



Document Reference
PS.EVR.ASH

East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policies for Ashley

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 policies relating specifically to the village of Ashley, including:
- Ashley1: Ashley's Local Character and Facilities
 - Ashley2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities
 - Ashley3: Allocation Sites
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide justification for the inclusion of specific policies relating to an individual settlement, and should be read alongside other Local Plan evidence documents. For example, a detailed reasoning of the settlement's position in the Settlement Hierarchy is contained in the Settlement Hierarchy report. For the findings of the assessment of individual sites, please refer to the Site Assessment Evidence Report Update 2017.
- 1.4 Collectively, the policies attempt to provide a coherent strategy for the settlement, over the plan period, which meets the area's needs and reflects the views of the community.

National policy

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 Through its Core Planning Principles, the NPPF indicates that planning should:
- "...take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it..."*
- 1.7 The emerging Local Plan recognises the differing roles and characters of different areas through providing a suite of bespoke policies, specific to each settlement in the district. These policies are set out in individual settlement chapters, in Section 7: Policies for Places.
- 1.8 In paragraph 157, the NPPF sets out a series of requirements which Local Plans should fulfil. The following requirements are considered relevant to the settlement chapters contained within Section 7:

"...Crucially, Local Plans should:

...be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area...

...not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives...

...plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework...

...be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date...

...allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate...”

- 1.9 In response to these requirements, Section 7 proposes the inclusion of policies relating to each settlement’s local character, infrastructure and facilities. Site allocations for a range of land uses are proposed for many settlements.

2 Ashley in context

- 2.1 Ashley is located 4 miles east of Newmarket. Due to its population size and good range of services, the Settlement Hierarchy identifies Ashley as a ‘medium’ village.
- 2.2 As a medium village, it is considered that Ashley offers the potential to accommodate growth, thereby contributing to meeting the development needs of the area. The overall scale of growth is influenced by the village’s position in the Settlement Hierarchy, the availability of suitable sites, and the presence of environmental and/or infrastructure constraints.

3 Local Plan Policy: Further Draft

- 3.1 A Call for Sites exercise was held as part of the Preliminary Draft Local Plan consultation, during which a number of site submissions were received for Ashley. The site submissions were assessed and sites considered suitable for development were proposed for allocation.
- 3.2 The Ashley chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan proposed three draft policies:
- 3.3 *Policy Ashley1: Ashley’s Local Character and Facilities* seeks to ensure development proposals maintain Ashley’s built character and maintain the village’s facilities expanding on them where possible.
- 3.4 *Policy Ashley2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities* sets out the settlement’s priorities in terms of infrastructure and facilities.
- 3.5 The content of the policies was informed by the Local Plan 2015, engagement with the Parish Council (in 2016), and responses to the Preliminary Draft Local Plan consultation.

3.6 Policy *Ashley3: Preferred Allocation Sites* identified one Local Green Space site allocations:

- ASH.LGS1 – Waiver Pond, Church Street, Ashley

3.7 A number of other site submissions were assessed, but each was found to be not suitable for allocation. The results of the site assessment are presented in the *Site Assessment Report Update 2017*.

3.8 Ashley has a Development Envelope to define the boundary of the built up area and extent of the countryside. One change to Ashley's Development Envelope was proposed during the Preliminary Draft Local Plan consultation. Following assessment, this was rejected. The reasons for rejection are set out in the Development Envelopes Assessment Report.

3.9 In summary, the following comments were received during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation (January – February 2017) in response Ashley draft policies:

Overarching Issues/Concerns

- Ashley does not have a primary school and there is limited public transport service and so categorisation of Ashley as a medium village is questioned.
- Support no housing allocation in Ashley

Infrastructure and Other constraints

- Support - character and nature of Ashley's historical centre should be preserved and that any new building be sympathetic in style and nature.
- The Parish Council's view on those priorities is as follows:
 - Improve road safety in Ashley by reducing speed of traffic through centre of village, Church Street and Mill Road and through highway improvements at junction of Church Street and Newmarket Road.
 - Provision of modern village hall with improved facilities to allow better use of recreation ground.
 - Improve capacity or efficiency of main drains to avoid flooding in village and routes into village caused by overcapacity.
 - More frequent, daily bus service to Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds.

Site Specific Comments

ASH.LGS1 Wavier Pond, Church Street

- Support the allocation of the Wavier Pond and the space around it as a Local Green Space.

New Site(s) suggested

- None

4 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

4.1 Policy *Ashley2* has been amended for the Proposed Submission Local Plan particularly to reflect the requests made by the Parish Council. The infrastructure needs reflect the Parish Councils priority although some improvement requested may be beyond the scope of the Local Plan in particular improvements to the public transport. Amending the infrastructure needs of the village will help potential developer to be aware this. Although no site is allocated in the village but there is potential for windfall sites to come forward over the plan

period. If these sites are big enough, then contributions will be sought for infrastructure on the list.

- 4.2 The Parish Council suggested that Ashley should be downgraded to a small village due to lack of a primary school in village. This issue is discussed in the policy LP3 evidence report and in the Settlement Hierarchy reports and so it is not necessary to reiterate these arguments in this report.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred policy approach for Ashley, comprising the three policies as set out.
- 5.2 Option 2 would be to not include either Policies Ashley1 or 2, but these are rejected on the basis that they both give locally specific policy matters for the settlement, which would be lacking without such a policy.
- 5.3 Option 3 would be to include alternative site allocations. Such alternatives are assessed in both the Sustainability Appraisal report and the Site Assessment Report.

6 Conclusion

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