



Document Reference
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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policy LP9 – Equine Development

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 early 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 LP9 (of the Proposed Submission Local Plan, November 2017), which relates to equine development. It should be read in association with policy LP10 (development affecting the horse racing industry).

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 Although there is no specific guidance provided in the NPPF on equine development, there is generic guidance provided on business and employment issues. In addition, as it is regarded as a business cluster which is fairly unique to East Cambridgeshire Section 3 of the NPPF concerning "supporting a prosperous rural economy" is relevant. The following points are particularly relevant:

- *plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;."*

This suggests that taking account of equine development cluster is an important consideration in generating local job growth.

- 1.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was introduced in 2014 and it sets out live guidance on how to implement the policies of the NPPF. There is no specific guidance on equine development.
- 1.5 The above NPPF policy and NPPG guidance has been taken into account in preparing the Local Plan as a whole, and policy LP9 in particular.

2 East Cambridgeshire Context in Relation to Policy LP9

- 2.1 East Cambridgeshire administrative area almost entirely surrounds Newmarket (which is located in Suffolk), a town which is known as the "Headquarters of British Horseracing" and is at the heart of the racing world. The Newmarket area is home to more racehorses, trainers, stable staff, stud farms and racing organisations than anywhere else across the globe. Whilst the name 'Newmarket' and its association with horse racing is well known, a considerable amount of that horse racing activity is located in East Cambridgeshire, including the Newmarket July Course itself.
- 2.2 East Cambridgeshire District Council has long standing support for this equine activity, and acknowledges the considerable economic benefits it brings to the area. However, equestrian development, whether domestic or commercial, should be of an appropriate scale and design. Careful attention should be given to siting, materials and landscaping details to avoid an adverse impact on the countryside and where possible re-use existing

buildings. The Council seeks equine development that maintains environmental quality and the character of the countryside.

3 Local Plan Policy: Preliminary Draft

- 3.1 The Preliminary Draft Local Plan (February 2016) contained a policy entitled the “LP9: Equine Development”. A limited number of representations were made on the policy and its supporting text, and in summary the key issues raised for the policy were:
- General support for the policy but would welcome commitment to improving the safety of horses, riders and other road users.
 - Support for the policy. It is important to protect and promote Newmarket’s status as an international horse racing centre of excellence, whilst also meeting the needs of all residents and other economic sectors.
- 3.2 Although the Local Plan does not cover the administrative area of Newmarket, two policies are included in the Local Plan (LP9 and LP10) that supports appropriate equine development in East Cambridgeshire’s area. This will help to maintain and enhance the reputation of Newmarket as an international horse racing centre of excellence.
- 3.3 To address the point regarding safety, the Further Draft Local Plan was amended, with the third bullet point of LP9 to read as follows (underlined text added):
- Proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises should have access to the public bridleway network or have sufficient space for exercising horses on-site. Such proposals will require a Transport Statement to demonstrate (a) that there are no unacceptable impacts on highway safety; and (b) how the safety of horses, riders and other road users have been considered and addressed.

4 Local Plan Policy: 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 suggesting rewording, including that any new buildings should be close to existing to prevent unwanted development within the countryside;
 - Comment suggesting that an additional criteria addressing the loss of equine related development;
 - Comment seeking specific inclusion of equine tourism development, and the need for homes to go with such tourism.
- 4.3 The policy relates to new or expanding equine development as a specific and significant activity within the District. Therefore criteria for the loss of equine related development would not sit within the current direction of the policy. Any loss or re-use of buildings or sites would still be required to meet the criteria set out under LP31 for Development in the Countryside.
- 4.4 The policy has been amended (bullet point (a) added), to match that in the 2015 Local Plan, in response to comments seeking rewording in relation to ensuring new buildings being close to existing buildings and not isolated in the countryside.

- 4.5 Finally in respect of the comment relating to equine tourism development and the need for homes on such estates, the Council considers this an inappropriate policy position because it could open up the possibility of isolated homes being built in the countryside. If such homes are necessary, they would have to pass the tests in LP3 and LP31. There is no need for LP9 to repeat or reinvent such tests.

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 Local Plan.)
- 5.2 **Option 2:** No policy, and rely on national policy for this subject area. There are some benefits on relying on national policy to help in delivering equine development. However, due to the very limited national guidance and due to the high level of equine activity in the district (and the economic benefits of it), having a specific policy in the Local Plan provides clear local guidance. The option of no policy is therefore rejected.

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.