APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA BY FORDHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Committee: Delegated decision on behalf of Full Council

Date: 20 December 2017

Author: Edward Dade – Strategic Planning Officer

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To determine Fordham Parish Council’s application to designate Fordham Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of Neighbourhood Planning.

1.2 Determination of the application is delegated to the Director (Commercial) (hereafter the Director), in accordance with the Council’s governance arrangements for neighbourhood planning¹.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that the Director:

   i. approve the application by Fordham Parish Council to designate Fordham Parish as a Neighbourhood Area, without amendment.
   ii. does not designate the Neighbourhood Area as a Business Area.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 Fordham Parish Council’s application to designate a Neighbourhood Area was received on 20 November 2017. Designation of the Neighbourhood Area is the first step toward preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. A copy of the application is provided in Appendix 1.

3.2 The power to designate a Neighbourhood Area is exercisable under section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under Regulation 5(1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, an area application must include a map which identifies the area to which the application relates, a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area and a statement that the body making the application is a relevant body for the purposes of section 61G(2) of the 1990 Act.

¹ Governance arrangements for neighbourhood planning were agreed by Full Council on 08 January 2015:
3.3 As a parish council, Fordham Parish Council automatically qualifies as a ‘relevant body’ for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The application was made using East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Application Form to Designate a Neighbourhood Area which included a justification statement and was accompanied by a map of the proposed Neighbourhood Area. The application was considered to be valid and was published for consultation.

3.4 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations were amended in 2015 (by SI. 2015/20) to simplify the neighbourhood planning process. Following amendment the statutory Neighbourhood Area publication period is not less than four weeks, where the proposed Neighbourhood Area application area is submitted by a parish council and applies to the whole of a parish area.

3.5 As the Fordham Neighbourhood Area application applies to the whole of the parish and was made by the parish council, the application was published for four weeks from 20 November to 19 December 2017. During this time the public and other stakeholders were invited to comment on the application.

3.6 The application and the opportunity to comment were advertised using the following publication methods:

- In electronic format on the District Council’s website\(^2\) and in hard copy at the District Council’s Office (The Grange);
- A press release was published by the Ely Standard and on the Council’s website (Appendix 2); and
- A poster was sent to Fordham Parish Council to display in their area (Appendix 2).

3.7 Response rates to the publication of Neighbourhood Area applications are typically low. However this application generated a relatively large number of responses, with 45 responses received during the consultation period as set out in Appendix 3.

3.8 Most responses were received from residents of Fordham. One response was received from a local community action group. Most respondents submitted similar or identical letters, through which they voiced their concerns about recent planning applications for housing development in Fordham. Such issues are not directly relevant to the determination of the Neighbourhood Area application, but will be passed to Fordham Parish Council for their consideration.

3.9 No respondent made any specific comment relevant to the determination of the application. There were therefore no objections or suggested changes to the boundary of the proposed Neighbourhood Area.

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3.10 In determining the application, consideration has to be given as to whether or not the specific area is an appropriate area to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

3.11 Under Section 61 of Town and Country Planning Act, the following factors are taken into account as part of the assessment of the appropriateness of the area:

- Whether the specified area falls entirely within East Cambridgeshire District Council’s area;
- Whether the specified area, in whole or part, has already been designated as a neighbourhood area, and whether there are any other outstanding applications to designate any part of the area specified as a neighbourhood area;
- The reasons provided by the Parish Council as to why the area is appropriate;
- All representations received during the four-week consultation period;
- Whether the proposed area should be designated as a business area.

The authority is not permitted in law to reject the proposal outright.

3.12 East Cambridgeshire District Council therefore has to choose one of the following options:

- Option A: area approved without amendment;
- Option B: area approved with minor amendments;
- Option C: minded to approve an area, but only if significant amendments are made which are subject to a further round of consultation

3.13 In relation to the matter of whether to also designate the area as a ‘Business Area’, the Localism Act, Schedule 9, Part 1, requires that whenever a Council considers an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area that it also considers whether the area should be designated as a Business Area. A key factor in this decision is whether the area concerned is wholly or predominantly business in nature. In simple terms, if an area is designated as a Business Area, then businesses that operate in the area have a much greater say over future neighbourhood planning proposal in the area, even if the occupiers of such businesses don’t live in the area. Nationally, very few areas are designated as Business Areas, and it would be surprising if any proposal in East Cambridgeshire (not just Fordham) was designated as a Business Area.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The application has been appraised against the criteria set out in paragraph 3.11:

- The specified area falls entirely within East Cambridgeshire District Council area.
• The specified area, in whole or part, has not already been designated as a
neighbourhood area, and there are no other outstanding applications to
designate any part of the area specified as a neighbourhood area.
• As a civil parish, the proposed Neighbourhood Area qualifies as appropriate
for neighbourhood planning.
• Representations received do not justify any alternative boundary for the
Neighbourhood Area to be designated.

