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## **1 Introduction**

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## 2 A strategic vision for East Cambridgeshire

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter sets the overall strategic vision for development in East Cambridgeshire up until 2031, taking account of its current issues, attributes and potential. The vision is supported by a set of strategic objectives.

2.1.2 The chapter includes:

- A brief description of East Cambridgeshire (section 2.2)
- An overview of the key issues and challenges facing the district (section 2.3)
- A vision of how the district should be in 2031 (section 2.4)
- A set of strategic objectives which should help to deliver the vision and guide development in the district to 2031 (section 2.5)
- Information on how the plan will be monitored and reviewed (section 2.6)

### 2.2 Description of East Cambridgeshire

2.2.1 East Cambridgeshire is a predominantly rural district located to the north-east of Cambridge within the county of Cambridgeshire. The district covers an area of 655km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of almost 81,000.

2.2.2 There are 3 main settlements including the cathedral city of Ely and the market towns of Soham and Littleport. Together, these comprise 47% of the district's population, with the remaining population spread between around 50 villages.

2.2.3 Ely is the largest urban area and acts as a retail, service and administrative centre for a wide rural catchment. The city is also an important tourist destination with its internationally renowned Norman cathedral and links to Oliver Cromwell. However,

there are issues with congestion around the station area and a need for further retail and leisure facilities. Soham is a small market town with a good range of shops, catering for day-to-day needs, but the elongated town centre has suffered decline in recent years. Littleport is a small fenland town with a very localised service catchment due to its



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proximity to Ely. The villages of Bottisham, Burwell, Haddenham and Sutton play a key service role for their rural hinterlands.

- 2.2.4 Once an agricultural focused area, the district is now a favoured business location in its own right. Employment rates are higher than the national average, with key sectors including construction, agriculture, and professional/technical services. A very high proportion of local businesses employ fewer than 10 people.
- 2.2.5 The landscape of East Cambridgeshire can be broadly defined into two sub-areas. The northern part of the district is predominantly intensively farmed fenland, with many settlements located on higher ground on the old 'islands' in the fen. Flood risk is a key issue, with much of the land at or below sea-level. The area contains the three market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport, and a range of scattered villages and hamlets. Here incomes are lower and deprivation is more marked than the southern part of the district. The south of the district consists of elevated chalk and heath land and contains a range of attractive villages and hamlets. The local economy and landscape is dominated by the horseracing industry with large areas of farmland converted to stud use. Residents mainly look to Newmarket and Cambridge for services and facilities.
- 2.2.6 The district contains many special landscape, natural and built heritage features, including:
- 1910ha of land within the Cambridge Green Belt, around the villages of Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck
  - 3 internationally important wildlife sites: Wicken Fen, Chippenham Fen, and the Ouse Washes
  - 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
  - 80 County Wildlife Sites.
  - Over 950 Listed Buildings and 27 conservation areas.
- 2.2.7 According to a 2012 survey<sup>1</sup>, East Cambridgeshire's residents have the best quality of life of any rural area in Great Britain. In particular, health and life expectancy are amongst the highest of rural areas. The district also performs well in terms of employment and average earnings and house prices are below the average house price to earnings ratio for rural areas.

## 2.3 Key issues and challenges

- 2.3.1 The district benefits from an attractive rural environment, and has a good level of overall prosperity. However, a number of specific issues need to be addressed. These are mainly related to the challenges of delivering high levels of growth and the effects of rapid population increase. In recent years, East Cambridgeshire has experienced considerable population and housing growth due to its location within a growth area. In particular, the success of the Cambridge economy has had a profound effect as the relative affordability of the district has stimulated rapid population growth. This has meant a significant increase in the level of out-commuting and pressures on local house prices. The pace of growth has slowed but the district remains the fastest growing in Cambridgeshire. An overview of the key issues is set out overleaf:

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<sup>1</sup> Halifax Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey

**Introduction and strategic vision**

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- **Delivering local jobs** – The district has one of the highest levels of out-commuting in the region (49% of the working population<sup>2</sup>), with many higher skilled workers commuting to Cambridge and elsewhere. It is likely that the level of out-commuting has increased significantly over the last decade as the pace of economic growth has not matched that of housing growth. New economic development needs to focus on the provision of higher skilled jobs and opportunities for homeworking to tackle the increasing levels of out-commuting and its associated congestion and pollution.
- **Enhancing the retail offer of market towns** – The three market town centres of Ely, Soham and Littleport form the core of East Cambridgeshire's retail offer and their vitality and viability are critical to the success of the local economy. Each faces particular challenges – Ely city centre is constrained by its historic heritage and limitations on car parking, whilst Soham and Littleport are smaller and more vulnerable and have experienced decline in recent years.
- **Infrastructure provision** – Recent high levels of growth have placed pressure on local services and facilities including health, education and leisure. The provision of a good broadband service is also critical to support business growth, especially in the rural areas where the current service can be poor. The challenge is to ensure that services and facilities are delivered alongside growth.
- **Out-commuting and congestion** – East Cambridgeshire is well served by rail, with Ely providing links with Cambridge, Peterborough, Norwich and Stansted Airport. However, use of the lines running through Ely for transporting freight is increasing, causing congestion on the A142 as the rail crossing is frequently closed to large vehicles. The A10 also experiences significant congestion, with a high proportion of residents commuting to Cambridge for work. The challenge is to lower the level of out-commuting and tackle these capacity issues with investment in the A10 and A142.
- **Housing affordability** – There is a high level of affordable housing need in the district and continuing concerns about housing affordability, with average house prices out of reach for many on lower to middle incomes.
- **Sustainable travel** – The district is predominantly rural with a dispersed population, which creates challenges in providing a comprehensive public transport network. As such, many local communities are reliant on the car as their only transport option. This impacts on carbon dioxide emissions, air quality, noise, public safety and the quality of the environment in towns and villages. The challenge is to ensure that development is directed to sustainable locations and that sustainable modes of transport are encouraged to reduce reliance on the car.
- **Rural services** – The decline in services is a concern, especially for many rural communities. Without support these services will continue to decline – the challenge is to resist the loss of these important facilities and support the delivery of new facilities. This will be especially important in the context of the district's ageing population.
- **Retaining distinctiveness and character** – There is a need to ensure that the character and appearance of the built environment is protected and enhanced, especially within areas of historic importance. It will also be important to ensure that all new development is well designed and locally distinctive. Enhancing the character and distinctiveness of the district will help to attract more tourism.
- **Climate change and green infrastructure** – The district is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as flooding and drought, because many areas are low lying and within areas of water stress. The provision of green infrastructure is recognised as a desirable 'win-win' approach to combating climate change, since it can

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<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census

## Introduction and strategic vision

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deliver other social, economic and environmental benefits. Maximising the creation of new green infrastructure will help to deliver a sustainable 'green living landscape'.

- **Quality of life** – Although the district has a good quality of life overall, there are areas for improvement, many of which are discussed above. There are also opportunities to improve and enhance certain parts of the district, including riverside areas and town centres. Part 2 of this Plan details these site-specific proposals.

## 2.4 Spatial vision

2.4.1 This spatial vision describes the proposed future development of the district until 2031. It goes beyond what can be achieved purely through the planning process, describing overall objectives which can be realised through a variety of delivery means. However the vision is founded on realistic, achievable goals developed through public consultation. Individual visions for the market towns and Burwell are provided in Part 2 of this document.

In 2031, East Cambridgeshire will have maintained a high quality of life and retained its distinct identity as a predominantly rural area of villages and market towns whilst accommodating the development of new homes and jobs. The district will have taken advantage of the economic vitality of the Cambridge sub-region, and have a diverse and thriving economy, with vibrant and attractive towns and villages which act as employment and service centres for their surrounding rural areas. More residents will have a high quality of life, with increased access to affordable housing, a wider range of local better skilled jobs, and good quality services and facilities.

The market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport will be the focus for development. Ely, as the main centre in the district, will accommodate the most growth. More employment opportunities will be available, reducing out-commuting and creating more balanced communities. A mix of residential development will be delivered to meet local needs (including affordable housing), whilst ensuring the necessary infrastructure and community facilities/services are in place to support growth. In the wider countryside, appropriate small-scale development<sup>3</sup> will be allowed where this meets local needs and supports the long-term sustainability of a settlement. The small part of the district which forms a suburb of Newmarket will support the overall development of Newmarket – as identified in the Forest Heath LDF.

Wherever new housing is provided, it will match local needs in terms of type, size and tenure. In addition, all new housing will be of high quality and well designed, ensuring that the distinctive character of the district's towns and villages is maintained and enhanced.

Communities will have improved social, recreational, health and educational facilities. The needs of elderly, young and lower-paid people will receive special attention. Existing vital community services will be retained<sup>4</sup> and new infrastructure and services required to support growth will be delivered on time to meet the needs of new residents. The levels of crime and the fear of crime will have been further reduced.

Transport deficiencies will be tackled and accessibility improved. Priority will be given to major improvements to the A142 between Angel Drove and the Stuntney Causeway. Public bus services between market towns and villages will be improved, the A10 will be developed as a high quality public transport corridor, and better cycling and pedestrian facilities and links will be provided. Other infrastructure improvement projects required to support growth will also be delivered.

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<sup>3</sup> Such as small scale and affordable housing, recreation, tourism, community facilities, small scale employment and farm diversification

<sup>4</sup> For example, community halls, local shops and pubs, and health facilities



## Introduction and strategic vision

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The overall diversity and quality of East Cambridgeshire's countryside, natural environment and built heritage will have improved. There will be better access to the countryside and green spaces for local communities. The challenges presented by climate change will have been embraced, with new development being located and designed to minimise resource and energy use and reduce the risk of flooding. Renewable energy production will have increased, and a proportion of all energy will be created from local renewable sources such as bio-fuels, biomass, and wind power.

## 2.5 Strategic objectives

2.5.1 The following strategic objectives will help to deliver the spatial vision and guide development in the district up to 2031.

1. Identify and provide sufficient land to meet the housing needs of the district.
2. Identify and maintain a suitable and flexible supply of premises and land for business to meet local employment needs and provide a better balance between jobs and homes.
3. Reduce car use by ensuring services, facilities, jobs and homes are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
4. Support and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres.
5. Support sustainable, safe and healthy communities with accessibility to a range of services and facilities.
6. Secure the infrastructure and services required to deliver sustainable development.
7. Protect and enhance the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of the natural environment.
8. Protect and enhance the historic environment and the unique character and identity of towns and villages.
9. Ensure the delivery of a highly attractive and safe built environment.
10. 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.
11. Support the delivery of new tourist facilities and visitor attractions to broaden the tourism offer and encourage longer visitor stays.
12. Ensure the delivery of sufficient high quality, multifunctional open space, sports and recreational facilities.

## 2.6 Monitoring and review

2.6.1 The Council will regularly monitor the effectiveness and implementation of the policies contained within this plan by identifying appropriate indicators and targets (Appendix x) and reporting these findings in the Annual Monitoring Report. If targets are not being met it may be necessary to review policies or produce additional Supplementary Planning Documents to give guidance on the implementation of a particular policy.

2.6.2 It will also be necessary to consider the implications from any changes to national planning policy. Therefore, although the plan covers a period of almost 20 years, it is likely that a review will take place well before 2031.

