



Document Reference
PS.EVR.ELY

East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policies for Ely
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 Swaffham Prior, including:
- Policy Ely1: Spatial Strategy;
 - Policy Ely2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities;
 - Policy Ely3: Allocation sites;
 - Policy Ely4: Site ELY.M4 - Station Gateway;
 - Policy Ely5: Site ELY.M5 - Octagon Business Park;
 - Policy Ely6: Site ELY.M6 - Princess of Wales Hospital; and
 - Policy Ely7: Site ELY.E2 – Lancaster Way Business Park.
- 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 Ely in context

- 2.1 The City of Ely is East Cambridgeshire’s main centre, both in terms of population and provision of employment, retail and services. Ely is a popular place to live and offers good transport connections to other towns and cities, particularly by rail. Consequently the Settlement Hierarchy places Ely in the district’s Main Settlements.
- 2.2 As a Main Settlement, Ely provides a key location to accommodate growth, and is expected to play a significant role in meeting the development needs of the area. The overall scale of growth is influenced by the town’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 Ely. The site submissions were assessed and sites considered suitable for development were proposed for allocation.
- 3.2 The Ely chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan proposed four draft policies:
- 3.3 Policy *Ely1: Spatial Strategy* sets out key requirements which development proposals need to comply with and respond to, relating to the special characteristics of Ely and the need for new infrastructure.

- 3.4 Policy *Ely2: 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 (where applicable).
- 3.6 Policy *Ely3: Preferred Allocation Sites* identifies eight site allocations:
- ELY.M1 North Ely – 3,000 dwellings, as a residential-led mixed-use urban extension (215.8 dwellings);
 - ELY.M2 The Grange, Nutholt Lane – 10-50 dwellings (0.6ha);
 - ELY.M3 Paradise Area, off Nutholt Lane – 50-65 dwellings (1ha);
 - ELY.M4 Station Gateway – 100-200 dwellings (11.4ha);
 - ELY.M5 Octagon Business Park - 13.1ha (retail & employment development);
 - ELY.E1 Ely Road and Rail Distribution Centre, Queen Adelaide Way – 11.2ha;
 - ELY.E2 Lancaster Way Business Park – 105.5ha; and
 - ELY.L1 Downham Road Sports and Leisure Hub – 6.1ha.
- 3.7 Policies *ELY4: Station Gateway* provides a bespoke policy for site ELY.M4 to deliver a residential-led mixed-use scheme in proximity of Ely's rail station.
- 3.8 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 Evidence Report Nov 2017*.
- 3.9 Ely has a Development Envelope to define the boundary of the built up area and extent of the countryside. No changes were suggested, and therefore the Development Envelope has been amended to include site allocations, only.
- 3.10 In summary, the following comments were received during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation (January – February 2017) in response to Ely policies:

Overarching Issues/Concerns

- Whilst the Station Gateway (ELY.M4) is identified as a draft site allocation, there are other sites in proximity of the station that provide opportunities for sustainable development.
- Chettisham will be 'swallowed up' by development at Ely. Better to 'swallow' Witchford, as less through traffic.
- Draft site allocations are either very small or very large – more moderate sites should be included to provide a range of different development opportunities.

Infrastructure and Other constraints

- Housing development will place increased pressure on the existing green infrastructure network, including potential impacts on designated sites. Housing development policies should require proposals to deliver additional and/or enhanced GI to meet additional demand.
- Reduce bypass speed limit.

- Build new housing further away from bypass to reduce noise and air pollution, improve safety and quality of life.
- Plan does not mention expansion of sewerage infrastructure.
- Council must ensure policies ELY1 and ELY2 are compliant with national policy tests for planning obligations and CIL regulations, and does not overburden development to the extent that viability is threatened.
- Cambs County Council confirm that mitigation of education impacts has already been identified in the form of two new primary schools (inc. Isle of Ely Primary which has already opened) and new secondary school in Littleport (open September 2017).

Site Specific Comments

ELY.M1 North Ely

- Support for scheme to be delivered in accordance with planning consent and/or principles of Ely North SPD.
- Site is located within a WWTW Safeguarding Area for allocation of a new Ely Waste Water Treatment Works.
- Development should protect and enhance the listed building (St Michaels Church) and its setting.
- No residual capacity in surface water receiving system. Necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development.
- Site promoter confirms commitment to delivery of site, with planning permission granted for 2,000 dwellings (of 3,000) total.
- Landowner confirms commitment to bring forward land as mixed-use scheme.