4.2 It is considered that designation of the whole of the parish is a logical and
appropriate area. Nationally, this is by far the most common area to
designate (i.e. aligned to a parish boundary), and there would have to be
exceptional reasons not to do so. No such exceptional reasons occur in the
instance for Fordham Parish, and no representations received suggested a
change.

4.3 In terms of whether the Neighbourhood Area should be designated as a
Business Area, the parish is clearly not wholly or predominantly business in
nature. It should not, therefore, be designated as a Business Area.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the designation of a
neighbourhood area. However, during the preparation and adoption stages of
any neighbourhood plan and/or order, there will be financial implications
arising from the provision of assistance and delivery of the authority’s legal
obligations prescribed by primary and secondary legislation. These will be
met from existing budgets.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 - Fordham Neighbourhood Area application and invitation to
comment letter
Appendix 2 – Press release and consultation poster
Appendix 3 - Table of consultation responses received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Documents</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Edward Dade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Position: Strategic Planning Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:edward.dade@eastcambs.gov.uk">edward.dade@eastcambs.gov.uk</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1 - Fordham Neighbourhood Area application and invitation to comment letter
Dear Consultee

Re: Publication of Fordham Neighbourhood Area Application

On 20 November 2017, East Cambridgeshire District Council (the Council) received an application to designate the whole of Fordham parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. The application was made by Fordham Parish Council, the ‘relevant body’ for neighbourhood planning in the parish.

The Neighbourhood Area is the area to which a Neighbourhood Plan will apply. Through making a Neighbourhood Area application, Fordham Parish Council has expressed its interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish.

The Council has today published the Fordham Neighbourhood Area application. You are invited to make comments on the application. Please note; all responses must be received on or before Tuesday 19 December 2017. This publication period of four weeks fulfils the statutory minimum requirement. The Council will publish all comments it receives along with the name of respondents. Personal data such as signatures and postal/email addresses will remain confidential.

The Fordham Neighbourhood Area application is attached for your consideration. If you wish to make comments on the application please respond in writing to:

- Email: planningpolicy@eastcambs.gov.uk
- Post: Strategic Planning, East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4EE

The Fordham application is also available for inspection during normal opening hours at:

- East Cambridgeshire District Council office, The Grange, Nutholt Lane; and

Yours sincerely

Edward Dade
Strategic Planning Officer

Enclosures:
Neighbourhood Area application
Map of proposed Neighbourhood Area
APPLICATION FORM TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

In East Cambridgeshire, only Parish Councils can make an application to designate a Neighbourhood Area. Please complete all fields in this form. Incorrect information will delay the processing of your application. For more general information on Neighbourhood Planning, please see our website. Once complete, please return the completed form to the District Council using one of the below methods. This form will be made public once submitted, and be subject to consultation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Email:</th>
<th><a href="mailto:planningpolicy@eastcambs.gov.uk">planningpolicy@eastcambs.gov.uk</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Post:</td>
<td>Forward Planning Team, East Cambs District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4EE.</td>
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NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Name (this could match the Parish Council name, or could be the name of a settlement):</th>
<th>Fordham Neighbourhood Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parishes included in area (this is likely to be just one parish, but could be more):</td>
<td>Fordham Parish Council</td>
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APPLICANT’S DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Hugh Palmer, Chairperson</th>
<th>Address:</th>
<th>33 Church Street Fordham Cambridgeshire</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation:</td>
<td>Fordham Parish Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fordhampc@btinternet.com">fordhampc@btinternet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>01638 721716</td>
<td>Postcode:</td>
<td>CB7 5NJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>16/11/2017</td>
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**SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The following items must be submitted alongside this application form:

| Map of the proposed neighbourhood area | Please include a map with this application that identifies the area to which the neighbourhood area application relates. The map should be at an identified standard metric scale, on an Ordnance Survey base, showing the boundary of the area and the direction north. Please contact us if you need help producing a map.  
   | Map Enclosed: Yes |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Justification Statement               | Please explain why your proposed neighbourhood area is considered appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area. If the area matches a parish boundary, then simply stating as much is likely to be sufficient (though feel free to say more if you wish). If the area does not match a parish boundary (eg it covers only part of a parish, or extends into more than one parish), then please provide a statement explaining **why you** consider this to be appropriate:  
   | The proposed neighbourhood area matches the boundary of Fordham Parish Council and it therefore provides a suitable boundary for the neighbourhood plan area. Fordham Parish Council will be the ‘qualifying body’ for Neighbourhood Planning in the parish. |
| Qualifying Criteria Statement         | Please confirm that you are a Parish Council:  
   | Yes  
   | (Note: if you answer ‘no’, it is unlikely that you will be able to proceed with this application. Please contact us for details.) |

Please ensure that you have signed and dated the front of this form and included the map of the proposed neighbourhood area with your application.
Appendix 2 – Press Release and Poster
Chance to have your say on the future of Fordham and its neighbourhood plan

Seb Peace

© PUBLISHED: 14:51 05 December 2017 | UPDATED: 14:59 05 December 2017

Fordham residents are being asked to give their views on an application for the village to become a neighbourhood area.

