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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Policies for Stretham

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:
 - Stretham1: Local Character and Facilities
 - Stretham2: Infrastructure and community facilities
 - Stretham3: Allocation sites
 - Stretham4: Site STR.H1 – Land at Manor Farm
- 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 November 2017. 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 Stretham in context

- 2.1 Stretham is located 4 miles south of Ely. Due to its population and range of services, the Settlement Hierarchy identifies Stretham as a ‘Large Village’.
- 2.2 As a Large Village, it is considered that Stretham offers the potential to contribute to meeting the development needs of the area. Through the designation of site allocations in the Local Plan, Large Villages such as Stretham are likely to be able to accommodate some 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 Stretham. The site submissions were assessed and all sites considered suitable for development were proposed for allocation.
- 3.2 The Stretham chapter of the Further Draft Local Plan proposed three draft policies:
- 3.3 Policy *Stretham1: Stretham’s Local Character and Facilities* - the policy seeks to ensure development proposals maintain the villages character and its facilities. Policy *Stretham2: 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.

- 3.4 Policy *Stretham3: Preferred Allocation Sites* identifies one site allocation, STR.H1 *Land at Manor Farm* – The 6.5ha site is under construction to deliver a Community Land Trust scheme totalling 100 homes.
- 3.5 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*.
- 3.6 Stretham has a Development Envelope to define the boundary of the built up area and extent of the countryside. Suggested changes to Stretham 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

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

Infrastructure and Other constraints

- Stretham2 seeks to provide improved pedestrian/cycle routes to Ely and other key locations. Central Govt has promised funding in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. Reliance on CIL and s106 could result in insufficient resources.
- Stretham2 implies that it priorities pedestrian/cycle access between Stretham/Ely over other routes – this should be clarified.
- Cycle access between Stretham and Waterbeach is very poor. A link with the proposed upgraded Waterbeach Greenway is important.
- Improved cycle access between Stretham and Wicken would bring additional benefits, including access to Soham, Upware and NCN11/51 to Bottisham and Cambridge.
- Cambs County Council indicates that plans are already in place to expand the primary school in response to development at Manor Farm.

Site Specific Comments

STR.H1 Land at Manor Farm

- Southern half of site lies in Safeguarding Area for Stretham Waste Water Treatment Works – but already has planning permission.
- Plans for primary school expansion in place.
- No residual capacity to accept increased rates of surface water run-off. Surface water should be managed on-site.
- Site is located east of Stretham Conservation Area. Development of the site should conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance the conservation area and its setting.
- Site promoter supports allocation of site for 100 dwellings (of which 75 benefit from planning permission, with phases under construction), and confirms site is suitable, available and deliverable, contributing to five year supply of housing.

Site/25/01 Land to the north of Berry Close (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to non-inclusion of site.

- Site Assessment Evidence Report acknowledges that site has merit as a development site – site promoter suggests site has significant development potential.
- Stretham is a Large Village and offers a wide range of services and facilities, and is therefore a sustainable location to accommodate development.
- Village services and facilities are within walking/cycling distance of the site.
- Impact on primary school capacity likely to be limited.
- Parish Council raised concerns about local road impact. However local highways authority did not object to the site, subject to reasonable mitigation measures.
- Site is of negligible ecological value.
- Development would not cause undue harm on views of wider countryside, Ely Cathedral, Stretham Conservation Area, listed buildings or scheduled monuments.
- Landscape buffer on northern boundary would reduce visual impact on countryside.
- PROW adjacent to site would be largely unaffected by development.
- Site suitable and available for development, and will contribute to increasing supply of housing within five years.
- Site would deliver public benefits in terms of public open space, additional market and affordable housing, and enhanced PROW.
- Site should be allocated for approximately 50 dwellings and associated public open space.

Site/25/03 Wilburton Road (rejected site)

- Site promoter objects to rejection of site.
- Site would provide an attractive new development well-related to the existing settlement. Vehicular access can be achieved from Wilburton Road.

New Site(s) suggested

- Site/25/08 Land off A10 at Stretham / Lt Theftford

4 Local Plan: Proposed Submission

- 4.1 Cambridgeshire County Council confirmed that plans are already in place to expand the primary school in response to development at Manor Farm. No change to policy is required.
- 4.2 A respondent suggested that Stretham2 implies that it priorities pedestrian/cycle access between Stretham/Ely over other routes, requesting clarification, and noted that there are other important destinations in the locality, and existing routes.
- 4.3 The Proposed Submission Local Plan includes the following amended policy requirement to Stretham2:
- Improved pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Ely, other towns and villages in the locality, and to existing routes such as PROW, the National Cycle Network and the Cambridgeshire Greenways.

Policy Stretham3: Site STR.H1 Land at Manor Farm & Policy Stretham4

- 4.4 The site is covered by a number of planning consents (for 75 units, of a total 100 units), and is under construction. Some respondents noted the proximity to the Safeguarding Area for Stretham Waste Water Treatment Works, drainage. However, considering the consented nature of this site, matters such as this have been addressed at the planning application stage.

- 4.5 The site is located east of (but not adjacent to) Stretham Conservation Area. A respondent indicated that development of the site should conserve, and where opportunities exist, enhance the conservation area and its setting. The site is not expected to have a direct impact on the Conservation Area, and therefore strategic policies requiring high quality design, to conserve the historic environment, and Stretham1 which requires proposals to respect local character, are likely to be sufficient.
- 4.6 No changes to policies Stretham3 or Stretham4 are required.

New site submission & rejected sites

- 4.7 New site submissions and comments relating to rejected sites, are addressed in the Site Assessment Evidence Report.

5 Alternative Reasonable Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the preferred policy approach for Stretham, comprising four policies, as set out.
- 5.2 Option 2 would be to not include either Policies Stretham1 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 Evidence 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.