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**TITLE: FINAL DRAFT - EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

Committee: Development and Transport Committee

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012

Author: Katie Child, Principal Forward Planning Officer

[M177]

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1.0 ISSUE

1.1 The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan will set out a vision and strategy for the future growth and development of the district up to 2031. This report presents a final draft version of the Local Plan and accompanying draft Final Sustainability Appraisal.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that:

- i. The draft Local Plan (attached as Appendix 1) is approved for public consultation purposes, subject to any changes Members may wish to make.
- ii. The draft Final Sustainability Appraisal document (attached as Appendix 2) are approved for public consultation purposes, subject to any changes Members may wish to make.
- iii. Subsequent changes to the documents prior to publication are delegated to the Head of Planning and Sustainable Development in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 The District Council is required to prepare a statutory Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire, to guide the growth of the district over the next 20 years. Preparation of the Local Plan was first endorsed by this Committee in September 2010.

3.2 The Local Plan will set out a strategic vision and policies, which will help to guide and shape growth in the district, and be used for assessing planning applications. The Plan will also identify new sites for housing, employment, community, infrastructure and other uses. Site options have been assessed in terms of their suitability and deliverability, and an overview of these findings are presented in the accompanying draft Final Sustainability Appraisal report.

3.3 The purpose of the Local Plan is to ensure that growth takes place in a planned and 'sustainable' way, i.e. brings maximum benefits to the local economy and quality of life, protects the environment, and facilitates delivery of essential infrastructure and facilities.

3.4 Work on the Local Plan in 2011/12 has involved extensive engagement with the public, and close partnership working with Parish Councils – to identify local priorities and needs, and how people want their communities and the district to change and grow over the next 20 years. A significant amount of supporting technical and background work has also taken place, on strategic matters such as housing, jobs and retail growth, and on specific sites such as North Ely, Soham Eastern Gateway, and Ely Station Gateway. A Masterplan for Burwell has also been prepared, to inform the production of a Vision for the village in the Local Plan. Various reports have been prepared for Committee during this period, updating Members on consultation outcomes, and seeking feedback on technical/background work.

#### 4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Since a working draft Local Plan was presented to Members of Development and Transport Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> November, officers have carried out further preparation work, taken account of comments and feedback, and produced a final draft Local Plan – this is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.2 The Local Plan is split into 2 sections, as follows:

- Part 1 consists of a strategic vision and policies which will guide development, and be used to assess planning applications
- Part 2 contains Village/Town Visions, setting out how each settlement in the district will change and improve over the next 20 years, and identifying new development sites.

4.3 The Local Plan is supported by a number of technical/background documents. Some of these have already been produced and reported to Members – including the Council's Retail Assessment (2012), Jobs Growth Strategy (2012), and Water Cycle Study (2011). Since Development and Transport Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> November, officers have produced initial draft versions of several documents which will need to be published for consultation/information purposes alongside the Local Plan, including:

- Draft Final Sustainability Appraisal – looking at the social, environmental and economic impact of policies and proposals
- Background Technical Paper – including site appraisals
- Habitats Assessment Scoping Report – currently awaiting comments from Natural England

4.4 A number of additional technical documents are still to be finalised, and will be published alongside the Local Plan including:

- Consultation Statement
- Transport Impact Assessment
- Housing Requirements Paper (updated)
- Ely Station Gateway Development Framework
- Infrastructure Investment Plan
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

## Consultation process

4.5 A summary of the estimated timetable is as follows:

Stage	Timescale
Draft Local Plan – considered by D&T Committee	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2012
Consultation on draft Local Plan	January/February 2013
Consultation results – reported to D&T Committee	May 2013
Approval to submit to Government – Full Council	May 2013
Draft Local Plan submitted to Government	June 2013
Examination	Autumn 2013
Adoption of Local Plan by Full Council	Late 2013

4.6 Formal consultation on the Local Plan and Final Sustainability Appraisal will commence in January/February 2013 for 6 weeks. This process will involve extensive contact with landowners, developers, Parish Councils and the public through general publicity, direct emails/letters, meetings, exhibitions and Market Stall events. An online questionnaire will be provided for people's comments.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 No further financial implications. A budget is already in place for the production of the Local Plan.

