



Document Reference

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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policy LP18 – Improving cycle provision

November 2017

Contents

1. Introduction and Policy Context.....	1
2 East Cambridgeshire Context in Relation to Policy LP18	1
3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft.....	2
4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft.....	2
5 Alternative Reasonable Options.....	2
6 Conclusion	3

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 LP18 (of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, November 2017), which relates to improving cycle provision in the district.

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 LP18 in particular.

2 East Cambridgeshire Context in Relation to Policy LP18

- 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. However, the broadly flat fenland landscape provides the opportunity for cycling as a recreational activity and also as a means of transport. Many people already cycle in East Cambridgeshire, such as part of a daily commute to Ely rail station. Despite this, there remain many opportunities to substantially increase the uptake of cycling across the district.
- 2.2 Within Ely, there are a number of cycle routes, identified collectively as the Ely Cycle Network. These routes provide the baseline on which to build and improve. However, there is a general lack of quality facilities and that there is poor connectivity between key destinations, and a number of schemes could improve connectivity between key destinations. The Transport Strategy for East Cambridgeshire also identifies a number of schemes to improve connectivity for cyclists.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft Local Plan (February 2016) contained a policy entitled 'Improving cycle provision'. A limited number of representations were made on the policy, and in summary the key issues raised for the policy were:
- A comment suggesting that the policy needs re-wording to take account of specific cross county boundary sustainable travel;
 - A comment seeking the inclusion within the policy of support for recreational walking;
 - A small number of supporting comments were also received.
- 3.2 We did not take forward the suggestions to include recreational walking within this policy, as the policy relates to cycling specifically, and its use as a mode of transport. However, we acknowledge the benefits of walking, though feel this is sufficiently addressed elsewhere, most notably policies LP17 Creating a sustainable, efficient and resilient transport network, LP20: Delivering Green Infrastructure and LP21: New Open Space.
- 3.3 We partially took forward the comment relating to specific cross county boundary sustainable travel. Whilst the comment more relates to Policy LP17, and the associated Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), the third paragraph was amended for the Further Draft

4 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 4.1 The Further Draft was published for consultation in January – February 2017.
- 4.2 Only a small number of comments seeking amendments were received during the Further Draft consultation. In summary, the key issues raised for the policy were:
- Various comments broadly supporting elements of the policy;
 - Various comments relating to specific settlements, including Isleham and Stuntney/Stretham connectivity;
 - Detailed suggestions to improve clarity of policy wording, including deletion of reference to Market Town Transport Strategies; the inclusion of encouragement of walking;
 - Objection to policy and restrictions on car users – it is pandering to the cycle lobby.
- 4.3 In response to the comment made, the reference to Market Town Transport Strategies has been removed.
- 4.4 We have not taken forward the suggestions to include walking, for the same reasons as set out at the Preliminary Draft stage. We also do not consider the policy unduly prioritises cycling over cars.
- 4.5 The settlement specific comments are noted and are considered within the relevant settlement section.

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 version.)

- 5.2 **Option 2:** No policy, and rely on the more generic transport policy (LP17) and national policy. This option has been rejected as it is anticipated it would have insufficient positive impact upon cycling provision within the District.

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.