## **PART 1 – Spatial strategy and policies**

### **3 Delivery of sustainable growth**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 This chapter sets out the Council's strategy for delivering growth in East Cambridgeshire over the Plan period up to 2031. It looks at the amount of new development that will be delivered, and where it should be located across the district. It also identifies the need for new allocations to deliver this strategy, and what new infrastructure and services may be required.
- 3.1.2 The strategy seeks to deliver the vision and objectives in Chapter 2, and ensure that growth in East Cambridgeshire is 'sustainable.' Sustainable development is defined as '*development which meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*<sup>5</sup>' In essence it means trying to provide growth which meets the needs of local people, whilst minimising adverse social, environmental and economic impacts (now and in the future). The amount and location of growth is important. It is also critical to ensure that growth is accompanied by improvements in infrastructure and services in order to support the quality of people's lives.
- 3.1.3 The chapter also sets out details of how local people can facilitate the delivery of growth themselves, and influence their local area – through community-led development and Neighbourhood Plans. The Coalition Government's localism agenda (and the Localism Act) has raised the profile and importance of community involvement in planning. The District Council is supportive of this approach, as demonstrated through the Village/Town Vision work in this Local Plan.

#### **3.2 Level of growth**

- 3.2.1 This section looks at the amount of housing, employment and retail growth that the District Council will seek to facilitate over the Plan period. The District Council is required by national policy to identify a supply of deliverable sites or broad locations for housing growth for at least a 15-year period. This Local Plan looks at a slightly longer period, up to 2031. The additional years should give some flexibility with regards to land supply.
- 3.2.2 Other types of growth or development will also be needed in the district over the Plan period, including infrastructure and community facilities. These requirements are explored further in section 3.4 below.

#### **Level of housing growth**

- 3.2.3 Following the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, the District Council is responsible for identifying a housing 'target' in the Local Plan. Having a housing target allows a local authority to plan for a sustainable level of growth. This includes working with infrastructure providers and other organisations to ensure the correct level of infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of new development.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 24/187 – as set out in the NPPF page 2

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- 3.2.4 The housing target needs to be justified and based on an assessment of local need. This involves looking at demographic evidence, affordability levels, jobs growth, land availability, infrastructure capacity, market deliverability – and ensuring co-ordination with the strategy of neighbouring authorities. It is particularly important to provide sufficient housing to support the local economy, and to ensure a supply of new affordable homes for local people. Further details and analysis of the East Cambridgeshire context are set out in the Council's 'Housing Requirements Paper' (October 2012).
- 3.2.5 The evidence indicates that there is likely to be a need for approximately **8,500-9,000 additional dwellings to be built between 2013-2031. This represents an annual rate of about 447-473 dwellings per year.** This rate is close to the previous Regional target (430 per year) but is suitably challenging given the recent economic downturn and altered market conditions. In summary, the evidence indicates that this level of housing growth:
- Will be sufficient to support trend-based predictions of future housing needs in the district up to 2031 (ONS and other estimates)
  - Will support the predicted growth in the local economy up to 2031
  - Can be accommodated on sufficient, suitable available sites within the district
  - Is deliverable, in terms of market supply and capacity
  - Has a high level of support from the local community (44% support in consultation on strategic matters in March 2012)
  - Will help to deliver the Council's strategic aims of regenerating and expanding the district's Market Towns, and supporting the maintenance and sustainability of villages (in the context of a declining and ageing population)
  - Will meet East Cambridgeshire's own housing needs, and is a coherent strategy in the context of other local authorities emerging Plans
  - Is consistent with the strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region
  - Will be supported by appropriate levels of new infrastructure and services
- 3.2.6 However, it is accepted that this level of housing growth will not be sufficient to meet the expected demand for affordable housing in the district. There is an estimated need for 660 affordable homes per year in East Cambridgeshire (as set out in the Strategic Market Housing Assessment 2012), which far greater than the market has ever or is predicted to support. A housing target which attempted to deliver all the required affordable properties would be closer to 12,500, and is not considered to be deliverable or sustainable in the context of the evidence base.

**Level of economic growth**

- 3.2.7 The district has seen a large increase in overall employee jobs between 2000 and 2010 and despite the uncertain short term outlook, it is likely that the district will attract significant numbers of jobs again in the future as part of its recent transformation from a post-agricultural economy and the continued success of the Cambridge economy. However, despite this growth, the number of employee jobs has failed to keep pace with the increase in resident population resulting in a low job density ratio (0.54) and it is the aim of this plan to improve on these overall figures over the next 18 years.
- 3.2.8 Future employment needs have been identified and assessed as part of the Council's 'Jobs Growth Strategy' which acts as a technical background document to this plan. This

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strategy sets out a minimum requirement of 9,200 new jobs in the district up to 2031 or approximately 460<sup>6</sup> per annum. This would bring the East Cambridgeshire jobs density ratio in line with the Cambridgeshire average of 0.75. This is an ambitious target when compared to historical growth rates but one that the Council believes is achievable in light of the growth agenda for the district and through a partnership approach with both the public and private sectors.

3.2.9 Of the 24,100 employee jobs within the district in 2010, a large proportion of these were in manufacturing (3,100), retail (2,400), business administration and support services (2,200) education (2,200) and health (1,900). This plan seeks to encourage growth in all sectors but a key strategy is to ensure sufficient provision of land and premises for industrial, office and warehousing uses (B1, B2, B8) in sustainable locations which meets the needs of local businesses.

3.2.10 A previous study by SQW in 2008 suggested that jobs growth in office, light industrial and warehousing/distribution sectors would require approximately 1 hectare for every 134 jobs created. Using this formula, a target of 9,200 would require approximately 70 hectares of land across the district. The Council intends to make provision for a greater amount of B1/B2/B8 employment land than may be required in East Cambridgeshire over the Plan period however, and proposes that 145 hectares of new land will be identified which, when combined with planning commitments and unused large sites, amounts to approximately **169 hectares** of total land available for employment use (further details of the breakdown are provided in section 3.5 below). This amount is considered necessary for the following reasons:

- *The need to provide choice and quality and cater for specific known demands.* The Council wishes to provide a diverse stock of employment land and premises to support a broad based economy and sustainable economic growth, which maximises opportunities for local people. This requires a good supply of land in a choice of locations to make the district as attractive as possible to a wide range of potential employers. The district is also likely to see considerable growth in its office provision in Ely in particular in the future in order to cater for demand from professional and technical services occupations. Additional land has also been identified in the Fordham area as this has traditionally seen the largest growth in floorspace and jobs over the last decade given the proximity to the A14/A11 strategic transport corridor.

Historically, a number of employment allocations have failed to be delivered across the district due to the significant cost of providing supporting infrastructure which has made certain sites unviable. Approximately 1/3 of employment sites have been brought forward over the last 10 years and it is hoped that by matching sites to where commercial demand is strongest this ratio can be improved to 50% in the future. It would seem a prudent strategy however, for the District Council to set aside more land than required to cater for sites not being brought forward.

- *The need to reduce out-commuting.* As previously shown over half of East Cambridgeshire workers leave the district to work, and most travel by car. Most of the district's commuting takes place in finance and business services, public administration and education, manufacturing and distribution, hotels and catering. If the District Council is to be successful in helping to claw back some of these commuters, a wide variety of sites and premises will be required with particular emphasis on high quality office provision for the finance, business services, public administration and education sectors in close proximity to the rail network.

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<sup>6</sup> Jobs figures are calculated from a base year of 2011

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- *The need for flexibility in employment land provision.* Predicting the amount of floorspace required by different businesses in the future is difficult. The amount of land predicted has been based on the employment projections included in the Council's Jobs Growth Strategy. However, it is difficult to assess how accurate these projections are given that they cover such long time frames and macro-economic factors can have significant impacts at the local level.
- *Recent employment land take.* Between 1999 and 2012 almost 35 hectares (net) have been taken up for employment use in the district, an average of 2.69 ha per annum, and growth has been particularly strong in the land-hungry sector of warehousing and distribution. If growth continued at this rate to 2031 then approximately 48 hectares would be needed.

**Level of retail growth**

3.2.11 The level and type of retail provision in town centres is particularly key to their health and viability. The Council has assessed qualitative issues and quantitative requirements for additional retail floorspace to meet future needs – see below. Retail needs and population increases will be carefully monitored, and any necessary updates/reviews of this part of the Local Plan instigated.

3.2.12 There may be scope for additional retail floorspace above these levels where this can deliver increased retention rates of comparison or convenience spending within East Cambridgeshire whilst maintaining or enhancing the vitality and viability of the districts three market towns. Such applications would be assessed against Policy xx.

*Convenience (food) retail*

3.2.13 The Council's Retail Study 2012 concluded that there is a requirement for up to 1,984m<sup>2</sup> net of additional convenience goods floorspace to 2031<sup>7</sup>. Based on the proposed location of the housing growth, it is recommended that the total additional space is split between Ely (50%), Soham (30%) and Littleport (20%).

*Comparison (non-food) retail*

3.2.14 Ely will remain as the focus for comparison goods retailing. A requirement for up to 6,373m<sup>2</sup> net of additional comparison goods is identified to 2031.

**Policy GROWTH 1: Levels of housing, employment and retail growth**

In the period 2012 to 2031, the District Council will:

- Make provision for a deliverable supply of land to accommodate in the region of 8,804 new dwellings in East Cambridgeshire
- Maximise opportunities for jobs growth in the district, with the aim of achieving a minimum of 9,200 additional jobs in East Cambridgeshire. Part of this strategy will involve making provision for a deliverable supply of approximately 181 ha of employment land for B1/B2/B8 uses
- Make provision for at least an additional 1,984m<sup>2</sup> of convenience and 6,373m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail floorspace in the district.

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<sup>7</sup> This convenience floorspace requirement should be reviewed to reflect the changes to shopping patterns within Ely following the opening of the new Sainsbury's store.

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**3.3 Locational strategy**

- 3.3.1 This section sets out the Council's proposed broad overall strategy for the distribution of growth across the district. It looks at where growth should be focused, and where it should be restricted. The aim is to ensure that growth takes place in the best locations in the district, e.g. where it is needed, where it is deliverable, and where it is 'sustainable'. This means having regard to local economic and needs, infrastructure capacity/needs, and the potential impacts and benefits of growth in different types of locations.
- 3.3.2 The Local Plan can help to ensure that growth is sustainable, by ensuring that the majority of new development is focused on the Market Towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport (with precedence being given to Ely as the largest and most sustainable settlement in the district). The Market Towns have a wide range of jobs, services and facilities, and locating development here can reduce out-commuting, the need to travel, carbon emissions and energy use. It can also contribute to the quality of people's lives. This strategic approach should help to deliver Local Plan strategic objective x, as set out in Chapter 2.
- 3.3.3 However, there is also a need to support the villages within the district, particularly given that the population of East Cambridgeshire is ageing and average household sizes are likely to decrease over the Plan period - meaning that the population of villages will decline without additional housing growth. Some limited housing growth in villages can help to support local services and community activities, and is proposed in the strategy below. Small-scale new employment development in or on the edge of villages can also help to reduce out-commuting levels and provide vital local employment opportunities. There will also be a need to ensure that new and improved community facilities and services are provided in rural communities, which meet local needs.
- 3.3.4 Part of this strategy also involves trying to ensure that as much development as possible takes place within the built-up areas of the Market Towns and Villages, rather than the open countryside. In some cases, new housing and/or employment development will need to take place on the edge or close to settlements, as there are insufficient opportunities in the built-up parts of settlements to meet identified needs. Further details of proposed allocations are set out in section 3.4 below. However, the overall aim is to focus development within or on the edge of towns and villages, and to minimise unnecessary development of open fields and countryside areas of the district. This strategy is in accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that local authorities should protect the intrinsic character of the countryside for its own sake. Development envelopes have therefore been drawn around the main built-up areas of the market towns and villages, in order to prevent sprawl into the open countryside, and protect the character and setting of settlements. Development envelopes provide certainty to local people and developers – and were supported by a very high proportion of the community in consultation on the Local Plan (66%). A more compact form of development is also more sustainable, as it promotes easier access to jobs and services.
- 3.3.5 The development envelopes are shown on the settlement maps in Part 2 of the Local Plan. They are largely similar to those in the Core Strategy Proposals Map (2009), but with two key changes. Firstly, the development envelopes have been re-drawn to include a number of the new allocations on the edge of towns and villages. Secondly, there are minor boundary changes in some settlements where anomalies have been removed. It should be noted that the development envelopes do not necessarily include all areas of built development. For example, there are a number of small hamlets which do not have a development envelope. These are considered to be part of the open countryside, due to their small size and open structure/lack of compact built-form.

