dormitory village. It is important that it stays this way and that all housing development is accompanied by opportunities to increase local employment. Successful sustainable development requires housing and employment to be viewed as complimentary and supportive of each other.

The principal central village employment site has recently been given permission for housing on 75% of its area. This has resulted in the relocation out of the village by a significant number of businesses with associated loss of jobs to local people. Gamlingay has a core blue collar/unskilled workforce which has historically sourced most of its employment locally. Recent diminution of rural bus services has made it even more difficult for people without access to private transport to find work. The young are particularly affected and there is evidence of young people leaving education and training due to the logistics and costs associated with commuting. It is a key strategic aim for the Community Development charity, Forward Gamlingay, to improve the opportunities for young people to gain employment and training locally from local providers.

Early feedback indicates that almost 20% of working adults are employed in the village.

Within Gamlingay there are:

- 3 employment sites
- A primary school
- A small selection of basic retail outlets
- 2 public houses
- A post office
- 1 restaurant including take away
- 1 fast food outlet
- 2 cafes
- 1 farm shop
- 1 petrol station

1.1 The main centres for employment other than the village are:

Cambridge	18 miles
London	51 miles
Biggleswade	7 miles
Sandy	4 miles
Bedford	17 miles
St Neots	8 miles
Grt Gransden	4 miles
Stevenage	20 miles
Cambourne	10 miles

Hitchin	17 miles
Milton Keynes	30 miles
Papworth	9 miles
Huntingdon	14 miles
Melbourn	12 miles
Royston	13 miles
Peterborough	37 miles
Stevenage	20 miles

1.2 Using Neighbourhood Planning to Support Economic Development

Why did we Include Economic Development in our Neighbourhood Plan?

- The Greater Cambridgeshire Area is experiencing huge economic growth and Gamlingay could easily be left behind.
- We need to make sure we have the right sorts of jobs in the right places..
- Gamlingay must remain a sustainable community and not become a commuter village
- We need jobs as well as houses
- Lack of public transport means that we must have local jobs, local shops and local service providers.
- Gamlingay has already lost its principle large central village employment site to housing and there is potential threat to other existing sites.
- Residents have told us that they place a high value on local employment opportunities.

What overriding economic aims did we include in the Neighbourhood Plan?

- To retain existing businesses in the village.
- To facilitate growth of existing businesses.
- To create an environment which encourages new business and start ups.
- To attract businesses to relocate to Gamlingay and to relieve pressure on other employment centres including Cambridge.

What have we done so far?

- Put together a business directory of 120 Gamlingay businesses
- Mapped existing and potential employment sites and premises
- Held a meeting with owners of employment sites to ask how the Neighbourhood Plan could help them
- Held 2 Business Development workshops attended by 50 local businesses to ask how the Neighbourhood Plan could help them
- Created an economic development action plan and supporting project.
- Delivered 2 questionnaires to land owners and businesses.

Summary of Results of Consultations with Businesses and Business Site Owners and Promoters.

What did the owners of employment sites tells us about the barriers to economic growth?

- Planning regulations make getting planning permission very difficult
- Small developments are required to produce as much evidence to support planning applications as big developments

- Business rates are too high.
- Need for housing is a threat to employment sites and discourages development for employment use.
- The local workforce does not have the skills needed.

What did the owners of businesses tell us about the barriers to growth?

- Broadband connectivity is not good enough.
- Isolated businesses have serious security problems.
- To keep the volunteer run fire service we need people to live and work locally.
- The cost of planning advice and applications is too high.
- Sole traders and home workers are very isolated in terms of information and support.
- Businesses do not know about each other so they are not part of each other supply chains.
- There are few opportunities to access skills and development support locally and affordably and few opportunities to build networks to promote mutual support.
- There is no affordable way to advertise local jobs.
- There is a lack of small, secure and affordable premises for business.
- Planning polices inhibit business growth.

What are the Two Priorities for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan?

- Developing and securing local employment sites and premises.
- Providing business support to meet identified needs.

What policy areas have we looked at for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan?

- Protecting existing employment sites including retail and farming.
- Identify suitable dormant and new sites for development.
- Identify expansion sites adjacent to existing sites.
- Set design standards for buildings including environmental standards.
- Set access, parking and travel plan standards.
- Facilitate development of the village as a visitor destination.
- Protect retail and food outlets.

What does the Economic Development Project look like?

- Establish an Actual Business Hub i.e a Gamlingay Business Hub
- Establish a web-based Virtual Business Hub to include a local service directory, links to business support, a communications forum etc . . .