

## LITTLE DOWNHAM



### 1. Settlement characteristics

Little Downham is a large linear village set on slightly elevated ground amongst the wider fen, approximately 2 miles north-west of Ely.

The village contains a number of listed buildings and has a Conservation Area in the central part of the village along Main Street, with the Church and Old Rectory forming prominent and attractive features at the eastern end.

Little Downham has a good range of facilities – there is a range of food and non-food shops, post office (outreach service), primary school, public houses, petrol station and car showroom, a church, a chapel, village hall (which includes a library and internet access point), recreation playing field and a play area. There are also several village greens.

Little Downham is also home to the first dedicated Local Nature Reserve in East Cambridgeshire, which consists of four areas of land on the edge of the village (Pingle Wood, Myles Meadow, Holts Spinney and Holts Meadow) (see Policy xx). The main features of the village are shown on Map xxx.

### 2. Key Statistics

<i>Little Downham</i>	
<i>Population</i> <sup>1</sup>	1860
<i>Dwellings</i> <sup>2</sup>	802
<i>New dwellings built 2001-2012(net)</i>	128
<i>Estimated new dwellings 2012-2031</i>	
<i>Employment</i> <sup>3</sup>	13% work from home, 51% travel up to 20km to work, 30% travel more than 20km to work

<sup>1</sup> Population for village of Little Downham, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group (mid-2010)

<sup>2</sup> Dwellings in the village of Little Downham, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group (mid-2010)

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<i>Existing public transport services</i>	A Monday to Saturday service to Ely (as at June 2012)
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### **3. Housing**

Little Downham is expected to grow, with new housing being built on suitable ‘infill’ sites within the village. Additionally, a new housing allocation site is proposed at land to the west of Ely Road.

A ‘development envelope’ has been drawn around Little Downham to define the built-up part of the village where development (infill and the allocation sites) may be permitted. The purpose is to prevent sprawl into the open countryside. Development on infill sites will need to be in line with Policy xx. Development on the allocation site will need to be in line with Policy DOWN 1.

Outside the development envelope, housing will not normally be permitted – unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as essential dwellings for rural workers, or affordable housing. Housing schemes outside the development envelope will be assessed against Policy xx and other Local Plan policies as appropriate.

#### **Housing allocation - Land west off Ely Road**

The site is currently grassland and is located to the rear of housing at Cannon Street and is adjacent to an existing farm business located on Ely Road.

The site includes a small workshop located at 7 Cannon Street, which forms part of an existing agricultural engineering business. The owner of the workshop has stated that this building could be removed to enable the development of this site.

A single vehicular access should be provided from Ely Road the location of which will be determined as part of the planning application process.

It is well screened from Ely Road by substantial hedging close to the junction with Cannon Street. This hedging is located adjacent to an attractive row of trees, which form part of the roadside verge on Ely Road. The site is also bound by hedging along the boundary with the open countryside to the rear of the site. It is open to the south. Consequently the site is visible from the neighbouring farm and is partially visible from both Ely Road and the surrounding countryside.

As this site is located to close to existing residential properties on Cannon Street and Ely Road there will be a need to ensure that this development is sensitively designed to minimise its impact. Although the site is adjacent to existing built development on Cannon Street, the site adjoins open countryside to the rear. It will important to retain as much of the original hedgeline as possible and provide additional landscaping along the boundaries of the site.

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<sup>3</sup> Distance travelled to work, East Cambridgeshire 005A and 005B Lower Layer Super Output Areas (covering Little Downham), Census 2001

**Policy DOWN1: Housing allocation, land west of Ely Road**

1.2 hectares of land is allocated for residential development of approximately 25 dwellings. Development proposals will be expected to:

- Have particular regard to site layout and the scale, building height and massing, and soft landscaping to minimise the visual impact of development from Cannon Street, Ely Road and the open countryside, and to minimise amenity impact on adjoining residential properties.
- Maximise the retention of existing hedgerows on the site, and provide additional landscaping on the site boundaries.
- Provide safe vehicular access on Ely Road with an access point to be located at distance from the Cannon Street and Ely Road junction
- Provide safe pedestrian/cycle access from Ely Road.
- Provide an element of affordable housing (currently 30%) as required under policy xx with priority being given to people in local housing need.
- Provide a minimum of 0.16 ha of public open space on site with play equipment.
- Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect current evidence of need within Little Downham.
- Comply with the other policies of the Local Plan.

## **4. Employment**

There are a number of small businesses within the village, including a car showroom, bookkeepers, building contractor, betting shop and a public relations company. There is also a haulage company (Halls Transport) located close to the village at Black Bank Drove and a small industrial estate on Cowbridge Hall Road.

The District Council is keen to retain the stock of business land and premises in order to support local economic growth. Proposals to re-use employment sites (B1, B2 and B8 uses) for other purposes will only be permitted in certain circumstances (see Policy xxx).

No new employment allocation sites are proposed on the edge of Little Downham. However suitable new employment proposals on the edge of the village, will be supported in principle, subject to Policies xx, xx and xx.

## **5. Infrastructure and community facilities**

Residents in Little Downham have indicated a desire for improvements to infrastructure and facilities in their village.