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- 3.3.6 Within the identified development envelopes, housing, employment and other types of development to meet the needs of the local community will generally be appropriate (provided there is no adverse effect on the character of the locality and that all other material planning considerations are satisfied). Applications will be determined on their merits against the policies in the Local Plan.
- 3.3.7 Outside the development envelopes there will be a strict policy of control over development. However, exceptions may be allowed for certain types of development in the countryside – for example, development which requires a rural location, which supports the rural economy, meets local housing needs, or provides essential services and infrastructure. The main types of exceptions are listed in the policy below. Applications for these uses will need to accord with other policies in this Local Plan which relate to the different types of development (for example, Policy xx relating to affordable housing, and Policy xx relating to new employment development in the countryside).
- 3.3.8 Retail and leisure development in the district will reflect the locational strategy outlined above. Ely is the main town centre in the district, and will be a focus for major retail and leisure development in East Cambridgeshire. Development will also take place in Soham and Littleport, focused on meeting local needs and aiding regeneration. Village centres in the district play an important role in providing for day-to-day convenience and local needs, and the Local Plan will seek to protect this role. In the countryside, development will be strictly controlled. Retail and other ‘town centre uses’<sup>8</sup> will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in the countryside – for example, in relation to small-scale farm shops linked to farm diversification schemes.
- 3.3.9 Within the market towns, new retail, leisure and other town centre uses should be focused in the town centre wherever possible. Or if no suitable sites are available, in edge of centre locations first, then out of town locations - in accordance with the sequential test outlined in Policy x in Chapter 7. A number of specific allocations and opportunity sites are identified in Part 2 of this Local Plan. The town centre boundaries for Ely, Soham and Littleport are shown in the Proposals Map. It is important that these centres are vibrant and attractive environments, and offer a range of retail, leisure and other ‘town centre uses’ which meet the needs of the community and visitors. Successful centres can help to improve the quality of people’s lives, boost the local economy, and reduce the need to travel by concentrating development in accessible locations.

**Policy GROWTH 2: Locational strategy**

The majority of development will be focused on the Market Towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport. Ely is the most significant service and population centre in the district, and will be a key focus for housing, employment and retail growth.

More limited development will take place in villages which have a defined development envelope, thereby helping to support local services, shops and community needs.

Within the defined development envelopes housing, employment and other development to meet local needs will normally be permitted – provided there is no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and that all other material planning considerations are satisfied. Retail

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<sup>8</sup> The NPPF defines the types of development which are considered to be ‘main town centre uses’, and includes retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

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development should be focused where possible within the town centres of Ely, Soham and Littleport – or alternatively, if there are no suitable sites available, on edge of centre sites, then out of town sites, in accordance with Policy x.

Outside defined development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled, having regard to the need to protect the countryside. Development will be restricted to the main categories of development listed below and may be permitted as an exception, providing there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside and that other Local Plan policies are satisfied.

- Community-based development (see Policy x), which may include uses such as affordable housing, small business units and renewable energy schemes
- Affordable housing (see Policy x)
- Dwellings for essential rural workers (see Policy x)
- Residential care homes (see Policy x)
- Extension and replacement of dwellings in the countryside (see Policy x)
- Gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople sites (see Policy x)
- Extensions to existing businesses (see Policy x)
- Small-scale employment development (see Policy x)
- Horse racing and equestrian development (see Policy x)
- Tourism development (see Policy x)
- Renewable energy development (see Policy x)
- Enabling development associated with heritage assets (see Policy x)
- Farm shops (see Policy x)
- Outdoor recreation and leisure facilities (see Policy x)
- Community facilities appropriate to a rural area (see Policy x)
- Telecommunications (see Policy x)
- Agriculture, horticulture and forestry
- Utility infrastructure and flood protection schemes
- Specific allocations in the Local Plan (see Chapter 4 and Part 2 below)

### 3.4 Infrastructure needs

3.4.1 This section sets out the range of infrastructure which will be needed within the district to support the levels of housing, employment and retail growth outlined in Policy GROWTH 1. When development takes place it makes additional demands upon infrastructure, which can include water and energy supply, roads, education and health care as well as open space, and green infrastructure. Therefore it is important to ensure that appropriate levels of infrastructure are provided to support growth and meet the objectives of the Local Plan.

3.4.2 Policy GROWTH 3 summarises the key infrastructure requirements that are required to support the level of growth envisaged in the Local Plan (although it is important to note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list). This list is based upon current evidence relating to existing infrastructure capacity and constraints within the district and the expected infrastructure requirements to enable the delivery of the Local Plan as set out in the District Council's 'Infrastructure Investment Plan' (October 2012). The Infrastructure Investment Plan sets out a comprehensive list of infrastructure likely to be required over the plan period, including estimated costs and potential funding sources.



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- 3.4.3 The policy also looks at how infrastructure requirements can be delivered to support the proposed level of growth in the Local Plan. The process of identifying infrastructure needs as part of the Local Plan is an essential starting point, and the District Council has an important role to play in helping to co-ordinate with a range of agencies and bodies who deliver infrastructure in East Cambridgeshire, to ensure delivery alongside growth. Infrastructure providers include the County Council (education and transport), the Primary Care Trust (healthcare), Parish Councils (allotments and play areas) and utility companies (as well as the District Council itself). The planning system can be used in a number of other ways, including securing the provision of additional infrastructure as part of development schemes – either on-site for larger schemes, or through financial contributions from developers if this is not possible, secured through Section 106 agreements or via the Community Infrastructure Levy (once adopted) Further details on developer contributions is set out in policy xx in Chapter 7. The Local Plan also assists by allocating specific strategic sites for infrastructure provision (see Part 2 of this plan), and protecting existing facilities against loss (as set out in policy x).
- 3.4.4 All types of infrastructure are important to ensure the quality of people's lives, but there are certain key essential types of infrastructure which developers need to have particular regard to. This includes water supply, sewage treatment capacity and energy supply. These are briefly explored below.
- 3.4.5 East Cambridgeshire District Council commissioned a Water Cycle Strategy<sup>9</sup> to assess the potential constraints to water supply and wastewater treatment within the district. It was concluded that there is an adequate water supply within East Cambridgeshire district to accommodate additional growth. The study also found that several Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) have capacity to accept wastewater flow from proposed growth without the need for improvements to treatment. However there will be a need for existing wastewater treatment sites to be expanded to enable further development. This work is currently due to be completed in 2015. Anglian Water has confirmed that [to be completed].
- 3.4.6 EDF Energy has made a high level assessment of existing electricity sub stations are likely to need to be reinforced as a result of further development. This highlights the need for improvements to be made in 2014-2018 to the substations, which serve Ely, Haddenham, Littleport and the Newmarket Fringe.

**Policy GROWTH 3: Infrastructure requirements**

There should be appropriate physical, social and green infrastructure in place to serve the needs of new development within the district as set out in policy GROWTH 1. East Cambridgeshire District Council will work closely with infrastructure providers (both public and private) and developers to ensure that infrastructure is provided in conjunction with new development.

New and improved infrastructure within the district will be delivered as follows:

- On-site infrastructure provision to be provided by development schemes where possible. Where this is not practical developer contributions will be sought as part of Section 106 agreements or in accordance with the District Council's CIL Charging Schedule (following adoption).
- Coordinating with infrastructure providers to ensure inclusion of infrastructure schemes within their programmes, plans and strategies

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<sup>9</sup> East Cambridgeshire District Council Water Cycle Study Detailed Study Stage 2 Report (September 2011)

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- Identification of land for the provision of new infrastructure (see part 2).
- Protection of existing infrastructure provision or facilities as outlined in policies xx and yy.

Key infrastructure requirements within the district include the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

Education

- New pre-school facilities at Burwell, Ely, Littleport and Soham, and expansion of pre-school facilities elsewhere within the District
- New nursery facilities at Ely, Soham and Littleport and expansion of existing nursery facilities elsewhere
- 2 or 3 new primary schools in Ely, 1 in Littleport and 1 in Soham, and expansion elsewhere in the district
- A secondary school at Littleport, and expansion of existing facilities elsewhere

Green Infrastructure, Leisure and Open Space

- Green infrastructure improvements as outlined in the Cambridgeshire Green Strategy including the provision of Ely Country Park.
- New leisure centre at Downham Road, Ely.
- Open space improvements throughout the district.

Health Facilities

- New primary healthcare facility at Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely.
- Expanded primary healthcare provision at Burwell, Littleport, Soham and Ely City Centre
- Redevelopment of facilities at Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely (to provide modern healthcare facilities and meet needs of new and existing population)

Transport (including highways, public transport and walking and cycling)

- Highway improvements associated with the development of Ely North.
- Ely Southern Bypass.
- Dualling of the A10 between A142 Witchford Road and A142 Angel Drove.
- Improvements to Queen Adelaide Way.
- Improvements to A142 and A14 junctions.
- Capacity improvements to the A10 and junction improvements.
- Development of Soham Rail Station.
- Improvements to Ely Rail Station (passenger transport interchange and increased car parking) and Littleport Rail Station (increased car parking).
- Improved rail and bus services.
- Pedestrian and cycle improvements within settlements and between settlements.

Water and Wastewater

- Expansion of existing Waste Water Treatment Works where required.

