

## Forward Planning

**Service Plan 2012-13****Corporate Objectives**

To run an efficient and effective Council to deliver best value for its residents.

To build the foundations for the growth of the economy of East Cambridgeshire; supporting job and wealth creation and improving quality of life and the environment.

**Overview of Service**

The forward planning service is responsible for the preparation and monitoring of planning policy, and for the trees service area.

The forward planning service is a statutory service helping the Council fulfil its responsibilities as a local planning authority. The recently published National Planning Policy Framework has reaffirmed the importance of the plan led approach to planning. Local Plans are the key consideration when determining planning applications. They also play another important role in guiding investment in infrastructure.

The Government's purpose for the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. East Cambridgeshire experiences strong growth pressures, between 2001 and 2010 the population of the District increased by 10,000 people to reach 80,900. It is important that growth is effectively managed and that there is a balance between housing, employment and infrastructure. Recent changes to the planning system with the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies have devolved decision making to the Council for housing and employment targets.

The forward planning service is currently preparing a new Local Plan for the district. This responds to the Government's localism agenda and builds on the work carried out in the masterplans for Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell. Considerable work has taken place for other settlements through the Village Visions work. A radical bottom up approach has been adopted, working closely with Parish Councils and local communities, in order to better understand local needs. The new Local Plan will replace the current approved Core Strategy.

The Localism Act has introduced a duty on the Council to cooperate with neighbouring Councils and other key agencies on strategic planning issues. A framework is being established in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support this work.

The forward planning team also covers provides tree and planting advice on proposed development schemes, makes tree preservation orders, processes applications for work on protected trees, and manages the Council's budget for tree planting and management. The development services support team provides the administrative support for the trees function.

### **Service Objectives**

1. To provide a strategy and policy framework for comprehensive and up-to-date planning within East Cambridgeshire.
2. To coordinate planning for East Cambridgeshire with that of neighbouring Councils and the Sub-Region.
3. To work in partnership with local communities in order to respond to local concerns and priorities.
4. To support business development and growth in local employment opportunities.
5. To conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the built environment, including its historical context.
6. To preserve and enhance the character and diversity of the natural environment.
7. To ensure that new developments are sustainable, well designed, and have the appropriate infrastructure.
8. To ensure the continued contribution of trees to the character and biodiversity of the district.

The work of forward planning closely relates to both of the Council's corporate objectives. It has a key role in helping the Council support the growth of the local economy, and improving quality of life and the environment, for example, setting appropriate local policies to guide development. The service also aims to be efficient and effective in preparing planning documents. The Council's progress on forward planning compares very favourably with other Councils, the District already has an adopted Core Strategy, which is now being reviewed, and significant progress has been made on a Community Infrastructure Levy.

These objectives and the service plan comply with the Council's responsibilities under equality and Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

### **Resources**

<b>Financial</b>	Net Revenue Budget 2012/13 is £525,209 Capital Budget is £0
<b>Workforce</b>	Employee resources 2012/13 FTE 5.6 which equates to total employee budget including on costs of £289,714.

### **Key Partners**

Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership – the local enterprise partnership for the area.

The Joint Planning Team for the Cambridge and Peterborough Sub-Regions – the small team coordinating strategic planning in the County.

Neighbouring planning authorities – meeting the Councils' duties to cooperate.

Cambridgeshire County Council – important responsibilities for education and transport.

Environment Agency – statutory consultee, the regulatory agency concerned with rivers, flooding and pollution.

Anglian Water - statutory consultee, provides water services.

Natural England – statutory consultee, advisor on the natural environment and biodiversity.

English Heritage – statutory consultee, advisor on heritage.  
Parish Councils – local input

### **Key Service Risks**

The Council has a Performance and Risk Management Framework with both Corporate and Operational Risk Registers. The likelihood and impact of the risks are scored using a scale from 1 to 5. The key operational service risks for forward planning are:

1. Changes to government planning legislation, guidance or new interpretation of the planning system – this operational risk recognises the impact of these circumstances in creating additional delays and costs. (Likelihood 5, Impact 2)
2. Local Plan being determined as unsound leading to delays and additional costs for the Council – this is related to the corporate risk regarding the loss of major income from legal challenge, and to the operational risk concerning the independent examination of the Local Plan. (Likelihood 4, Impact 2)
3. Failure to meet milestones for plan delivery due to lack of staff resources – this operational risk recognises the limited nature of staff resources and the impact of staff turnover. (Likelihood 4, Impact 2)

### **Achievements in 2011/12**

Extensive work with rural communities through the Village Visions work, over 1,300 people responded.

Essential background research for Local Plan undertaken.

Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule prepared and consulted upon.

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document reviewed.

North Ely Development Framework prepared.

11 Tree Preservation Orders Made.

214 applications for works to protected trees were determined.

### **Key priorities and projects rolled forward to 2012/13**

Prepare Draft Local Plan	Need new local policy to set vision for sustainable growth and help manage development.
Adopt Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.	New mechanism for developer contributions, which will provide greater flexibility for the Council in their use.

### **Key priorities and projects for 2012/13 and beyond**

Reflect National Planning Policy Framework in Local Plan	Need to develop sound Local Plan.
Review programme for local guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.	Provide additional guidance in areas where the Government has reduced national guidance.
Consult on draft Local Plan and Prepare for Examination	New planning policy for the District to guide decision making on planning applications.

Take Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule through to adoption.	Additional income stream to support infrastructure.
Ely Station Gateway Development Framework.	Guidance for key development area.
Coordinated sub-regional planning	Duty on Council to cooperate with neighbouring councils.

<b>Performance measures</b>		
<b>Measure</b>	<b>2012/13 Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Net additional homes provided per annum	430	368 (4/10 to 3/11)
Supply of ready to develop housing sites	At least 5 years	6.7 years (2011)
Submission of Local Plan	January 2013	