



Document Reference
PS.EVR17

East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policy LP17 – Creating a sustainable, efficient and resilient transport network

November 2017

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1. Introduction and Policy Context

Introduction

- 1.1 East Cambridgeshire District Council is reviewing its Local Plan, which was last adopted in April 2015. The new Local Plan, which is hoped to be adopted in 2018, will provide a framework for development in the district until 2036 and beyond.
- 1.2 This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for policy LP17 (of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, November 2017), which relates to creating a sustainable, efficient and resilient transport network.

National policy

- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in 2014 which offers 'live' government guidance.
- 1.4 Sustainable transport is referenced throughout the NPPF and the whole of Section 4 is concerned with "Promoting Sustainable Transport". Reference is also made to transport in the section on "Plan-making". The following points are particularly relevant:
 - The stated Core Planning Principles in NPPF paragraph 17 include the following: planning should "actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable";
 - Section 4 (paragraphs 29 to 46) details the requirements of planning to maximise sustainable transport options and the need for and use of Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and Travel Plans;
 - Paragraph 58, in requiring robust and comprehensive policies setting out the quality of development should aim to ensure that the "optimise the potential use of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses...and support local facilities and transport networks"; and
 - In the section on plan-making, paragraph 156 it states that the local plan should include strategic priorities to deliver "the infrastructure for transport..."
- 1.5 The above NPPF policy and NPPG guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP17 in particular.

2 East Cambridgeshire Context in Relation to Policy LP17

- 2.1 East Cambridgeshire is a rural district, meaning that residents often have to travel further to access services and facilities than those living in urban areas. Some key routes between the larger settlements, both within and outside of the District are well served by public transport, providing sustainable alternatives to the private car for travel. However, the smaller settlements rely more heavily on the private car for access to services, facilities, education and jobs. Therefore it is important that high quality routes and connections are provided.
- 2.2 The reliance on the transport network as a result of the rural nature of the district requires that it is resilient to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and extreme weather events.
- 2.3 Within the larger settlements, such as Ely and Soham, connectivity between homes, jobs and leisure activities has more scope to be undertaken sustainably via walking and cycling.

In a number of cases several smaller villages are well related to each other and could easily be accessed to and from one another by sustainable means.

- 2.4 Where new development takes place, particularly in the south of the District where development is likely to impact upon Cambridge and Newmarket, it will be necessary to ensure that significant increases in car use, and congestion issues, are mitigated against with appropriate alternative means.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft Local Plan (February 2016) contained a policy entitled ‘Creating a sustainable, efficient and resilient transport network’. A number of representations were made on the policy, and in summary the key issues raised for the policy were:
- Some suggested that the evidence behind the policy is weak;
 - Some offered settlement specific requirements (which can be dealt with in updates versions for section 7 e.g. for Burwell and Reach);
 - Various detailed suggestions to improve clarity of policy wording;
 - A few comments suggesting the policy needs substantial or significant rewording, especially in relation to including public transport issues and cross county boundary issues;
 - Two suggested amending the second bullet to read: “Reduce the need to travel by ensuring *that* development is accessible, being well located in relation to existing or *proposed* services and facilities;” (changes in italics)
 - Cambridgeshire and Suffolk county councils suggested section 5.3 should include reference to existing and emerging transport strategies; and
 - A few comments broadly supporting elements of the policy.
- 3.2 We took forward the suggestion to slightly amend the second bullet point, as this was a sensible changes and gives greater flexibility to the policy.
- 3.3 Whilst we extended paragraph 5.3.4 to make reference to the wider transport policy framework, we did not take forward the various suggestions and comments relating to the consideration of specific transport issues or the inclusion of specific schemes because clear reference is made to the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) which identifies strategic transport infrastructure projects and the fact that this will be regularly updated to remain up to date. The IIP in identifying its priorities for strategic transport infrastructure takes into account transport issues within, and in close proximity to, the district.
- 3.4 Where comments have related to settlement specific requirements, these will be taken into account during the formulation of the settlement specific pages in Section 7.
- 3.5 In addition, whilst not specifically raised as issues by a representor, the policy was extended to include the following two new paragraphs. The first paragraph gives the framework to ensure developers address, to an appropriate degree relative to the scale of development, the requirements of the policy; the second paragraph makes the policy clear that, if transport issues cannot be addressed, then proposals will be refused:

To demonstrate that developers have considered and taken into account the requirements of this policy, an appropriate Design and Access Statement (all development proposals), Transport Statement (typically for 50-80 dwellings or similar scale) or Travel Assessment and Travel Plan (typically for 80 dwellings or more or similar scale development) should be submitted with proposals, with the precise form being dependent on the scale and nature of development and agreed through early discussion with the local planning or highway authority.

Any development that has severe transport implications will not be granted planning permission unless deliverable mitigation measures have been identified, and arrangements secured for their implementation, which will make the development acceptable in transport terms.

4 Local Plan: Further Draft

- 4.1 The Further Draft was published for consultation in January – February 2017.
- 4.2 Various comments were received during the Further Draft consultation, either supporting the policy or expressing concern over certain aspects of the policy. In summary, the key issues raised for the policy were:
- Various comments broadly supporting elements of the policy;
 - Detailed suggestions to improve the clarity of policy wording in relation to: the impact of development on designated sites; the protection of existing town centre car parks / need for air quality assessments;
 - Comments suggesting the policy is weak, and should place more emphasis on rail travel;
 - Various comments relating to a number of specific settlements. Including, the lack of sustainable travel options in Isleham, and the highway impacts of the extension to Lancaster Way.
 - Various comments relating to matters beyond the remit of the Plan, for example speed limits and their enforcement.
- 4.3 In response to the comments made seeking amendments to the policy in relation to the potential impact of schemes on designated sites and the need for air quality assessments, additional text has been added to Policy LP26 (rather than this policy), broadly along the lines as suggested.
- 4.4 Additional text has been included at paragraph 5.4.5 to make reference to rail travel and the opportunities for sustainable travel to destinations further afield, as follows: *“Ely and Littleport (and to a more limited degree, Kennett and Dullingham) have the additional benefit of travel by rail, providing an alternative to travel by private car, particularly to destinations such as Peterborough, Kings Lynn, Cambridge and London.”*
- 4.5 No amendments have been made to the policy in response to the comments about car parking / air quality assessments of changing car parks. Car parking is addressed under separate matters, including LP14 for city centre parking, whilst air quality is assessed under LP26.
- 4.6 The request to improve rail connections and services are not included. Whilst the principle of this is supported, the Local Plan is not the place to refer to it. These are matters for, for example, the Local Transport Plan. Nevertheless, LP17 is supportive in more general terms to sustainable travel means.
- 4.7 The settlement specific comments are noted, and are considered as part of consideration of settlement specific policies.
- 4.8 In addition to responding to representations, the policy has been amended slightly through a new opening short paragraph, ensuring development makes appropriate provision for transport measures, and the second paragraph amended so as to ensure the list that

follows are required to be met 'as appropriate', because not all proposals (eg a house extension) could be expected to meet all the criteria.

- 4.9 Further, a new paragraph mid way through the policy has been added, relating to Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs), and the need to appropriately manage and mitigate their impact, should HCVs arise as a result of development. East Cambridgeshire is particularly prone to HCV use (eg HGVs and farm machinery), hence why the policy needs bolstering.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been considered for this policy. (Option 1 is the preferred policy approach which has been included in the Proposed Submission.)
- 5.2 **Option 2:** No policy, and rely on national policy. However, considering the importance of transport to the delivery of sustainable development, this approach is felt to provide insufficient local policy framework (eg on matters such as HCVs and when certain types of assessment would likely be necessary). The NPPF is also quite clear in stating the role of Local Plans in delivering sustainable development and the importance of planning policies in promoting sustainable transport.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan (November 2017). It is hoped this helps demonstrate how we have responded to comments received during the consultation stages, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.