A list of priorities is set out in the table below:

	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
1	More school places	Work with the County Council to ensure that sufficient primary school places are made available over the plan period.
2	Improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes	Existing bridleway has been identified as a potential cycling route from Little Downham to Ely, which, subject to improvements could form part of national cycling network subject to funding being available.
3	New cemetery	Little Downham Parish Council is currently working to identify and secure appropriate site for additional burial land.
4	Improvements to play areas	Little Downham Parish Council has secured funding for replacement of some of the existing play equipment.
5	Improvements to sports ground/open space	Little Downham Parish Council has secured funding for the additional fencing at the all weather court.  Little Downham Parish Council is seeking funding for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Pavilion.
6	Adequate bus service	

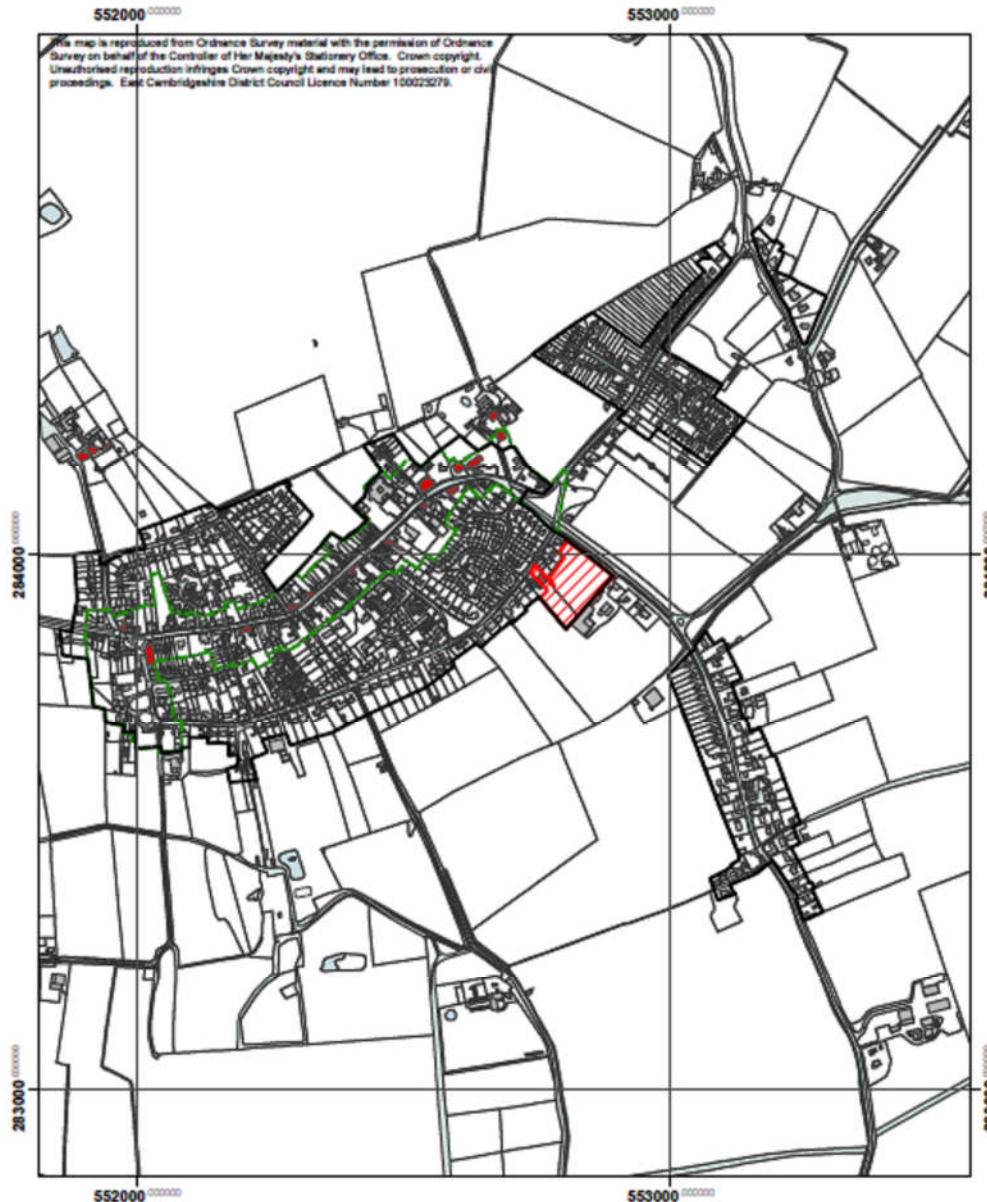
The top priority is the provision of more school places at Little Downham Feoffes Primary School. The District Council is working with the County Council to explore options for improving access to school places at Little Downham. The second priority is improvements to pedestrian/cycle links with the fourth and fifth being improvements to play areas and sport ground/open space. The District Council will work with the Parish Council and County Council to explore options for funding for such schemes.

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The third priority is a new cemetery to address the need for additional burial space within the Parish. Little Downham Parish Council has established a working group to explore potential options for the development of additional burial land within the Parish following public consultation on this issue in 2012.

The current community facilities in Little Downham (including the shops, public houses, village hall and church) contribute to the quality of people's lives. The District Council will work with the County Council and Parish Council to secure funding, including developer contributions, to improve facilities wherever possible. The loss of community facilities will also be resisted under Policy xx. Proposals for new community development that benefits the village will be supported in principle, subject to Policies xx and xx.

**6. Spatial strategy for Little Downham(Map x)**



Key	
Development Envelope	Conservation Area
Housing allocation	County Wildlife Site
Employment allocation	Area of International Importance for Wildlife
Scheduled Ancient Monument	Listed Building
Historic Parks & Gardens	Site of Special Scientific Interest

**Map x  
Little  
Downham**

1:10,000