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**3.5 Delivery of growth**

- 3.5.1 This section looks at how the identified levels of housing, employment and retail growth (as set out in section 3.1 above) will be delivered in East Cambridgeshire over the Plan period. It analyses the various sources of land supply, and identifies the amount of new land and sites which will be needed to facilitate required levels of development. The Annual Monitoring Report will be used to monitor delivery and maintain a sufficient supply of sites.
- 3.5.2 Some development in the district is already committed and will come forward on sites which have planning permission. It is also known that some supply will continue to come forward on small 'windfall' sites over the Plan period. Allocating new land to meet the remaining shortfall (and over-allocating) can ensure that appropriate levels of growth are delivered.
- 3.5.3 This policy below focuses on the new allocations, and includes a list of specific sites. The Local Plan has an important role to play in ensuring that sites are suitable and deliverable, and in the best locations to meet local needs. Further details on the search for appropriate and sustainable sites can be viewed in the accompanying technical paper 'Assessment of site options' and in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal document. The proposed distribution of allocation sites takes account of a range of issues, including:
- The locational strategy in Policy GROWTH 2 above
  - The benefits of concentrating most development in locations which offer access to jobs, services and other facilities
  - The need to focus retail and town centre uses in or adjoining town centres, in order to support their vitality and viability
  - The needs, size and role of settlements, taking into account any current imbalances
  - Infrastructure requirements, capacity and deliverability
  - Availability of land
  - Suitability of sites, including access and environmental constraints
  - Strategic economic requirements for particular employment locations
  - Community aspirations for development, as expressed through community and Parish Council engagement during Local Plan preparation. The District Council has given significant weight to this factor, given the Government's localism agenda and the importance of involving local people in shaping their areas.
- 3.5.4 The allocations are not solely limited to housing, employment and retail uses. A number of the allocations also incorporate community facilities and infrastructure – linked to identified local and/or strategic needs. There are also a number of allocations relating to stand-alone community facilities or infrastructure – for example, the site of the proposed secondary school and new primary school on the edge of Littleport. The list of sites in the policy below should be read alongside the site-specific policies in Part 2 of this Local Plan, which provide further information on delivery and requirements.

**Housing delivery**

- 3.5.5 Housing will be delivered in the district from a range of potential sources, including:
- Outstanding commitments (including sites with planning permission, and outstanding allocations from the 2000 Local Plan)

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- Large potential sites within settlements – as identified in the Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012)
- Small windfall sites – an estimated rate is included, based on historical evidence of completions and taking account of likely future changes in supply.
- Rural exception sites – large specific sites identified in the Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2012)
- Rural exception windfall sites – an estimated is included, based on historical evidence of completions and taking account of likely future changes in supply.
- New allocations on the edge of settlements

3.5.6 The table below summarises how and where housing is likely to be delivered in East Cambridgeshire over the Plan period. It identifies there will be sufficient overall supply of land to deliver in the region of 8,804 additional dwellings over the Plan period between 2012 and 2031 (representing an annual rate of 463 per year). Approximately xxxx of these dwellings will be on new allocations on the edge of existing towns and villages. The table also shows that the distribution of development accords with the locational strategy in Policy GROWTH 2 – with significant new land allocations proposed on the edge of Ely, Soham and Littleport, and smaller amounts on the edge of villages where this is supported by the local community. A full list of allocation sites is set out in Policy GROWTH 3 below (with site-specific policies contained in Part 2 of this Local Plan).

3.5.7 Further details of the various sources of housing supply, the breakdown by settlement, and the predicted levels of supply year on year throughout the Plan period (the ‘housing trajectory’) is set out in Appendix 2 of this document. The housing trajectory demonstrates that a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites incorporating an additional buffer of 5% can be identified in East Cambridgeshire – as required by national Government policy. It also illustrates that an estimated xxx affordable dwellings could be delivered over the Plan period, mainly on the new allocation sites as they come forward. Further information on the tenure and type of dwellings is set out in Chapter 4 of this Local Plan.

*Table x.x – Summary of housing supply 2012-31*

| <b>Location</b>     | <b>Outstanding commitments</b> | <b>Large potential sites</b> | <b>Small windfall sites</b> | <b>Specific rural sites</b> | <b>Allocations</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>Market towns</b> | <b>1152</b>                    | <b>443</b>                   | <b>323</b>                  | <b>19</b>                   | <b>4510</b>        | <b>6447</b>  |
| Ely                 | 174                            | 208                          | 86                          | 19                          | 3000               | 3487         |
| Soham               | 382                            | 26                           | 147                         | -                           | 1005               | 1560         |
| Littleport          | 596                            | 209                          | 90                          | -                           | 505                | 1400         |
| Villages            | 222                            | 263                          | 600                         | 86                          | 676                | 1847         |
| In the countryside  | -                              | -                            | 510                         | -                           | -                  | 510          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>1374</b>                    | <b>706</b>                   | <b>1433</b>                 | <b>105</b>                  | <b>5186</b>        | <b>8804</b>  |

**Employment delivery**

3.5.8 The Local Plan needs to consider how employment opportunities can be delivered. This will very much depend on economic factors outside the remit of the planning system, but ensuring that allocated land is available and appropriate for various types of employment use gives some certainty to land owners and developers. A significant supply of allocated sites are proposed, for reasons explained in section 3.2 above.

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3.5.9 The table below provides a broad summary of how and where B1/B2/B8 employment land is likely to be delivered in East Cambridgeshire over the plan period between 2012 and 2031. It includes details relating to:

- Outstanding commitments – sites with planning permission which have yet to be implemented
- Allocation sites – this includes new sites, plus some sites which were previously identified in the Core Strategy 2009 but have not yet been delivered.

3.5.10 A full list of the specific proposed allocations is set out in Policy GROWTH 3 below. Some of the allocations are proposed for employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) only. However, a significant number of the employment allocations are part of mixed-use schemes, where the commercial element will be delivered alongside other uses such as housing and retail. Having a mix of different types of sites, and linking employment development with other uses which have a higher land value, should help to deliver additional jobs in the district, and facilitate employment growth.

3.5.11 The employment allocations or employment elements of the allocations are mainly proposed for a non-specified mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses to provide as much flexibility as possible. However, in certain places a specific use class is proposed. In some cases this is due to the specific characteristics of the site and its location (e.g. the proximity of residential development, standard of access, local amenity). In other cases, economic demand/needs also play a part. For example, the Council's Jobs Growth Study indicates there is likely to be a demand for office development in Ely in the future around the station quarter and in the south of the district (where it is close to Cambridge and can cater for the skills of the population), and that warehousing, storage and distribution uses (B8) will need to be in strategic locations close to the A14 to ensure easier access to the national road network and meet the needs of businesses.

Table x - Summary of B1/B2/B8 employment land supply 2012-31 (hectares)

| <b>Settlement</b> | <b>Outstanding commitments<sup>10</sup> excluding development under construction</b> | <b>Allocations (hectares)</b> | <b>TOTAL [jobs growth estimates to be inserted]</b> |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Ely               | 4.1  | 66.8                          | 79  |
| Soham             |  | 19                            | 19  |
| Littleport        |  | 13.07                         | 13.07   |
| Bottisham         |  | 1                             | 1   |
| Burwell           |  | 5.5                           | 5.5   |
| Haddenham         |  | 0.8                           | 0.8   |
| Sutton            | 20   |                               | 20  |
| Fordham           |  | 36.5                          | 36.5  |
| Isleham           |  | 1                             | 1   |
| Swaffham Prior    |  | 1                             | 1   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>24.1</b>  | <b>144.67</b>                 | <b>168.77 ha</b>                                    |

<sup>10</sup> Excluding Lancaster Way Business Park and the Octagon Business Park which have previous gained permission but are allocated in this Local Plan

**Part One: Spatial strategy and policies****Retail delivery**

3.5.12 In order to maintain and promote the vitality of the district's town centres, provision will be made to accommodate additional retail floorspace over the plan period. New retail floorspace will be delivered over the plan period from several sources:

- Outstanding commitments
- Allocation sites
- Retail developments which come forward in addition to the above sources. This could involve the re-use of existing retail units or the development of new sites. These 'windfall' developments will need to accord with Policy xx.

3.5.13 The table below provides a broad summary of the outstanding commitments in the district for retail uses. Details on proposed allocation sites which incorporate some retail are provided in Table x. Estimated floorspace figures are not available for all proposed allocations since the scale and form of the retail element will be determined through a site-specific masterplanning process.

*Table x - Summary of outstanding retail commitments 2012*

| <b>Location</b> | <b>Convenience floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> | <b>Comparison floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> | <b>Unknown retail floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|-----------------|---|--|--|--------------|
| Ely             | 1103  | 297  | 368  | 1768         |
| Burwell         | 375   | 30   | -  | 405          |
| Fordham         | -   | 346  | -  | 346          |
| Wilburton       | -   | 270  | -  | 270          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>1478</b>                                   | <b>943</b>                                   | <b>368</b>                                       | <b>2789</b>  |

**Policy GROWTH 4: Delivery of growth**

Land will be allocated in the Local Plan to enable the delivery of:

- 5186 dwellings on the edge of towns and villages
- 58 hectares of employment development (B1/B2/B8 uses)
- 4200m<sup>2</sup> comparison retail floorspace in Ely, plus additional comparison and convenience floorspace on sites listed in the table below
- Key infrastructure and community facilities, including new schools, expanded health facilities, leisure facilities and open space

The sites identified in table x are allocated for development over the Plan period. Development on the allocation sites will be guided by the site-specific policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan. The employment allocations include a jobs growth target as well as the amount of land allocated. Note: \* = number of units/floorspace yet to be determined.

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Table x -

| <i>Location</i>              | <i>Estimated housing capacity</i> | <i>Employment land (hectares)</i> | <i>Retail/leisure</i>                    | <i>Key community facilities (not exhaustive)</i>         | <i>Policy reference</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| <b>ELY</b>                   |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| North Ely                    | 3000                              | 7.5 ha<br>(1331 jobs)             | Neighbourhood centre and 2 local centres | 2 primary schools, Country Park extension                | ELY 1                   |
| The Grange                   | 50                                |                                   | 4200m <sup>2</sup> retail                |  | ELY 2                   |
| Paradise area                | *                                 |                                   | *  | Public car park  | ELY 3                   |
| Station Gateway              | *                                 | 6.8 ha<br>(964 jobs)              | *  | Transport interchange                                    | ELY 5 & 6               |
| Land at Downham Road         |                                   |                                   | Sports centre, pool and cinema           |  | ELY 7                   |
| Lancaster Way Business Park  |                                   | 40.5 ha<br>(2477 jobs)            |  |  | ELY 8                   |
| Ely Distribution Centre      |                                   | 12 ha<br>(469 jobs)               |  |  | ELY 9                   |
| <b>SOHAM</b>                 |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| Brook Street                 | 350-400                           |                                   |  |  | SOHAM 1                 |
| Station Road                 | 70-90                             | 0.5 ha<br>(140 jobs)              | Station shop                             | Station building and car park                            | SOHAM 2                 |
| Eastern Gateway              | 500-600                           | 0.5 ha<br>(132 jobs)              | Local shop + garden centre               | Land for extended Medical Centre & school playing fields | SOHAM 3                 |
| East of The Shade            |                                   | 5 ha<br>(293 jobs)                |  |  | SOHAM 4                 |
| North of The Shade           |                                   | 2 ha<br>(232 jobs)                |  | Primary school   | SOHAM 5                 |
| East of A142 bypass          |                                   | 11 ha<br>(429 jobs)               |  |  | SOHAM 6                 |
| Budgens                      |                                   |                                   | 0.55 ha                                  |  | SOHAM 7                 |
| Church hall area             | *                                 | *                                 | 0.4 ha                                   | *  | SOHAM 8                 |
| Coop area                    | *                                 | *                                 | 0.3 ha                                   | *  | SOHAM 9                 |
| <b>LITTLEPORT</b>            |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| Woodfen Road                 | 200-250                           | 7 ha<br>(341 jobs)                |  |  | LITTLEPORT 1            |
| Highfields                   | 260-300                           |                                   |  |  | LITTLEPORT 2            |
| West of 150 Wisbech Road     |                                   | 1.6 ha<br>(172 jobs)              |  |  | LITTLEPORT 3            |
| North of Wisbech Road        |                                   | 4.77 ha<br>(218 jobs)             |  |  | LITTLEPORT 4            |
| West of Camel Road           |                                   |                                   |  | Secondary and primary school                             | LITTLEPORT 7            |
| <b>BARWAY</b>                |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| The Barn, Randalls Farm      | 5                                 |                                   |  |  | BARW 1                  |
| East of Barway Road          | 5                                 |                                   |  |  | BARW 2                  |
| <b>BOTTISHAM</b>             |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| Land east of Bell Road       | 50                                |                                   |  |  | BOTTISHAM 1             |
| <b>BURWELL</b>               |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| Newmarket Road               | 350                               |                                   |  | Sports pitches   | BURW 1                  |
| Reach Road                   |                                   | 2.5 ha<br>(95 jobs)               |  |  | BURW 2                  |
| Former DS Smith site         |                                   | 3 ha<br>(293 jobs)                |  |  | BURW 3                  |
| <b>CHEVELEY</b>              |                                   |                                   |  |  |                         |
| Rear of Star and Garter Lane | 2                                 |                                   |  |  | CHEVELEY 1              |