5.2 A draft version is attached as Appendix 3 below.

## 6.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft East Cambridgeshire Local Plan *[please note that due to the size of the Local Plan document only copies have been provided for Members of the Committee. A copy is available for viewing at the Council offices or via the Council's website]*

Appendix 2 – Draft Final Sustainability Appraisal *[please note that due to problems with the IT systems at ECDC this week, most of the site option maps are not included – but will be forwarded to Members prior to the Committee meeting].*

Appendix 3 - Draft Equality Impact Assessment

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**Background Documents**

Localism Act (November 2011)  
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (2010)  
National Planning Policy Framework  
(March 2012)  
Ely Masterplan (2009)  
Soham Masterplan (2010)  
Littleport Masterplan (2011)  
Draft Burwell Masterplan (September  
2012)  
North Ely Development Framework  
(2012)  
Soham Eastern Gateway Masterplan  
(2011)  
Results of ECDC Village Vision  
consultation (2011/12)  
Results of Local Plan strategic  
consultation (March 2012)  
CIL Infrastructure Study (December  
2011)  
East Cambridgeshire Infrastructure  
Investment Framework (2009)  
East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy  
(2009)  
East Cambs Jobs Growth Strategy  
(2012)  
East Cambs Retail Assessment (2012)  
East Cambs Water Cycle Study and  
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Part  
1 (2011)  
Cambs Gypsy and Traveller  
Accommodation Needs Assessment  
(2012)  
East Cambs Design Guide SPD (2012)  
Cambs Strategic Open Space  
Assessment (2011)  
Cambs Strategic Housing Market  
Assessment (2012)

**Location**

Room 12,  
The Grange,  
Ely

**Contact Officer**

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**Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessment (INRA)****APPENDIX 3**

<b>Name of Policy:</b>	East Cambridgeshire Draft Local Plan
<b>Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):</b>	Stewart Patience – Forward Planning Officer
<b>Department:</b>	Development Services – Forward Planning
<b>Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):</b>	Katie Child – Forward Planning Officer
<b>Date INRA Completed:</b>	November 2012

**'Policy' needs to be understood broadly to include all Council policies, strategies, services, functions, activities and decisions.**

(a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

To provide a spatial strategy that will be used to guide development decisions to 2031 in East Cambridgeshire District. The specific objectives of the Draft Local Plan are as follows:

1. Support the local economy and help create more jobs in the district, which meet local employment needs and reduces out-commuting
2. Provide a range of new housing in appropriate locations, which meets needs local housing needs as far as possible
3. Support and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres, as places for shopping, leisure and community activities
4. Ensure that new development is of high quality and sustainable design which reflects local character and distinctiveness, provides attractive and safe environments, and is supported by appropriate facilities and services.
5. Protect and enhance the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of the natural and built environment
6. Protect the open countryside against insensitive and sporadic development
7. Reduce the environmental impact of development and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by reducing pollution and waste, maximising water and energy efficiency, and promoting the use of renewable energy sources and sustainable construction methods
8. Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use, by locating most developments where there is good access to jobs, services and facilities, and supporting improvements in public transport and walking/cycling networks
9. Ensure a high quality of life by maintaining and delivering infrastructure and facilities needed to support local communities
10. Support the expansion of the tourist economy and the ability of the district

(b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

- The allocation of new housing sites and provision of additional affordable housing (on allocated and non-allocated sites) – will benefit low income persons, people on housing waiting lists, first time buyers, all others seeking a home in the district.
- The allocation of new employment sites – all those seeking work in the district and businesses looking to expand or invest in the area. Those wishing to live and work locally and reduce the need to commute.
- Strategies for the development and enhancement of town centres and provision of retail/leisure facilities within neighbourhoods, which will benefit local communities and businesses.
- The provision of physical, social and environmental infrastructure secured as a result of new development within the district, which will benefit local communities.
- New development will be required to be of a high quality design and complement local distinctiveness will benefit local communities and encourage further investment
- Protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment within the district for the enjoyment of all.

The process does involve allocating new development sites and there will be people who feel they are disadvantaged by the proximity of new building to their own homes and businesses. The Local Plan has been devised where possible to address such concerns. Individuals and organisations have raised the concerns during the consultation process.

**(c) Is the INRA informed by any information or background data (quantitative or qualitative)?**  
i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The preparation of the Draft Local Plan has been informed by the collation and analysis of evidence and the results of public consultation as follows:

- Results of the Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell Masterplan consultations
- Results of the Village Visions consultations
- Results of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Strategic Issues consultation
- Housing Requirements Paper
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Cambridge Housing Sub Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- East Cambridgeshire Jobs Growth Strategy
- East Cambridgeshire Retail Assessment Update
- East Cambridgeshire Water Cycle Study (Stage 1 and 2)
- East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Transport Assessment
- Cambridge Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment
- Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
- East Cambridgeshire Infrastructure Investment Plan

Throughout the document reference is made to the evidence, which has been used to inform the preparation of the policies which appear in the Draft Local Plan. This evidence has been used to assess the need for additional housing, infrastructure and community facilities within East Cambridgeshire District. As part of which consideration has been given to the needs of the following groups:

- Young people: (access to primary and secondary education)
- Those with children (mix of housing and access to childcare and education)
- The elderly (suitable housing and access to services)
- Disabled (suitable housing) and
- Gypsies and Travellers (specific accommodation needs)

**(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause an impact (positive, negative or neutral) on different groups in the community, on the grounds of (please tick all that apply):**

**Ethnicity**  
**Gender**  
**Disability**

√
√
√

**Age**  
**Religion and Belief**  
**Sexual Orientation**

√
√
√

**Please explain any impact identified (positive, negative or neutral):** i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

**Ethnicity (positive impact)**

The Draft Local Plan takes account of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers as identified in locally available evidence and plans to provide an adequate number of pitches in East Cambridgeshire District.