ELY.M2 The Grange

- Development should conserve, and where opportunities arise, enhance the setting of Ely Conservation Area and listed buildings.
- Located in Conservation Area, development should be of particularly high quality and respond to local character and distinctiveness.

ELY.M4 Station Gateway

- Proposals should have no adverse impacts on the adjacent CWS and ideally enhance and provide public access.
- No residual capacity in surface water receiving system. Necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development.
- Development should pay particular regard to adjacent County Wildlife Site and ensure no adverse impact upon it. Public access must be compatible with enhancement of ecological interest of site.
- Station Gateway policy to restrictive in respect of retail – needs greater flexibility.
- Development should conserve, and where opportunities arise, enhance the Conservation Area. Located in Conservation Area, development should be high quality and respond to character and distinctiveness.

ELY.M5 Octagon Business Park

- Site is located within a WWTW Safeguarding Area for allocation of a new Ely Waste Water Treatment Works.
- Development would have a negative impact on the setting of Ely Cathedral and the economic well-being of the city centre.

- Legal agreement in place with drainage board to manage surface water.

ELY.E1 Ely Road and Rail Distribution Centre

- Proposals should have no adverse impact on the adjacent SSSI, CWS and Ely Country Park by providing adequate landscape treatment and other mitigation.
- Development proposals should contribute significant ecological enhancements.
- In addition to avoiding impacts on SSSI, CWS and Ely Country Park, major development should enhance these sites and the wider ecological network along the Ely Ouse.
- Site is located within a WWTW Safeguarding Area for allocation of a new Ely Waste Water Treatment Works.

ELY.E2 Lancaster Way Business Park

- Site lies within a Waste Consultation Area. Typically B2, B8 employment uses are unlikely to prejudice waste management operations, but B1 may be sensitive.
- Development will retain and expand employment opportunities local to Ely and reduce the level of out-commuting.
- Site boundary should remain clear of bridleway (located west of site, which is well used and offers views of Ely Cathedral), should follow topography, and provide suitably landscaping. Site area should be reduced in size and redrawn towards Ely.
- Extension of Lancaster Way Business Park is not commensurate with its rural location.
- Site is excessive in its extent and would conflict with aspirations of the plan to protect open countryside, landscape and Cathedral views. This will have significant adverse impact on the rural setting of Witchford.
- Development of site would have severe transport implications for residents of Witchford. Direct vehicular access to A10 should be provided.
- To provide greater clarity, the draft site allocation should be split into smaller parcels reflecting the extent of the existing business park, area of Enterprise Zone, and proposed extension to south.
- Site promoter confirms deliverability of extension area.
- Site promoter welcomes draft site allocation, and confirms designation of area as National Enterprise Zone, with infrastructure progressing to serve extension land.

ELY.L1 Downham Road Sports and Leisure Hub

- Development would have a negative impact on the setting of Ely Cathedral and the economic well-being of the city centre.
- No residual capacity in surface water receiving system. Necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development.

Site/10/05 Orwell Pit Farm (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of site.
- Site assessment flawed as site will provide on-site infrastructure and facilities.
- Site can be readily assimilated into the landscape and will not have significant impacts on the character and setting of Ely.
- Progress of North Ely site (ELY.M1) indicates positive market conditions in locality – radical approaches required to meet housing shortfall.
- Site has similar characteristics to ELY.M1.
- Precedent for development west of the A10 already set by Sports and Leisure Hub.

- Site has clear boundaries and would be developed in phases, therefore would not harm landscape or setting of Ely.
- Views of Cathedral would be maintained.
- Sustainable location close to Ely's services and facilities; well-related to Ely.
- Site could provide up to 2,000 dwellings, of which 600 affordable, self-build plots, a primary school and 5ha of employment land.

Site/10/10 Greenacre Farm (North) (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of site, and to site assessment process and findings - suggests proposal was misunderstood.
 - Proposed use sought was recreational/leisure i.e. playing fields/sports facilities, including some commercial facilities – such as gym/spa, garden centre. Private sports clubs.
 - Net area calculation not appropriate.
 - Assessment assumes access via West End. However it is intended that access would be taken from adjacent Sports and Leisure Hub.
 - Recreational uses will have less visual impact than other types of development.
 - Site should be reassessed.
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- Comprehensive assessment of formal open space is required to ensure needs of growth are met. Site/10/10 should be reassessed in light of this assessment.
 - Site should be allocated to provide an extension to Sports and Leisure Hub.
 - Site would support recreation needs of Ely North development (ELY.M1).