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| <i>Location</i>                  | <i>Estimated housing capacity</i> | <i>Employment land (hectares)</i> | <i>Retail/leisure</i> | <i>Key community facilities (not exhaustive)</i> | <i>Policy reference</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Between 199-209 High Street      | 18                                |                                   |                       |  | CHEVELEY 2              |
| <b>FORDHAM</b>                   |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| East of 24 Mildenhall Road       | 10                                |                                   |                       |  | FORD1                   |
| Between 37-55 Mildenhall Road    | 6                                 |                                   |                       |  | FORD 2                  |
| South of Snailwell Road          |                                   | 7 ha<br>(342 jobs)                |                       |  | FORD 3                  |
| North of Snailwell Road          |                                   | 5.5 ha<br>(215 jobs)              |                       |  | FORD 4                  |
| Horse Racing Forensic Labs       |                                   | 9 ha<br>(176 jobs)                |                       |  | FORD 5                  |
| North of Turners                 |                                   | 8 ha<br>(88 jobs)                 |                       |  | FORD 6                  |
| South of Landwade Road           |                                   | 7 ha<br>(228 jobs)                |                       |  | FORD 7                  |
| <b>HADDENHAM</b>                 |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| Rowan Close                      | 15                                |                                   |                       |  | HADD 1                  |
| New Road                         | 24                                |                                   |                       |  | HADD 2                  |
| Station Road                     |                                   | 0.8 ha<br>(78 jobs)               |                       |  | HADD 3                  |
| <b>ISLEHAM</b>                   |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| South of Lady Frances Court      | 15                                |                                   |                       |  | ISLE 1                  |
| 5a Fordham Road                  | 10                                |                                   |                       |  | ISLE 2                  |
| West of Hall Barn Road           | 12                                |                                   |                       |  | ISLE 3                  |
| Church Lane                      | 2                                 |                                   |                       |  | ISLE 4                  |
| Hall Barn Road Industrial Estate |                                   | 1 ha<br>(98 jobs)                 |                       |  | ISLE 5                  |
| <b>LITTLE DOWNHAM</b>            |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| West of Ely Road                 | 25                                |                                   |                       |  | DOWN 1                  |
| <b>PRICKWILLOW</b>               |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| Putney Hill Road                 | 10                                |                                   |                       |  | PRICKWILLOW 1           |
| <b>PYMOOR</b>                    |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| North-east of 9 Straight Furlong | 10                                |                                   |                       |  | PYMO 1                  |
| <b>SUTTON</b>                    |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| North of The Brook               | 50                                |                                   |                       |  | SUTT 1                  |
| <b>SWAFFHAM PRIOR</b>            |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| Rogers Road                      | 20                                |                                   |                       |  | SWAP 1                  |
| Goodwin Farm, Heath Road         |                                   | 1 ha<br>(116 jobs)                |                       |  | SWAP 2                  |
| <b>WENTWORTH</b>                 |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| Opposite Red Lion, Main St       | 2                                 |                                   |                       |  | WENTWORTH 1             |
| East of 1 Main Street            | 2                                 |                                   |                       |  | WENTWORTH 2             |
| <b>WICKEN</b>                    |                                   |                                   |                       |  |                         |
| North-west of The Crescent       | 5                                 |                                   |                       |  | WICKEN 1                |
| South of Church Road             | 5                                 |                                   |                       |  | WICKEN 2                |

### 3.6 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

3.6.1 As set out in the NPPF, the main purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development' (paragraph 6). New growth in East Cambridgeshire needs to be 'sustainable'. This means that development should support the local economy, provide



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social benefits (e.g. housing and community facilities) and protect and enhance the natural and built environment. The principles of sustainable development are reflected in the strategic objectives and vision in Chapter 2 of this Plan – and incorporated into the policies in this Plan.

- 3.6.2 The NPPF also highlights the Government's desire to promote and support the delivery of growth. Local authorities are urged to work proactively with applicants, and approve proposals wherever possible – e.g. where they accord with policies in the Local Plan. If the Local Plan is silent or out of date, local authorities are urged to grant approval, having regard to whether any adverse effects would significantly outweigh the benefits, and other aspects of the NPPF. This approach has been termed a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development.'
- 3.6.3 Full details of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' are set out in sections 11 to 16 the NPPF. However, the Government has issued advice<sup>11</sup> that a 'model policy' should also be included within Local Plans, which reiterates the national guidance. This policy is set out below.

**Policy GROWTH 5: Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This will include working proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved wherever possible without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole
- Specific policies in the NPPF which indicate that development should be restricted or refused.
- Strategic objectives of the Local Plan and policies and proposals contained within town and village visions.

**3.7 Community-led development**

- 3.7.1 Giving communities greater say and control of their localities is a central theme of Government policy. Community-led schemes are those that are driven by local communities, rather than local authorities or private developers. They can help communities to tackle local issues such as a shortage of affordable homes or jobs, and can generate income to provide financial security and help fund further investment in the local area. Small-scale community-led schemes which meet a need identified by a local community will be encouraged in all settlements.

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<sup>11</sup> Planning Inspectorate statement – see <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planningsystem/localplans>

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3.7.2 One mechanism for delivering community-led development is a Community Land Trust (CLT)<sup>12</sup>. CLTs are not for profit organisations based in and run by the community, that seek to develop key community assets to help communities become stronger and more independent. The usual starting point for CLTs is the provision of affordable housing but other benefits such as community shops, pubs, allotments, gardens, play areas, orchards, workspace, and renewable energy can also be provided.

**Policy GROWTH 6: Community-led development**

The District Council is generally supportive of community-led development. This may include schemes involving affordable housing, small business units, renewable energy generation and other appropriate uses.

The non-housing elements of schemes will be assessed against other relevant Local Plan policies.

The affordable housing elements may be permitted outside the development envelope as an exception to the normal policies of control where:

- The site is well related to a settlement which offers a range of services and facilities, and there is good accessibility by foot/cycle to those facilities.
- No significant harm would be caused to the character or setting of the settlement and the surrounding countryside.
- The scale of the scheme is of a character and scale appropriate to the location and to the scale of the identified local affordable housing need.
- The scheme incorporates a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures appropriate to the identified local need.
- The District Council is satisfied that (i) the scheme was initiated by, and is being led by, a legitimate local community group such as a Parish Council or Community Land Trust and (ii) the scheme has general community support, with evidence of meaningful public engagement.
- It is demonstrated through financial appraisal that any market housing element is essential to enable delivery of the affordable housing, and that the community benefits of the scheme (such as the level of affordable housing or open space) are significantly greater than would be delivered on an equivalent open market site.
- It can be demonstrated that the scheme will be well managed and financially viable over the long-term and that any benefits provided by the scheme can be retained by the local community in perpetuity.
- The scheme accords with all other policies of the Local Plan.

## 4 Housing

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter sets out the Council's approach to addressing the need for different types of housing within the district up to 2031. It includes policies relating to affordable housing, type, mix and density of new dwellings and Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople housing requirements.

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<sup>12</sup> A legal definition is provided in Section 79 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

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4.1.2 The strategy seeks to deliver the vision and objectives in Chapter 2, and ensure that the future housing needs within the district are addressed as part of new development. This will require the provision of affordable homes as well as an appropriate range of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of households including those with families and older people. Developers will be required to provide affordable housing as part of open market housing developments and affordable housing will also be provided on exception sites (where housing would not normally be permitted).

## 4.2 Housing mix and type

4.2.1 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to plan for a mix of housing to meet the different needs of the community including families with children, older people and people with disabilities. In order to ensure that housing provision meets the needs of all sectors of the community, it is important that a range of house types and sizes are provided as part of new residential developments within the district. Policy xx seeks to ensure that an appropriate mix of sizes and types is provided.

4.2.2 Evidence in the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been used to inform the policy. This includes data on the age profile of the current and future population, housing stock information, and recent occupancy densities.

4.2.3 In terms of size mix, the profile of the current population in East Cambridgeshire reveals that a significant proportion of the households in the district are single person households (30% in the 2001 Census). This proportion is predicted by the County Council Research Group to be likely to increase even further over the next x years, as a result of a rise in single person households, smaller family units, and older people. The Research Group predicts that the number of households in the district will rise by 30% to 2031, and that x% of these will be single occupancy. During the same period the population is forecast to rise by x%, with almost all of the growth coming from the 60+ age group. At the same time the district has a considerable stock of larger properties. The 2011 Census reveals that only x% of housing stock have 1-3 rooms (not including bathrooms and hallways), and that the overwhelming majority of dwellings (x%) have more than 5 rooms [section to be updated to include reference to 2011 Census figures]. These proportions are likely to have changed only slightly since 2001, as housing completions data between 2001 and 2012 reveals that only 35% of dwellings built in this period were 1 or 2 bedroom properties.

4.2.4 It is clear that there has been a significant gap between the size mix of general market properties built in the district, and identified needs for smaller dwellings. Policy xx seeks to restore this balance to reflect local need, and address the current low supply of smaller market properties – so that more people can have access to a suitable home. However, the policy also takes account of the fact that housing need is not an indication of housing occupancy, as people aspire to take properties they can afford rather than their actual 'needs'. A mix of housing will therefore be required on development sites to ensure a balanced community, and enable those who wish to live in larger properties to do so.

4.2.5 The Cambridge Housing Sub-Region Property Size Guide (August 2010) is intended to provide a guide for the proportions of different sizes of properties, which would be appropriate on open market housing sites within each district.

4.2.6 Table x sets out the expected need for different types of dwellings (expressed as number of bedrooms) within East Cambridgeshire district when market behaviour is applied.