**Age (positive impact)**

The Draft Local Plan includes reference to new primary and secondary schools and the expansion of existing schools, which are planned to support the expected demand from new housing in the district.

The Draft Local Plan will require a mix of housing to be provided on open market sites, which will address the needs of all households including those with families and first time buyers.

**Age and Disability (positive impact)**

The Draft Local Plan will ensure that a significant proportion of housing is suitable of easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities.

**Gender (neutral impact)**

The Draft Local Plan makes no reference to gender and its impact would not be differential upon any particular gender.

**Religion and Belief (neutral impact)**

The Draft Local Plan makes no reference to religion/belief and its impact would not be differential upon any particular religion belief.

**Sexual Orientation (neutral impact)**

The Draft Local Plan makes no reference to sexual orientation and its impact would not be differential upon any particular sexual orientation.

**(e) Does the policy have a differential impact on different groups?**

YES

**(f) Is the impact *adverse* (i.e. less favourable) on one or more groups?**

NO

**(g) Does it have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate unfairly against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful?**

NO

**(h) What additional information is needed to provide a clear picture of how the activity is impacting on different communities and how will you collect this information, i.e. expert groups, further research, consultation\* etc? Where there are major gaps in information that cannot be addressed immediately, these should be highlighted in your recommendations and objectives at the end of the INRA.**

The Draft Local Plan will be subject to public consultation in January/February 2013 and a public examination in Autumn 2013. It is expected that the District Council will adopt the Local Plan in late 2013.

There is potential for the implementation of the Local Plan to have a positive impact on particular groups. The District Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report, which will be used to monitor the implementation of the Local Plan. This document together with other relevant evidence will be used to determine the need to review the policies of the Local Plan (following adoption).

\* The Consultation Register is available to assist staff in consulting with the Council's stakeholders. If you are consulting on a new or revised policy contact the Principal HR Officer.

**(i) Do you envisage any problems with these methods of information collection?** i.e. not accessible to all, timescale not long enough to obtain all of the necessary information, translation facilities not available, insufficient resources etc.

It is expected that a wide range of local communities, organisations and representative bodies will make representations as part of the forthcoming Local Plan consultation. This consultation will be widely publicised and a number of community engagement methods will be employed including notifying interested residents and organisations, making consultation documents widely available and meeting with community organisations (where requested).

There will also be an opportunity for interested organisations and individuals to participate in the public examination where the content of the Local Plan will be considered by an independent planning inspector.

**(j) If it has been possible to collect this additional information, summarise the findings of your research and/or consultation (please use a separate sheet if necessary).**

There is currently no information, as the Local Plan will be adopted in late 2013.

**(k) What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact and unmet needs/requirements?** i.e. reputation, financial, breach of legislation, service exclusion, lack of resources, lack of cooperation, insufficient budget etc.

The District Council has a statutory duty to prepare a development plan for the district. There is also a need for the plan to be consistent with requirements of national planning policy (currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework).

Failure to provide an up to date development plan will mean that planning permission will be granted for proposals, which are consistent with national planning policy. It will not provide local communities and organisations with certainty as to when sites are likely to come forward for development or where development should be focused.

**(l) Use the information gathered in the earlier stages of your INRA to make a judgement on whether there is the potential for the policy to result in unlawful discrimination or a less favourable impact on any group in the community, and what changes (if any) need to be made to the policy.**

Option 1:	No major changes, the evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	√
Option 2:	Adjust the policy to remove barriers or to better promote equality.	
Option 3:	Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality.	

Option 4:	Stop and remove the policy – if the policy shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination it must be stopped and removed or changed.	
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**(m) Where you have identified the potential for adverse impact, what action can be taken to remove or mitigate against the potential for the policy to unlawfully discriminate or impact less favourably on one or more communities in a way that cannot be justified?** Include key activities that are likely to have the greatest impact (max. 6). Identified actions should be specified in detail for the first year but there may be further longer term actions which need to be considered. To ensure that your actions are more than just a list of good intentions, include for each: the person responsible for its completion, a timescale for completion, any cost implications and how these will be addressed. It is essential that you incorporate these actions into your service plans.

Not applicable – impacts will be neutral or positive.
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This completed INRA will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service. **Please forward completed and signed forms to Nicole Pema, Principal HR Officer.**

All completed INRAs will need to be scrutinised and verified by the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) and published on the Council's Intranet to demonstrate to local people that the Council is actively engaged in tackling potential discrimination and improving its practices in relation to equalities. Please be aware that you will be asked to attend a half-an-hour session to summarise the findings of the INRA to the EOWG Verification panel.

**Signatures:**

**Completing Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Head of Service:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_