Site/10/14 Land to the south of Ely golf club and to the east of Cambridge Road (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of site.
- Site can make a valuable contribution to supply of housing land.
- Site is in a sustainable location as it is in close proximity of Ely's main urban area, with pedestrian/cycle/public transport access to its wide range of services and facilities.
- Disagrees which Site Assessment Evidence Report, which suggests site is physically separate from Ely – as site can be developed in conjunction with Site/10/15.
- Separation is as a result of Ely golf club; however this is not open countryside and is urbanised in form.
- Site has clear, defensible boundary. Proposed highways works along A142 and A10 will strengthen the boundary of the site.
- Minimal impact on distant views of Ely Cathedral, due to topography and vegetation.
- Noise from A10 can be easily mitigated through design and layout.
- Development would be a logical extension to Ely.

Site/10/15 Land to the south of Witchford Road (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of site.
- Site can make a valuable contribution to supply of housing land, and is suitable, available and deliverable.
- Site is in a sustainable location as it is in close proximity of Ely's main urban area, with pedestrian/cycle/public transport access to its wide range of services and facilities.
- Strongly disagree with findings that site will have significant adverse impact of historic City of Ely – site is over 500m from Conservation Area, 0.8km from nearest listed building, with views restricted by topography and built form.

- Opportunities to establish a strong accessible green fringe to the City.
- Any landscape impacts can be addressed through design and mitigation measures.

Site/10/16 Westmill Foods Site, Angel Drove (site rejected in part)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of wider site area as a mixed-use proposal. NB: eastern part of site, with frontage to Angel Drove, forms part of draft site allocation ELY.M4.
- Despite marketing, site has been vacant and underutilised for more than 12 years.
- Allocation should attract and secure potential developers/occupiers at the earliest opportunity.
- No reasonable prospect of site being developed for employment purposes.
- Site suitable for housing development and retail and commercial – particularly large-scale retail, which is unlikely to be met in the town centre.
- Site offers sustainable location for housing development, near rail station and town centre.
- Rear site well-related to built area.

New Site(s) suggested

- Site/10/27 Land at Kiln Lane
- Site/10/28 Princess of Wales Hospital site
- Site/10/29 Site to the north-east of Witchford

4 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 4.1 To address comments raised during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation, and following preparation of the Ely Quintessential Views Study, Policy Ely1: Spatial Strategy was amended to give greater protection to Ely's landscape character and key views of Ely Cathedral from the wider landscape.
- 4.2 Policy Ely2 was amended following confirmation from Cambridgeshire County Council that, to meet Ely's growth needs, two new primary schools are required. The policy was amended through the inclusion of the following policy requirement:
- c. Additional education provision
- 4.3 It was suggested that housing development will place increased pressure on the existing green infrastructure network, including potential impacts on designated sites. The extent to which recreational pressure on designated sites will increase is explored through the Habitats Regulation Assessment, and addressed through other policies in the plan. It should be noted that the North Ely development includes the provision of a new Country Park, thereby meeting the recreational needs of this major development. It was raised that housing development policies should require proposals to deliver additional and/or enhanced GI to meet additional demand. This is addressed through policy LP20: Delivering Green Infrastructure.
- 4.4 It was raised that the plan does not mention the expansion of sewerage infrastructure. The Proposed Submission Local Plan has been informed by an updated Water Cycle Study which identifies additional infrastructure, where required.

- 4.5 For a number of sites, the proximity to/within the WWTW Safeguarding Area and area of search for allocation of a new Waste Water Treatment Works was raised. The Proposed Submission Local Plan does not alter the status of the WWTW Area of Search, and its extent is shown on the Policies Map. The area of search is safeguarded by the Cambridgeshire Minerals & Waste Plan.
- 4.6 For certain sites, the Internal Drainage Board confirmed that necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development, due to limited capacity. Development proposals should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, as required by policy LP25.
- 4.7 A number of comments were received relating to specific sites in Ely. Comments relating to site allocations and their supporting policies (policies Ely 3 onwards) are discussed below. Comments relating to new site submissions and rejected sites are addressed in the Site Assessment Evidence Report.