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Table x -

|                 | <i>Minimum %</i> | <i>Maximum %</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Bedroom       | 3                | 5                |
| 2 Bedroom       | 13               | 23               |
| 3 Bedroom       | 22               | 39               |
| 4 Bedroom       | 26               | 47               |
| 5+ Bedroom      | 7                | 14               |
| Total (minimum) | 72               |                  |

- 4.2.7 The findings of the Size Guide as set out above (together with any recent available evidence relating to housing mix in the locality) will be considered by the District Council when negotiating with applicants to determine the appropriate mix of housing to be included on individual sites.
- 4.2.8 It is proposed that an appropriate mix of unit sizes will be secured on schemes of 10+ general market dwellings. This threshold is considered to be a reasonable level, above which schemes should make a contribution to mixed communities.
- 4.2.9 The district also faces a major challenge in increasing the provision of housing for potentially vulnerable elderly and single person households. Increasing provision for the elderly can bring wider community benefits from releasing under-occupied housing back into both the public sector and general housing market. The Council will therefore aim to ensure that a proportion of new housing built as part of major housing developments is suitable, or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities (Lifetime Homes Standard or equivalent).
- 4.2.10 There is also a need for specialist types of housing, both market and affordable, including sheltered and extra care housing<sup>13</sup> for the elderly or disabled and other groups who require communal facilities/wardens or on site management and/or medical support as highlighted in the SHMA and the Cambridgeshire Older Persons Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Affordable housing specifically designed to meet the accommodation needs of the elderly is provided by Housing Associations (on behalf of the District Council). However there are also a number of privately owned extra care and retirement housing developments within the district. It is acknowledged that applications for market and affordable extra care and retirement housing will contain mainly one-bed and two bed homes
- 4.2.11 Policy xx sets out the criteria, which will be used to determine planning applications for accommodation for residential care homes.
- 4.2.12 Where applicants propose an alternative mix of housing/types they will be expected to demonstrate that this can be fully justified by providing robust evidence relating to the identified level of housing need, financial viability or deliverability to the District Council. Where this policy would result in the requirement relating to part of a dwelling the calculation will be rounded upwards to ensure that at least the minimum requirement is met.
- 4.2.13 The development of self-build properties by individuals or community groups can also contribute to meeting the need for additional housing within the district. Policy xx sets out the criteria, which will be used to determine planning applications for additional housing proposed by community groups including Community Land Trusts (CLTs).

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<sup>13</sup> Housing which enables older people with longer term health conditions to live independently in self contained accommodation as an alternative to residential care.

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**Policy HOU 1: Housing Mix**

Housing developments of 10 or more dwellings should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes that contribute to current and future housing needs as identified in the most recent locally available evidence including that required in the locality.

Developments of 50 or more dwellings will be expected to provide a proportion of dwellings that are suitable or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities (Lifetime Homes standard or equivalent).

Developments of 100 or more dwellings will be expected to provide a minimum of 5% self build properties. The inclusion of self build properties on smaller sites will also be encouraged.

The final mix of dwelling types and sizes will be subject to negotiation with the applicant. Applicants proposing an alternative mix of housing will be required to provide evidence to demonstrate to the District Council that it can be justified.

On sheltered/supported housing schemes, the type and mix of housing will be determined on a site by site basis according to identified needs in the locality.

Self build properties will also be encouraged where development is proposed within settlement boundaries or as part of identified housing allocations.

**4.3 Housing density**

4.3.1 Land resources in England are scarce, and it is therefore important that development land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of building that needs to take place on greenfield sites in the countryside. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.

4.3.2 East Cambridgeshire District Council will seek to ensure that an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare is achieved on new housing developments across the district. However the precise density of particular schemes will need to be determined having regard to a site's immediate context, on-site constraints, the type of development proposed and the level of transport accessibility. Whilst higher densities may be appropriate in major developments or town centre locations where public transport is good and urban form is dense, lower densities may be appropriate in established suburban areas, in villages, in areas with an open character or on the edge of settlements. In assessing what density is appropriate, priority will be given to ensuring that making efficient use of land does not result in development that detracts from the character of the area.

**Policy HOU 2: Housing Density**

The appropriate density of a scheme will be judged on a site-by-site basis taking account of:

- The landscape character and biodiversity of the site and its surroundings;
- The need to make efficient use of land;
- The existing character of the settlement and housing densities within the surrounding area;
- The need to accommodate other uses and residential amenities such as open space and parking areas;
- Levels of accessibility, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; and

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- The need to ensure that the residential amenity of new and existing dwellings is protected.
- Major development schemes will be expected to provide a range of housing densities as part of the development in accordance with an agreed masterplan.

**4.4 Affordable housing on open market sites**

- 4.4.1 The NPPF defines affordable housing as: 'Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.' Social and affordable rented housing is normally owned and managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Intermediate housing is provided at a cost above Social Rent but below market levels. This can take the form of intermediate rent, shared ownership or shared equity schemes. Affordable housing should also include provision to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.
- 4.4.2 The District Council secures the majority of affordable housing that is built in the district through requiring developers to provide affordable dwellings as part of open market housing developments (through Section 106 agreements). Affordable housing is also delivered on 'exception sites' as set out in Policy xx.
- 4.4.3 There is a significant need for additional affordable housing within East Cambridgeshire, as set out in the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>14</sup>. This document sets out the need for additional affordable dwellings in East Cambridgeshire over the next 5 years. It is estimated that there is a need to provide an additional 660 affordable dwellings per year, between 2010 and 2015. This amount of housing represents xx% of the overall housing likely to be delivered over the plan period.
- 4.4.4 It is considered that it would be unrealistic to require 100% affordable housing on all development sites coming forward within the district. Therefore the minimum percentage of affordable housing proposed in Policy xx takes account of this high level of need, but is based on a realistic proportion and has been developed with close regard to the overall viability of housing schemes (as set out in the Council's 'Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Testing' document). (should we say that the percentage requirement differs across the district because of the different overall viability??)
- 4.4.5 Applicants seeking to justify a lower proportion of affordable housing will be required to demonstrate why it is not economically viable to make the minimum level of provision in Policy xx. The financial viability assessment should be prepared by the applicant and provided to the Council for its consideration. Where agreement is not reached external consultants will be appointed to undertake a further independent viability assessment. The applicant will be required to meet the costs of the assessment being prepared.
- 4.4.6 The Council recognises that in some cases there may be exceptional development costs, which need to be recognised, and that the policy is a starting point for negotiation. Where this policy would result in the requirement relating to part of a dwelling the calculation will be rounded upwards to ensure that at least the minimum requirement is met.
- 4.4.7 Policy xx states that affordable housing contributions will be sought on developments of 5 or more dwellings. It is considered that this is a realistic threshold, which will enable the delivery of affordable housing and not prevent the delivery of smaller sites for housing within the district.

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<sup>14</sup> Cambridge Housing Sub Region Market Assessment 2012

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- 4.4.8 Where development involves the demolition of existing properties the amount of affordable housing will be calculated on the gross.
- 4.4.9 Policy xx indicates that the size mix and tenure of affordable dwellings should reflect identified needs at the time of the proposal and in the locality. The current SHMA forecasts that there will be a need for x% of affordable dwellings in the district to be 1 or 2 bedroom [SHMA section currently under preparation] and x% to be 3 or 4 bed and that x% should be social rented and x% should be intermediate housing. Housing developments should also ensure that sufficient provision is made to meet the needs of an ageing population and disabled people as highlighted in the Government's Housing Strategy and the SHMA.
- 4.4.10 On schemes of 10 or more dwellings, affordable housing should be provided on the application site as part of well designed, mixed tenure schemes, as this ensures the best prospect of securing mixed, inclusive communities. On schemes of 5 to 9 dwellings are proposed, off-site provision or financial contributions in lieu may be acceptable. In exceptional circumstances, these alternatives, may be acceptable on larger schemes, and applicants will be expected to justify any exception to the Council as part of an application.
- 4.4.11 There are no agreed ideal method(s) for ensuring the physical integration of affordable and open market housing. However developers will be expected to demonstrate that they have considered this issue as part of the overall design of the development.
- 4.4.12 The Council will ensure that any planning permission granted is subject to appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations to secure affordability in perpetuity. Further details of the Council's approach to affordable housing including details of how financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision are to be calculated will be set out in the a Supplementary Planning Document.

**Policy HOU 3: Affordable Housing Provision**

All new open market housing developments, which incorporates 5 or more dwellings, will be required to make appropriate provision for an element of affordable housing, as follows:

- A minimum of 40% of the total number of dwellings to be provided will be sought in the south of the district (i).
- A minimum of 30% of the total number of dwellings to be provided will be sought in the north of the district (ii).
- The proportion and type of affordable housing will be the subject of negotiation with applicants. As part of this, consideration will be given to the financial viability of the development including any exceptional costs (e.g. site remediation and infrastructure provision).
- Applicants seeking to justify a lower level of affordable housing will be required to provide a financial viability assessment as part of the planning application. *It will be for applicants to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the District Council that the development is not financially viable if the minimum level of affordable housing is provided.*
- The precise mix in terms of tenure and house sizes of affordable housing within a scheme will be determined by local circumstances at the time of planning permission, including housing need, development costs and the availability of subsidy.
- Affordable housing should normally be provided on-site, apart from in exceptional circumstances where agreed with the District Council. Applicants will be required to provide justification as part of the planning application setting out the need for off-site provision or financial contributions in lieu to be made.
- The affordable properties will be made available solely to people in housing need at an

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affordable cost for the life of the property.

- The allocation of affordable housing should give priority to people in local housing need in accordance with the District Council's allocation policy.
- On larger schemes the affordable housing will be provided in phases, as set out in an agreed masterplan or approved planning application.
- The affordable housing shall be physically integrated into the open market housing development by using appropriate design method(s).
- Affordable housing intended specifically for elderly occupants should be focused on public transport routes. In order to meet identified local needs, a proportion of dwellings that are suitable or easily adaptable for occupation by the elderly or people with disabilities.

(i) The south of the district comprises the parishes of Ashley, Bottisham, Brinkley, Burrough Green, Burwell, Cheveley, Chippenham, Dullingham, Fordham, Kennett, Kirtling, Lode, Reach, Snailwell, Stetchworth, Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior, Westley Waterless and Woodditton.

(ii) The north of the district comprises the parishes of Coveney, Ely, Haddenham, Isleham, Little Downham, Littleport, Little Thetford, Mepal, Soham, Stretham, Sutton, Wentworth, Wicken, Wilburton, Witcham, Witchford.

## 4.5 Affordable housing exception sites

- 4.5.1 In East Cambridgeshire there is significant need for additional affordable housing, as demonstrated in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. However, land values are high, and Registered Social Landlords find it difficult to afford to purchase sites within settlements for the development of affordable housing schemes. The NPPF recognises these issues, and allows small affordable housing schemes to be developed as 'exception sites' where open market housing would not normally be permitted.
- 4.5.2 Policy xx sets out the circumstances in which exception sites may be considered appropriate. In assessing such proposals the housing needs of the local community will be carefully considered, and schemes should be designed to include a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures, appropriate to the local need as demonstrated for example by a local housing need survey. The occupation of these properties will be restricted in accordance with a cascade mechanism, agreed by the Council and Affordable Housing Providers, whereby those who have a connection with the village are given first priority for newly created housing, followed by those in adjacent villages, and then those in the wider locality.
- 4.5.3 The Council will ensure that any planning permission granted is subject to appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations to secure its affordability in perpetuity.
- 4.5.4 Exception sites should ideally be solely for the provision of affordable housing but this may not always be possible e.g. due to the lack of housing grant. Therefore in certain circumstances an element of market housing may be permitted on exception sites where the applicant can demonstrate that the inclusion of open market housing is required to enable the site to be developed primarily for affordable housing and does not significantly increase the land value above that which would be payable if sufficient grant were available to provide 100% affordable housing. The Council will assess the financial viability of proposed rural exception sites to ensure that any open market housing is required to enable the development of the site for affordable housing (where grant funding is not available).
- 4.5.5 Policy xx sets out the circumstances in which exception sites may be considered appropriate. In assessing such proposals the housing needs of the local community will be



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carefully considered, and schemes should be designed to include a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures, appropriate to the local need as demonstrated by evidence obtained for example by a local housing need survey. The occupation of these properties will be restricted in accordance with a cascade mechanism, agreed by the Council and Affordable Housing provider, whereby those who have a connection with the village are given first priority for newly created housing, followed by those in adjacent villages, and then those in the wider locality.