The application, which is now with the district council, will be used by the council to determine planning applications.

The application is available for inspection at East Cambridgeshire District Council office, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Cambridge, CB7 4EE.

It can also be viewed and downloaded online at http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/neighbourhood-planning.

Comments and representations can be emailed to planningpolicy@eastcambs.gov.uk or posted to Strategic Planning, East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE.

All responses must be received by the district council on or before Tuesday December 19.
East Cambridgeshire District Council has received an application to designate Fordham parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of Neighbourhood Planning. Neighbourhood Planning is a new option for communities to decide the future of the places they live.

To view the Neighbourhood Area application and have your say, visit the Council's website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk. Alternatively, documents are available for inspection at East Cambridgeshire District Council's office at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4EE.

You are invited to comment on the Fordham Neighbourhood Area application. Please make comments in writing to:
Email: planningpolicy@eastcambs.gov.uk; or
Post: Strategic Planning, East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, Cambs, CB7 4EE.

All comments must be received on or before 19 December 2017.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Date rcvd</th>
<th>Comments received</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S Asbury</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>05/12/17</td>
<td>I understand the need for development and growth - in particular affordable housing and suitable homes for our ageing population. As you are aware, a large development of 150 new homes (Ref:17/00880/OUM- Scotsdales) is pending approval - I have concerns regarding the lack of infrastructure to support these homes and concerns regarding the volume of traffic along Market Street which is already a congestion hotspot. Both the Mildenhall Road 100 home development (17/00481/OUM- 98 to 118 Mildenhall Road) and Soham Road 52 house development (17/01572/OUM- Soham Road) applications, should be refused as they are outside the development envelope and were not included in the new Local Plan which was issued in the Autumn. As a member of the Fordham Speedwatch Team I am well aware of traffic issues along Mildenhall Road and critical safety issues outside the Co-op on Carter Street. Fordham will struggle to support large developments and will do better to accept smaller developments meeting the needs mentioned - affordable homes and suitable housing for the ageing population.</td>
<td>The respondent raises a number of planning issues affecting Fordham. These issues are not directly relevant to the determination of the Neighbourhood Area application. However, the Parish Council may wish to explore such issues through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.</td>
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<td>S Bailey</td>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>19/12/17</td>
<td>I wish to comment on the above plan. In my opinion, Fordham needs only limited growth. In the past 18 months or so, 155 new homes have been approved (Parish Council figures). Local residents and the Parish Council objected to the vast majority of these. As you are aware, a large development of 150 new homes (Ref:17/00880/OUM - Scotsdales) and a 52 house development (17/01572/OUM – Soham Road) are pending approval. In addition an up to 100 home development (17/00481/OUM – 98-118 Mildenhall Road) was refused but has gone to appeal. The Mildenhall Road and Soham Road applications should be refused as they are outside the development envelope and were not included in the new Local Plan which was issued in the Autumn. There are also major traffic and infrastructure issues. In my view, the Scotsdales development is far too large and will bring increased traffic and infrastructure problems to our village. With additional smaller applications being made, the number of houses could increase dramatically and this needs to be controlled. I understand the Parish Council set a limit of 240 new homes over the next 20 years. Although that figure should be lower in my opinion, it certainly does not need to exceed it. This needs to include small developments of so called ‘affordable homes’.</td>
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| L Buck     | Letter | 19/12/17| I wish to comment on the above plan.  
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J Dennis  
Letter  
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B Evans</td>
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<td>S Ferguson</td>
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R & J Kowalczyk
Email 19/12/17

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In my view, the "Scotsdales" development is far too large and will bring increased traffic and infrastructure problems to our village. With additional smaller applications be made, the number of houses could increase dramatically and this needs to be controlled.

The disproportionate number of houses being proposed for our village is totally unreasonable and the lack of infrastructure makes these plans unworkable:

- Traffic levels are already high through the village
- The local school is at capacity
- The secondary school at Soham is already looking to cut numbers from areas out of Soham.
- Public transport is sparse – one bus an hour to Cambridge, and none on Sunday

I do not believe you are not fulfilling the wishes of the people in Fordham and you should re-examine the proposals with an objective eye and ask could any village take on this level of development.

I understand the Parish Council set a limit of 240 new homes in the next 20 years. Although that figure should be lower in my opinion, it certainly does not need to exceed it. Clearly this needs to include small developments of so called 'affordable homes'.

