



Document Reference
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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policies for Fordham

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 Fordham, including:
- Fordham1: Fordham’s Local Character and Facilities
 - Fordham2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities
 - Fordham3: Preferred 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 Fordham in context

- 2.1 Fordham is located 4 miles north of Newmarket, and 1 mile south of Soham. Due to its population size and good range of services, the Settlement Hierarchy identifies Fordham as a ‘Large’ village.
- 2.2 As a Large Village, it is considered that Fordham 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 Fordham. The site submissions were assessed and sites considered suitable for development were proposed for allocation.
- 3.2 The Fordham chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan proposed six draft policies:
- 3.3 Policy *Fordham1: Fordham’s Local Character and Facilities* seeks to ensure development proposals maintain Fordham’s built character and maintain the village’s facilities expanding on them where possible.
- 3.4 Policy *Fordham2: 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 *Fordham3: Preferred Allocation Sites* identified five site allocations:
- FRD.H1 – Land south of Mildenhall Rd;
 - FRD.H2 – Land NE of Rules Garden
 - FRD.M1 – Scotsdales
 - FRD.M2 – Land north of Mildenhall Rd
 - FRD.E1(a-g) – Employment Cluster, S of Fordham
- 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 Fordham has a Development Envelope to define the boundary of the built up area and extent of the countryside.
- 3.9 In summary, the following comments were received during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation (January – February 2017) in response Fordham draft policies:

Overarching Issues/Concerns

- The 200 houses proposed should not be exceeded.
- More sites need allocating to meet 5 year land supply.

Infrastructure and Other constraints

- Additional development will put further pressure on schools, doctor's dentists, youth clubs, social clubs etc
- Most people will commute – increasing car travel and congestion on and towards the A14
- Fordham2 – some of these items are 'strategic' and should be CIL funded, not site specific developer funded.
- Fordham 2 – needs 2 more bullets: provision of natural green space; management measures to avoid impact on SSSI
- Fordham Primary School can accommodate the 200 houses planned. However, school not be expanded further, to accommodate further growth.
- Deficit in early year's education provision.

Site Specific Comments

FRD.H1 Land south of Mildenhall Rd, east of Collins Hill

- No objection, but if mineral is extracted, it should be put to sustainable use.
- Object to this site, due to impact on Grade I listed St Peter's Church, opposite the site. If site continues, policy must have wording about high quality design and the need to conserve / enhance setting of the conservation area and listed church.
- (Promoter) support allocation. However, access should also be permitted off Collin's Hill. Also, if new suggested site adjoining to south is supported, alternative access to FRD.H1 might be appropriate.

FRD.H2 Land north-east of Rules Garden

- (Promoter) allocation supported
- Policy and supporting text should refer to need to conserve / enhance nearby listed building (Cromwell House)

FRD.M1 Scotsdale Garden Centre

- Proposed allocations have the potential to have an adverse effect on European protected sites and SSSI, through increased recreational pressure. Policy for both sites needs a requirement for HRA and a requirement for a net gain in biodiversity.
- FRD.M1 – (promoter) support allocation. However,
 - 150 target should be indicative, not maximum.
 - Policy should confirm that the garden centre will remain on site (albeit consolidated to approx 4 hectares), with rest (approx 9ha) for housing-led development.
 - Policy too specific / restrictive in terms of access – this detail should be determined at masterplanning and planning application stage.
 - Employment provision should be flexible (not B class)
 - Other detailed policy wording amendments also suggested

FRD.M2 Land north of Mildenhall Rd

- Object: traffic / access make this site unsuitable.
- Proposed allocations have the potential to have an adverse effect on European protected sites and SSSI, through increased recreational pressure.
- No objection, but if mineral is extracted, it should be put to sustainable use.

FRD.E1 Employment Cluster south of Fordham

- Support need for HRA
- No objection, but if mineral is extracted, it should be put to sustainable use.
- The Transport Safeguarding Area and the Waste Consultation Area for the European Metal Recycling Railhead, Snailwell, designated by T2D of the M&W Local Plan is not identified / wrong respectively on the Policies Map – it should be added / corrected respectively. Policy Fordham6 should also refer to these designations.
- FRD.E1(A-G) – these should all be for B1, B2 and B8.
- FRD.E1 (D) - Object to the need for a concept plan
- Support reference to heritage and archaeology in the policy, but specific mention should be made of the scheduled ancient monument and listed buildings which are very nearby.

Site/11/01 Land south of Fordham Rd (rejected site)

- Site 11/01 – (promoter) site should be reassessed – recent permissions nearby demonstrate this site also suitable for up to 60 dwellings.

Site/11/02 Land at 5 Station Rd (rejected site)

- Site 11/02 – (promoter) site should be added, because it now has a resolution to grant planning permission (subject to s106) for 27 dwellings.

Site/11/03 Land off Soham Rd

- Site should be reassessed (detailed reasons given), for 45-60 dwellings

Site/11/13 Land fronting Soham Rd and Stewards Field

- (Promoter) this rejected site could be reduced to 0.5ha, accessed off Stewards Field, and allocated for 20 dwellings.
- (Promoter) site should be reassessed – especially error relating to access (which can be provided off Grove Park, contrary to evidence reports published by council).

New Site(s) suggested

- Site/11/25 Land to the east of Isleham Rd
- Site/11/26 Allotment Gardens, Collins Hill

4 Local Plan Policy: Proposed Submission

- 4.1 Policy Fordham1 has been amended for the Proposed Submission Local Plan by including a new paragraph relating to impact on Brackland Rough SSSI and Chippenham Fen. This was to help address concerns raised by representors, as well as findings in the SA / HRA evidence.
- 4.2 Policy Fordham2 has increased its list of infrastructure needs, reflecting representations received and where such infrastructure is reasonable to be listed.
- 4.3 Policy Fordham3 has been amended as follows:
- FRD.H3 site has been added, to reflect a recent consent
 - FRD.H4 site has been added, for reasons set out in the site assessment evidence report.
 - FRD.M2 has increased to 79 dwellings, to reflect a resolution to grant consent for that site.
- 4.4 All comments relating to new and previously rejected sites were carefully considered, with full details as to the assessment of such sites available in the Site Assessment Report.
- 4.5 Policy Fordham4 has been amended, primarily in response to representations received by the promoter, but also in relation to comments received from organisations concerned about designated biodiversity sites. A 'no significant adverse effect' clause has therefore been added.
- 4.6 Fordham5 has been updated, to reflect a minded to grant consent for that site. Despite that resolution, a bespoke policy is still necessary because of the special circumstances regarding that consent (particularly in relation to the over-provision of open space).
- 4.7 Policy Fordham6 is largely retained.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred policy approach for Fordham, comprising the six policies as set out.
- 5.2 Option 2 would be to not include either Policies Fordham1 or 2, but this is 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 Fordham 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.