- 4.5.6 The amount of open market housing on such sites should be limited to that which is required to enable the site to be developed for affordable housing. The Council will assess the financial viability of proposed rural exception sites to ensure that any open market housing is required to enable the development of the site for affordable housing (where sufficient grant funding is not available).

**Policy HOU 4: Affordable Housing Exception sites**

Affordable housing development on exception sites can make an important contribution to meeting local housing needs, and schemes may be permitted on sites outside settlement boundaries where:

- There is an identified local need which cannot be met on available sites within the development envelope; and
- The site is adjoining or in close proximity to the main built-up framework of the settlement; and
- The site is well related to a village which offers a range of services and facilities, and there is good accessibility by foot/cycle to those facilities; and
- No significant harm would be caused to the character or setting of the settlement and the surrounding countryside; and
- The scale of the scheme is of a character and scale appropriate to the location and to the scale of the identified local affordable housing need; and
- The scheme incorporates a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures appropriate to the identified local need;
- The affordable housing provided is made available to people in local housing need at an affordable cost for the life of the property.

Open market housing will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated through financial appraisal that this is essential to enable delivery of the affordable housing, and that the community benefits of the scheme (such as the level of affordable housing) are significantly greater than would be delivered on an equivalent open market site.

**4.6 Dwellings for rural workers**

- 4.6.1 The accommodation needs of rural workers such as stud workers and those employed full-time in agriculture, horticulture, and forestry can usually be met in existing properties either on the site or in nearby settlements. Occasionally it is essential for a worker to be in close proximity to the business and there is no suitable accommodation available nearby – for example, where animal or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice, or where it may be required to deal with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or produce. These special circumstances will justify the potential construction of new dwellings in the countryside to meet these needs, according to the financial and functional criteria in Policy xx below. It must be stressed that genuine essential need, rather than business convenience must be justified.

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- 4.6.2 Applications will be assessed taking account of the history of the enterprise, in order to establish whether existing dwellings within the site/holding or nearby could fulfill the need, or whether any dwellings or buildings suitable for conversion have been sold on the open housing market. Such a sale is likely to constitute lack of evidence of essential need. New permanent dwellings can only be justified if the enterprise to which they relate is economically viable. For this reason, details of the financial situation of the business will be required. This information will also inform the scale of dwelling which the enterprise can sustain. The scale should be demonstrated to be appropriate to the needs of the business rather than those of the owner or occupier.
- 4.6.3 Where planning permission is granted for a new dwelling on this basis, suitable occupancy conditions will be imposed to ensure the dwelling remains available to meet that particular need. Proposals to remove an occupancy condition will be considered on the basis of whether a need remains for the accommodation for other rural workers. This will involve marketing the property for a period of at least 12 months at a realistic price to reflect the occupancy restriction. Applicants will also need to demonstrate a lack of general need in an area. As part of this approach, applicants will need to demonstrate that the dwelling has been made available to a minimum of three Registered Social Landlords operating locally on terms which would prioritise its occupation by a rural worker as an affordable dwelling - and that option has been refused.

**Policy HOU 5: Dwellings for Rural Workers**

Proposals for permanent dwellings in the countryside for full-time workers in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, stud and other rural activities will be permitted as an exception to the normal policies of control where:

- It can be demonstrated that the dwelling is essential to the needs of the business (i.e. there is a need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times); and
- It can be demonstrated that the enterprise has been established for at least three years and is, and should remain financially viable; and
- There is no other accommodation within the site/holding or nearby which is currently suitable and available, or could be made available; and
- A dwelling or building suitable for conversion to a dwelling within the site/holding has not been sold on the open housing market without an agricultural or other occupancy conditions in the last five years; and
- The proposed dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the functional needs of the enterprise, nor would it be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain; and
- The proposed dwelling is sensitively designed and in keeping with its rural surroundings and will not adversely affect the setting of any heritage asset;
- The proposed dwelling will have satisfactory access; and
- The proposed dwelling is well landscaped, is sited to minimise visual intrusion and is in close proximity to existing buildings to meet the functional need of the business; and
- Where the proposal involves a new business that cannot yet demonstrate financial soundness, a temporary dwelling (in the form of a caravan, mobile home or wooden structure that can easily be dismantled and removed from the site) may be acceptable provided all the other criteria are met.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, the occupancy will be restricted by condition to ensure that it is occupied by a person, or persons currently or last employed in local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, stud and other rural activities, or their surviving partner or dependant(s). Applications for

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the removal of an occupancy condition related to rural workers will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no longer a need for accommodation on the holding/business or in the local area; and
- The property has been marketed for a reasonable period (at least 1 year) and at a price which reflects the existence of the occupancy condition; and

The dwelling has been made available to a minimum of three Registered Social Landlords operating locally on terms which would prioritise its occupation by a rural worker as an affordable dwelling - and that option has been refused.

## **4.7 Residential care accommodation**

- 4.7.1 There is a need in the district to provide care accommodation for various groups of people for rehabilitation and out of hospital care, including the elderly, people with disabilities and vulnerable people.
- 4.7.2 The forecast change in population by broad age groups for the period 2011-2031 predicts that almost all of the estimated growth will be in the over 60 age group. The proportion of people aged 75+ years will rise by 93% and those aged 85+ years will grow by 144%. This is a dramatic increase in potentially vulnerable elderly couples and single elderly person households.
- 4.7.3 Accommodation for the elderly or those in need of care is moving towards more flexible forms of living and support which seek to maintain their independence and control of their lives. There are several options where residents can enjoy their own self-contained home within a site offering extra facilities. These include Retirement homes and retirement villages, and 'extra care' housing, where varying levels of care and support are provided in the home. These models often include a restaurant or dining room, health & fitness facilities and hobby rooms on site. Accommodation also includes care or nursing homes, which comprise single rooms within a residential setting where residents receive varying levels of care. Care can range from primarily personal care to nursing care for those who are bedridden, very frail or have a medical condition or illness.
- 4.7.4 All forms of residential care accommodation should be located within settlements where there is easy access to a range of services e.g. shops, healthcare and social facilities. This should enable non-car access to basic facilities for residents and staff, and ensure the facility is accessible for staff and visitors.
- 4.7.5 It is recognised that developers have to compete on the open market for land when purchasing care home sites, and that there may be a lack of suitable sites within settlement boundaries. Therefore, new development of care homes on the edge of settlements that offer a range of services may be considered as an exception to the normal policies of control in the countryside. In these circumstances it will be particularly important for applicants to demonstrate need for such provision, having regard to the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other County strategies.

### **Policy HOU 6: Residential Care Accommodation**

Residential care accommodation should be located within a settlement that offers a range of services and social facilities. The design and scale of schemes should be appropriate to its setting and have no adverse impact on the character of the locality or residential amenity. Applicants will be expected to provide evidence of need for the provision.

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As an exception, proposals for residential care homes may be acceptable on sites outside development envelopes where:

- The site is located adjoining or in close proximity to a settlement which offers a range of services; and
- The site is well related to a village which offers a range of services and facilities, and there is good accessibility by foot/cycle to those facilities; and
- There is an identified need for such provision that is unlikely to be met within the built-up area.

## 4.8 Mobile homes and residential caravan parks

- 4.8.1 There are a number of mobile home/residential caravan parks in the district, both within settlements and in the open countryside close to settlements. They play an important role in providing low-cost market housing for local people. These properties are particularly popular with the semi-retired, retired and the elderly, and are sometimes referred to as 'park homes'. Properties are usually owned by the occupier, but pay a rent to the site owner that includes costs towards maintenance of the communal areas. All sites are licensed by the District Council.
- 4.8.2 The Council is keen to retain existing mobile home and residential caravan parks in the district. Proposals involving the loss of all or any part of these existing parks will be resisted, unless applicants can demonstrate a lack of viability or business demand (e.g. by marketing the business at an appropriate price for at least 12 months).
- 4.8.3 The development of new, or the extension of existing mobile homes/residential caravan parks will not normally be appropriate outside development envelopes. New mobile homes and caravans should be located within existing settlements, where permanent dwellings would be acceptable. Where new provision is appropriate, planning conditions will be used to control the colour, massing and materials used, and the careful use of landscaping and layout of pitches, to reduce the environmental impact of mobile homes and caravans. Proposals will also need to demonstrate no adverse impact on the character of the countryside or amenity of other residential properties.
- 4.8.4 On existing sites in the countryside, expansion outside existing boundaries will be resisted. However, intensification of sites within the footprint of the current developed area may be appropriate, providing there is no adverse impact on the character of the locality and amenity of nearby residents.

### **Policy HOU 7: Mobile Homes and Residential Caravan Parks**

Proposals involving the loss of all or part of key identified mobile home or residential caravan park will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that the operation is no longer viable and there is no business demand.

New mobile homes or caravans will normally only be considered acceptable in locations where general market housing would be appropriate.

On existing sites, intensification within the footprint of the current developed area may be permitted, and must adhere to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England.

Any proposal for development or intensification must have careful regard to the colour, massing and materials used, incorporate appropriate landscaping, and have no adverse impact on the character of its locality or amenity of nearby residents.

**Part One: Spatial strategy and policies****4.9 Extension and replacement of dwellings in the countryside**

- 4.9.1 There are a number of dwellings in the countryside and these are an important part of housing stock in the district. It is recognised that there is some need for the replacement or extension of existing dwellings and this is a form of development in the countryside that may be allowed as an exception to normal policies of control.
- 4.9.2 It will be important to ensure that extension or replacement dwellings will be in keeping with the scale and character of the existing dwelling and its locality. The design of proposals will be important to reduce any adverse impact on the landscape and should correspond with the principles set out in Policy xx on design in Chapter xx and the Design Guide SPD.
- 4.9.3 For the purpose of this policy, the 'existing dwelling' refers to a dwelling house that has an existing lawful use as a domicile (i.e. not abandoned), as it exists on the date of the adoption of this document; or any new dwelling permitted after this date.

**Policy HOU 8: Extension or Replacement of Dwellings in the Countryside**

Proposals which seek to extend or replace an existing dwelling in the countryside will only be supported where:

- The extension to an existing dwelling is in keeping with the height, scale and character of the original dwelling and does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the locality or its countryside setting; and
- The replacement dwelling is of a scale and design which is sensitive to its countryside setting, with its height being similar to that of the original dwelling. If an alternative height is proposed, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme exhibits exceptionally high quality of design and enhances the character and appearance of the locality; and
- Is within the existing curtilage; and
- The residential use of the dwelling has not been abandoned; and
- Proposals accord with Policy xx on Design and other relevant Local Plan policies; and
- Proposals should have regard to maximising carbon neutrality (see Policy x in Chapter 6).

