



**Document Reference**  
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East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

## **Policies for Little Thetford**

**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 relating to draft policies relating specifically to the village of Little Thetford, including:
  - Little Thetford1: Local Character and Facilities;
  - Little Thetford2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities;
  - Little Thetford3: Allocation Sites; and
  - Little Thetford4: Site LTT.H4 – Land north of The Wyches.
- 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 November 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 draft policies relating to each settlement’s local character, infrastructure and facilities. Draft site allocations for a range of land uses are proposed for many settlements.

## 2 Little Thetford in context

- 2.1 Little Thetford is located 3 miles south of Ely, in close proximity to the A10. Due to its population and limited range of services, the Settlement Hierarchy identifies Little Thetford as a ‘Medium Village’.
- 2.2 As a Medium Village, it is considered that Little Thetford offers the potential to contribute to meeting the development needs of the area. Through the designation of site allocations in the Local Plan, Medium Villages such as Little Thetford are likely to be able to accommodate modest levels of growth. The overall scale of growth will be further influenced by 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 Little Thetford. The site submissions were assessed and all sites considered suitable for development were proposed for allocation.
- 3.2 The Little Thetford chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan proposed three draft policies:
- 3.3 Policy *Little Thetford1: Local Character and Facilities* - the policy seeks to ensure development proposals maintain Little Thetford’s character and its facilities. The content of the policy was informed by the Local Plan 2015, engagement with the Parish Council (in 2016), and responses to the Preliminary Draft Local Plan consultation.

- 3.4 Policy *Little Thetford2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities* – the policy sets out the settlement’s priorities in terms of infrastructure and facilities. The content of the policy was informed by the Local Plan 2015, engagement with the Parish Council, and responses to the Preliminary Draft Local Plan consultation.
- 3.5 Policy *Little Thetford3: Preferred Allocation Sites* identified two site allocations:
- LTT.H1 *Land north of The Wyches* – The 0.8ha site was received as a site submission during the Call for Sites exercise, and following assessment was considered to be suitable for development. The draft site allocation is expected to provide approximately 15 units. The policy includes a requirement to ensure development does not impact on the safety or operational use of the adjacent pre-school.
  - LTT.H2 *Land south of Caravan Park, Two Acres, Ely Road* – the site has been determined to be suitable for development through the granting of planning permission in 2016 for 10 dwellings. The policy reflects this decision.
- 3.6 A number of other site submissions were assessed, but were considered not suitable for allocation. The results of the site assessment are presented in the *Site Assessment Report Update 2017*).
- 3.7 Little Thetford has a Development Envelope to define the boundary of the built up area and extent of the countryside. A number of changes to Little Thetford’s Development Envelope were proposed, but each was rejected. The reasons for rejection are set out in the Development Envelopes Assessment Report (January 2017) (EB012).

### Comments received during public consultation

- 3.8 In summary, the following comments were received during the Further Draft Local Plan consultation (January – February 2017) in response to Little Thetford draft policies:

#### Infrastructure and Other constraints

- Parish Council fully supports policies Little Thetford1 and Little Thetford2.

#### Site Specific Comments

##### **LTT.H1 Land north of The Wyches**

- The draft site allocation is incorrect – it includes an area of land which is not available for development. Part of the site, on the western boundary, is owned by Little Thetford Parish Council and is intended to provide an extension to the cemetery. The available area is therefore smaller than indicated by the draft site allocation, and dwelling capacity likely to be lower.
- Site may have capacity for more than 15 dwellings – to be determined through a masterplanning exercise.
- No residual capacity for surface water. Necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development of site.
- Landowner supports allocation. Indicates site is largely free of constraints and has capacity for more than 15 units.

##### **LTT.H2 Land south of caravan park, Two Acres**

- Impact of development on the A10 junction remains a considerable concern.
- No residual capacity for surface water. Necessary surface water accommodation should be put in place prior to development of site.

#### **Site/17/03 Land south of Popes Lane (rejected site)**

- Site promoter objects to rejection of the site.
- Lt Thetford is a Medium Village with a range of facilities and services and good connectivity with Ely and Cambridge – sustainable location - level of growth should therefore be higher / more allocations should be made.
- Site could accommodate 20 – 30 dwellings, public open space, and a building for community use / local retail.
- Site available now and in single ownership.
- Site adjoins residential development and is adjoined by public byway open to all traffic.
- Concerns raised during site assessment – lack of defensible boundary, adverse visual impact, can be addressed.
- Landowner has access rights from Palisade Court – suitable access can be achieved.

#### New Site Suggestions

- Site/17/05 Land east of Caravan Park
- Development envelope should be amended to include the former scaffolding site at Holt Fen which has recently been granted planning permission for four dwellings (15/01476/OUT)

## 4 Response to Comments received

- 4.1 Little Thetford Parish Council expressed its support for policies *Little Thetford 1: Local Character and Facilities* and *Little Thetford2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities*, and no objections were received. No changes to Policies Little Thetford1 or 2.
- 4.2 It was indicated that the boundary of draft site allocation LTT.H1 *Land north of The Wyches* includes land not currently available for development. In response, the site boundary has been reviewed, and the boundary shown on the Policies Map is believed to now include only land which is available for development.
- 4.3 There was some disagreement about the ability of site LTT.H1 to accommodate 15 dwellings. In addition, the need for surface water drainage was highlighted. To overcome these and other concerns, a bespoke policy (Little Thetford4) has been added to the Proposed Submission Local Plan to set out specific requirements for the site.
- 4.4 Concerns were raised in relation to the suitability of site LTT.H2. However, the site has planning consent and such issues will have been considered during the planning application process. No change to policy is required.

## 5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred policy approach for Little Thetford, comprising the four policies as set out.

- 5.2 Option 2 would be to not include either Policies Little Thetford 1 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 policy 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.