

East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan examination

Stage 1 hearing session written representations

Respondent reference number PS309-314

Matter 2: Vision, objectives and development strategy.

Issue 2: Does the overarching development strategy for the Plan present a positive framework which is consistent with national policy, justified and effective, and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development within the District?

18. Nearly half of the housing requirement set out within the submitted Local Plan is proposed to be delivered on strategic sites at Ely, Kennett, Littleport and Soham. Is the strategy and distribution of development justified, effective, positively prepared and consistent with the particular circumstances of East Cambridgeshire District?

Our points in Matter 2 are similar to those points outlined in our statement on Matter 1.

As question 18 notes, the delivery of the district housing requirement is reliant on a number of strategic sites including one in Kennett. It is essential therefore to ensure that the strategy and distribution of development into these settlements is justified, effective, positively prepared and consistent with the particular circumstances of the East Cambridgeshire District.

For the reasons stated in our statement on Matter 1, the selection of Kennett for strategic scale development or the allocated site has not been appropriately justified with a timely and ordered evidence gathering and assessment process.

The village of Kennett was first identified for strategic scale development in section 22(d) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough East Anglia Devolution Proposal (July 2016) before supporting evidence studies or public engagement justified the suitability of the village to accommodate strategic scale growth or alternative sites had been assessed. This is evident in part within paragraph 7.18.4 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (further draft January 2017) (CD03A) which stated that *'For Kennett, a single large scale mixed-use site is proposed. This site, which has in principle support through the Cambridge-Peterborough Devolution Deal, will be a community-led development scheme providing much needed homes as well as transforming Kennett into a vibrant, sustainable and potentially self-sustaining village'*.

The Devolution Deal holds no statutory status within the plan making process. The retro-fitting of evidence in support of a pre-determined conclusion contravenes paragraph 14 of the Planning Practice Guidance which states that *'evidence needs to inform what is in the plan and shape its development rather than being collected retrospectively'*.

We shall provide further evidence and explanation of the Council's consideration of the allocation site and the suitability of reasonable alternative sites 14/02 and 14/10 in Stage 2 of the examination process.