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.M1 North Ely

- 4.8 It was indicated that development should protect and enhance the listed building (St Michaels Church), located in the village of Chettisham, and its setting. There were also concerns that Chettisham will be 'swallowed up' by development of the site. Policy Ely3 requires development of North Ely (ELY.M1) to be delivered in accordance with the principles established through consented schemes and the North Ely SPD. Policy Ely3 requires the site be developed in accordance with existing consents and the North Ely SPD, which sets out design principles for the site. No changes to policy are required

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.M2 The Grange, Nutholt Lane

- 4.9 Some respondents noted that the site is located in a Conservation Area and that development should be of particularly high quality and respond to local character and distinctiveness. For clarity, policy Ely3: Allocation Sites (ELY.M2) was amended to highlight the site's location in the Conservation Area.

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.M4 Station Gateway & Policy Ely4

- 4.10 It was stated that proposals should have no adverse impacts on the adjacent County Wildlife Site and ideally enhance and provide public access. This is an existing requirement of policy Ely4: Station Gateway, therefore no change is required.
- 4.11 A respondent suggested that the Station Gateway policy is too restrictive in respect of retail. However, it is considered that greater flexibility risks undermining the city centre. Policy Ely4 is clear in its promotion of a residential-led scheme, with other supporting uses, therefore no change is required.
- 4.12 It was suggested that there are other suitable sites in proximity of the Station Gateway. The area in proximity of the Station Gateway (and the whole of Ely's built area) is located within Ely's development envelope where, in principle, proposals for sustainable development should be approved.
- 4.13 It was raised that the site is located in Conservation Area, and that development should be high quality and respond to character and distinctiveness. Proposed Submission Local Plan Policy Ely4 was amended to include the following policy requirement:
- c. Have particular regard to the sensitive historic environment and proximity to the Conservation Area. Buildings should not be of a height or style to affect the visual dominance of Ely Cathedral or landscape setting of Ely;

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.M5 Octagon Business Park

- 4.14 Objections to the site were received due to concerns that development would have a negative impact on the setting of Ely Cathedral and the economic well-being of the city centre.
- 4.15 An additional policy, Ely5: ELY.M5 – Octagon Business Park, has been included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan which sets out specific policy requirements to inform development of the site.

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.E1 Ely Road and Rail Distribution Centre

- 4.16 It was suggested that, in addition to avoiding impacts on SSSI, CWS and Ely Country Park, major development should enhance these sites and the wider ecological network along the Ely Ouse. Policy LP30 requires all development to deliver a net gain in biodiversity, where possible.

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - Site ELY.E2 Lancaster Way Business Park

- 4.17 Support was expressed for the allocation of the Business Park and adjacent undeveloped land to retain and expand employment opportunities local to Ely and reduce out-commuting.
- 4.18 However, a range of concerns were raised including the site's potential transport impacts, proximity to the Waste Consultation Area, impacts on a well-used PROW/bridleway along the south-western boundary, the extent of the site, and its impact upon the open countryside, landscape, cathedral views and the rural setting. It was requested that the draft site allocation be split into smaller parcels to provide clarity on the status of different areas of the site.
- 4.19 To address issues raised and inform the development of site ELY.E2, the Proposed Submission Local Plan has been amended to:
- Include bespoke policy Ely7: Site ELY.E2 – Lancaster Way Business Park;
 - Reduce site area, excluding southernmost land parcel (Site/10/03);
 - Split sites into separate parcels (labelled a-c) to reflect their differing status (i.e. developed area, Enterprise Zone boundary, undeveloped land).

Policy Ely3: Allocation Sites - ELY.L1 Downham Road Sports and Leisure Hub

- 4.20 There were concerns that development would have a negative impact on the setting of Ely Cathedral and the economic well-being of the city centre. Policy Ely3 requires the site be developed in accordance with the consented scheme.

New site suggestions and other new sites

- 4.21 Three additional site suggestions were received and are discussed in the Site Assessment Evidence Report. An additional bespoke policy was added to the Proposed Submission Local Plan to inform the development of site ELY.M6 (Site/10/28) Princess of Wales Hospital site. The site was also added to Policy Ely3.
- 4.22 In addition, three new sites have been added to Ely3, sites ELY.H1-3. All of these have consent, and need allocating on the Policies Map.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred policy approach for Ely, comprising the seven policies as set out.
- 5.2 Option 2 would be to not include either Policies Ely1 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 Ely 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.