T Leonard
Letter 19/12/17

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<td>We have lived happily in Fordham for almost twenty years however the recent acceleration in house building and planning applications are causing significant concern. Please include this letter with your correspondence and feedback on the above plan. It is very clear that as with many villages surrounding Cambridge, Fordham would benefit from well planned, sustainable and gradual growth in the number of residential properties. In the past 18 months or so, 155 new homes have already been approved, (source Parish Council). A large development of 150 new homes (Ref: 17/00880/OUM – Scotsdales), and a 52 house development, (17/01572/OUM – Soham Road), are currently pending discussion. In addition a development of up to 100 homes, (17/00481/OUM – 98-118 Mildenhall Road), was approved.</td>
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My concerns are as follows:

1. Development envelope >> Both the Mildenhall Road and Soham Road applications, should be refused as they are outside the development envelope and were not included in the new Local Plan which was issued in the Autumn.

2. Traffic / pollution >> Fordham already shows major sign of congestion around the co-op and also the new bypass is often at a standstill. Substantial new development would greatly exacerbate this problem.

3. Sustainability >> When both the large and smaller applications are combined the total number of new houses is too large and will undermine the character of the village.

I understand the Parish Council set a limit of 240 new homes in the next 20 years. This should be considered an absolute upper limit on total number of new dwellings and should include a high percentage of starter homes for young families moving to East Anglia and wanting to gain a foot on the housing ladder.

M Neal Letter 19/12/17

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R Shortland  Letter  19/12/17

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These issues are not directly relevant to the determination of the Neighbourhood Area application. However, the Parish Council may wish to explore such issues through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
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<tr>
<th>A Sully</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>08/12/2017</th>
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| A Tate           | Letter | 19/12/17  | I wish to comment on the above plan. In my opinion, Fordham needs only limited growth. In the past 18 months or so, 155 new homes have been approved (Parish Council figures). Local residents and the Parish Council objected to the vast majority of these. As you are aware, a large development of 150 new homes (Ref:17/00880/OUM- Scotsdales) and a 52 house development (17/01572/OUM- Soham Road) are pending approval. In addition an up to 100 home development (17/00481/OUM – 98-118 Mildenhall Road) was refused but has gone to appeal. The Mildenhall Road and Soham Road applications should be refused as they are outside the development envelope and were not included in the new Local Plan which was issued in the Autumn. There are also major traffic and infrastructure issues. In my view, the Scotsdales development is far too large and will bring increased traffic and infrastructure problems to our village. With additional smaller applications being made, the number of houses could increase dramatically and this needs to be controlled. I understand the Parish Council set a limit of 240 new homes over the next 20 years. Although that figure should be lower in my opinion, it certainly does not need to exceed it. This needs to include small developments of so called ‘affordable homes’. |

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L Trundley Letter 19/12/17

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In my opinion, Fordham needs only limited growth.

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Local residents and the Parish Council objected to the vast majority of these.

As you are aware, a large development of 150 new homes (Ref:17/00880/OUM - Scotsdales) and a 52 house development (17/01572/OUM – Soham Road) are pending approval. In addition an up to 100 home development (17/00481/OUM – 98-118 Mildenhall Road) was refused but has gone to appeal.

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J Waller Letter 19/12/17

I wish to comment on the above plan.

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As you are aware, a large development of 150 new homes (Ref:17/00880/OUM - Scotsdales) and a 52 house development (17/01572/OUM – Soham Road) are pending approval. In addition an up to 100 home development (17/00481/OUM – 98-118 Mildenhall Road) was refused but has gone to appeal.

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B Warren  
(Mr & Mrs)  
Email
12/12/17

We wish to comment on the above plan that in our opinion Fordham only requires limited growth. In the past 18 months or so, 155 new homes have been approved (Parish Council figures) and local residents and the Parish Council have objected to the vast majority of these.

As you know a large development of 150 new homes (Ref 17/00880/OUM - Scotsdales) and a 52 house development (17/01572/OUM - Soham Road) are pending approval. In addition to these a development of up to 100 homes (17/00481/OUM - 98-118 Mildenhall Road) was refused but has gone to appeal.

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In our opinion the Scotsdale development is far too large and will bring increased traffic, which is already horrendous through the village and will also increase pollution. Also due to the large amount of traffic which has been increased due to other developments in the area i.e. (Soham) (and outlying villages) the Fordham bypass cannot cope with the volume and cars are now using the old road i.e. Market Street which is adding to the noise and air pollution. Generally the infrastructure cannot cope.

With additional smaller applications the number of houses could increase dramatically and further increase these problems and needs to be controlled.

We are given to understand that the Parish Council set a limit of 240 new homes in the next 20 years although we think that is too high and it certainly does not need to exceed it.

We urge you to consider these points.

P Wildman  
Letter
19/12/17

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