

WITCHFORD



1. Settlement characteristics

Witchford is a large village situated in agricultural countryside 1 mile west of Ely. The village is elongated in shape and has a number of attractive buildings. From 1943-1946 Lancaster bombers flew from RAF Witchford, just outside the parish. The airbase was dismantled and the site is now farmland and a business park.

Facilities in the village include a shop, post office, 2 churches, village hall, recreation ground, garage, and primary school. The village is home to one of the 4 Village Colleges (secondary school) in the district which serves Witchford and the surrounding villages. A new district household recycling centre is located on the edge of the village. The village has a regular bus service which runs to Ely and Cambridge. The main features of the village are shown on Map xxx.

2. Key statistics

<i>Witchford</i>	
<i>Population</i> ¹	2,330
<i>Dwellings</i> ²	990
<i>New dwellings built 2001-2011 (net)</i>	80
<i>Estimated new dwellings 2012-2031</i>	
<i>Employment</i> ³	37% work from home, 52% travel up to 20km to work, 11% travel over 20km to work
<i>Existing public transport services</i>	Regular services to Ely and Cambridge (Monday-Saturday) (as at June 2012)

¹ Population for Witchford parish (mid-2010), Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group

² Dwellings in Witchford parish (mid-2010), Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group

³ Distance travelled to work, East Cambridgeshire UV80 Haddenham ward (covering Haddenham, Aldreth, Wentworth, Witchford), Census 2001

3. Housing

Witchford is likely to continue to grow at a slow rate, with new housing being built on suitable ‘infill’ sites within the village. No new housing allocation sites are proposed on the edge of Witchford.

A ‘development envelope’ has been drawn around Witchford to define the built-up part of the village where infill development 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.

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. Witchford Parish Council is keen to see more affordable housing in the village and has indicated positive support for exception schemes outside the development envelope for affordable housing to meet local needs. Housing schemes outside the development envelope will be assessed against Policy xx and other Local Plan policies as appropriate.

4. Employment

There are a number of businesses in the village and two business parks in Witchford parish – Greenham Park and Sedgeway Business Park. 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 for other purposes will only be permitted in certain circumstances (see Policy xx).

No new employment allocation sites are proposed on the edge of Witchford. However, suitable new employment proposals within or 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 Witchford have indicated a desire for improvements to infrastructure and facilities in the village. A list of priorities is set out in the table below.

	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
1	Improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foot/cycle bridge to cross A10 from BP garage into Ely• Pedestrian path on Grunty Fen road from Main Street• Increase width of footpath/cycle paths along Ely Road/Main street and Sutton Road
2	Improvements to sports grounds/open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New netball courts at Bedwell Hey Lane recreation ground• Improvements to Victoria Green Park• Improvements to Common Road play area
3	Improvements to the community/village hall	Refurbishment of Village Hall
4	More school places	Liaison with County Council Education department

The top priority is for improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes, particularly to Ely. Other priorities include improvements to sports grounds/open spaces and to the Village Hall, and more school places in Witchford. The District Council will work with the Parish Council and County Council to explore options and secure funding for improvements to open spaces and community facilities in

Witchford. The District Council will work with the County Council to explore the issue of extra school places and also work in partnership to try to retain existing public transport levels, and encourage self-sufficient transport services, such as community transport.

The current community facilities in Witchford (including the shop, post office, churches, village hall, and recreation ground) contribute to the quality of people's lives. The loss of community facilities will be resisted under Policy xxxx. Proposals for new community development that benefits the village will be supported in principle, subject to Policies xx and xx.

6. Spatial strategy for Witchford (Map xx)