**4.10 Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople accommodation**

- 4.10.1 Local Authorities are required to consider and plan for the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as set out in the Housing Act 2004. The Government's 'Planning policy for traveller sites' (March 2012) also requires that local planning authorities (LPAs) set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers<sup>15</sup> in their area. LPAs are also required to identify specific deliverable traveller sites where there is an identified need for additional accommodation.
- 4.10.2 The Cambridge Sub-Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (October 2011) identified a need for 38 Gypsy and Traveller pitches to be provided within East Cambridgeshire district from 2011 to 2031. It also identifies an outstanding need for 4 Travelling Showpeople plots from 2011 to 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Travellers means "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople" as defined in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller sites (March 2012)

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4.10.3 Following the publication of the assessment the District Council has granted planning permission for a total of 15 Gypsy and Traveller pitches (Whitecross Farm, Wilburton and First Drove, Burwell). Assuming that both of these sites are delivered there will be a residual requirement for 23 pitches to be provided in East Cambridgeshire district.

4.10.4 Table x identifies the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation as identified in the current Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (in 5 year periods from 2011 to 2031). These have been used to enable local planning authorities to identify an effective supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites as required by national planning policy and to allow for a future review of the Needs Assessment. The total need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the district (up to 2031) as identified in the Needs Assessment will be used in determination of planning applications.

Table x -

|   | <i>Number of pitches</i> |
|---|--------------------------|
| 2011-2016                                     | 10                       |
| 2016-2021                                     | 13                       |
| 2021-2026                                     | 10                       |
| 2026-2031                                     | 5                        |
| Total (2011-2031)                             | 38                       |
| Sites with the benefit of planning permission | 15                       |
| Residual requirement                          | 23                       |

4.10.5 It is proposed to allocate sufficient Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Local Plan to provide a 10-year supply of sites (including those which currently have the benefit of planning permission) as set out in policy xx.

4.10.6 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have different cultures and traditions and accommodation needs. For example Travelling Showpeople need space for storage, maintenance and repair of fairground equipment<sup>16</sup>.

4.10.7 This policy also sets out the criteria, which will be used to determine 'windfall' proposals for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches, and Travelling Showpeople plots which come forward over the plan period (to 2031).

4.10.8 Reasonable travel distance will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking account of: the availability of public transport services, the suitability of the route for walking and cycling, and any other relevant factors.

**Policy HOU 9: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites**

East Cambridgeshire will make provision for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites to meet the identified need for accommodation. Provision should be made for at least 38 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2011 and 2031. At least 4 plots for Travelling Showpeople should also be provided between 2011 and 2016.

The following sites are allocated as Gypsy and Traveller sites (to provide a total of 8 pitches):

- Land at Muckdungle Corner, Newmarket Road, Bottisham (2 pitches).
- Land at Pony Lodge, Grunty Fen Road, Witchford (3 pitches).

<sup>16</sup> Travelling Showpeople's Planning focus – Model Standard Package (September 2007)

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- Church Road, Wentworth – north site (2 pitches).
- Church Road, Wentworth – south site (1 pitch).

The above sites are set out in the map below.

Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation should meet the following criteria:

- Adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport.
- There is no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and the setting of settlements.
- The site would not lead to the loss or adverse impact on important historic and natural environment assets as defined in policy xx.
- There is no significant risk of flooding or land contamination.
- The scale of the proposal is not disproportionate to the size of the nearest settlement and the availability of community facilities and infrastructure.
- The site provides a suitable level of residential amenity for the proposed residents and there is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents.
- Safe and convenient vehicular access to the local highway network can be provided together with adequate space to allow for the movement and parking of vehicles.
- Essential services (water, electricity and foul drainage) are available on site or can be made available.

Plots for Travelling Showpeople should also be of a sufficient size to enable the storage, repair and maintenance of equipment.

The sub-division of authorised Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will also be permitted provided that:

- The residential amenity of residents on the proposed site and neighbouring land is protected.
- Sites are of a suitable size to enable the creation of additional pitches or plots.
- Does not adversely affect soft and hard landscaping and amenity provision of existing site, particularly where conditioned by previous consent.
- There is no adverse impact in terms of highways access and movement.

## **5 Employment**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 Employment development is a priority for this Council. This chapter builds on the strategic policies in Chapter 2, and sets out a series of detailed policies which will be used to assess planning applications. It includes policies which seek to retain sufficient stock of employment land and premises (B1, B2 and B8) to support the expansion of the local economy, and policies which seek to ensure that development is of an appropriate scale and type to its location.

5.1.2 Most of the chapter focuses on business uses (B1, B2 and B8 uses) but also includes policies relating to specific sectors, including horse racing and tourism.

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**5.2 Retention of existing employment sites and allocations**

- 5.2.1 Future economic growth in the district can only be successfully delivered if there is sufficient land in the right locations for these uses. As demonstrated in the Council's Jobs Growth Strategy, existing employment sites (B1, B2 and B8) play an important role in this process and retaining existing employment sites is key to underpinning future economic growth. The availability of local employment opportunities is particularly important given the high levels of out-commuting from the district. Existing sites are serviced and add to the variety of stock. The loss of business land can harm local firms, who may find it difficult to find suitable replacement sites.
- 5.2.2 The policy below seeks to retain employment sites, whilst allowing some flexibility to take account of sites that may no longer be suitable or appropriate for employment use. For example, where the use of the site gives rise to unacceptable environmental/amenity problems that cannot be overcome, or is no longer viable. In relation to environmental/amenity issues, applicants will need to provide clear and robust evidence of problems, and demonstrate that they cannot be mitigated. Where the continued viability of the site for B1, B2 or B8 use is in question, applicants will be required to demonstrate that the site has been actively marketed with a commercial agent and placed on the District Council's business website at a realistic price for a continuous period of at least 12 months. If these conditions are met, redevelopment may be permitted, providing it involves a mixed-use scheme which includes a proportion of employment development (B1/B2/B8 uses). Applicants proposing the loss of all business uses on the site will be expected to demonstrate clear viability or other evidence as to why it is not possible to provide any employment uses on the site.
- 5.2.3 The policy applies to all employment sites or premises, currently or last used for employment purposes (B1, B2, B8). The Council does not propose to set a limit on the size of site to be retained, as small sites can make a significant contribution to local employment opportunities, and are a key type of stock, particularly for start-up businesses.
- 5.2.4 In order to help meet anticipated future employment demand, the Local Plan also identifies a number of new employment allocations, and mixed-use sites which include an element of employment uses (as set out in Part 2). These employment allocations are considered to be essential to the Council's strategy of delivering 9,200 new jobs over the Plan period, and meeting the identified future needs of the local economy (as set out in the Jobs Growth Strategy). These strategic sites will be expected to be retained for employment uses – unless it can be demonstrated through a review of the Council's Jobs Growth Strategy that there is an adequate supply of employment land and premises to meet predicted needs over the Plan period (up to 2031).

**Policy EMP 1: Retention of existing employment sites and allocations**

The Council will seek to retain land or premises currently or last used for employment purposes (B1, B2 and B8 uses). As an exception, proposals for mixed-use re-development involving an element of employment uses may be permitted, where it can be demonstrated that:

- Continued use of the site for employment purposes is no longer viable, taking into account the site's characteristics, quality of buildings, and existing or potential market demand; or
- Use of the site for employment purposes gives rise to unacceptable environmental or traffic problems; and in all cases

Applicants will need to provide clear and robust evidence relating to criteria a or b alongside a planning application. Re-development proposals which propose the loss of all employment uses



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will need to be accompanied by clear viability or other evidence as to why it is not possible to deliver employment as part of the scheme.

Employment allocations (as identified in Part 2 of the Local Plan) should be retained for their designated B1/B2/B8 uses.

### 5.3 Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside

5.3.1 One of the key aims of the Council's Jobs Growth Strategy and the Local Plan is to encourage business growth, particularly indigenous businesses. In many cases this will involve expansion or intensification within an existing site, rather than relocation - and many of these sites will be in countryside locations. Wherever possible the Council will aim to assist businesses in their proposals to extend on site, providing the proposal is in scale with the location – particularly in relation to the amount and nature of traffic generated. Extensions should be of an appropriate design in terms of height, scale, massing and materials, and not have an adverse effect on the character of the locality or residential amenity. Extensions should also be for the purpose of the existing business. Justification for the expansion, including the submission of a business case, will be need to be submitted with any planning application.

#### **Policy EMP 2: Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside**

Proposals to expand existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where:

- The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of any existing buildings or the locality
- The proposal is in scale with the location, and would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated
- The extension is for the purpose of the existing business
- Any intensification of use will not detract from residential amenity; and

Full justification for the proposals is submitted with a planning application.

### 5.4 New employment development in the countryside

5.4.1 The Council encourages the development of small businesses. It is known that there is a shortage of small business units throughout the district to cater for current and predicted demand. Some local business needs are likely to be met through the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside as detailed in Policy X. However, in cases where there are no suitable sites within settlements for business development or opportunities for re-use of buildings, new buildings to accommodate small business developments may be appropriate on the edges of settlements. This is particularly likely to be the case in relation to villages, rather than the Market Towns where there is a greater choice of land and buildings. The scale of development acceptable in these circumstances will depend on the type of business, the nature of the settlement and the character of the area, but is likely to involve the provision of up to 500m<sup>2</sup> of business floorspace. Any such development will only be permitted where it would not adversely affect its surroundings and is easily accessed by foot or cycle from the settlement centre along clear links.

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**Policy EMP 3: New employment buildings in the countryside**

New buildings for small scale business development will be permitted on small sites closely related to the built framework of a settlement where:

- There is a lack of suitable buildings and sites within the settlement; and
- The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, or result in a significant increase in traffic; and
- The site can be easily accessed by foot or cycle from the settlement.

**5.5 Re-use and replacement of existing buildings in the countryside**

- 5.5.1 Existing rural buildings that are no longer needed for their original purpose, provide an opportunity for development without the impact that new buildings have on the landscape. Their re-use or replacement may therefore be allowed in situations where new buildings would not. It is important, however, to consider the potential impact of re-use or replacement, in terms of the transport network and the character of the building and its locality.
- 5.5.2 This policy relates to the re-use and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside, such as barns and other agricultural buildings. The replacement of existing rural dwellings (and their extension) is covered by Policy x.
- 5.5.3 The re-use or replacement of existing rural buildings will primarily be supported for business, tourist or community-related uses. This includes rural worker dwellings associated with local businesses (in accordance with Policy x), and farm shops (in accordance with Policy x). Proposals for other types of residential re-use will only be permitted where applicants can demonstrate that a range of other opportunities have been explored, and are not deliverable due to lack of demand or viability issues. In relation to business re-use, applicants will need to provide evidence that the building has been marketed for sale or let for business use with a commercial agent and the District Council's business website at an appropriate price for at least 12 months.
- 5.5.4 Rural buildings will only be considered appropriate to re-use or replace if they are worthy of retention. Buildings should therefore be of sound and substantial construction, and their form, bulk and design should make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Buildings which are in a ruinous state or where only the site remains will not be considered appropriate for re-development. A structural survey may be required to demonstrate that the building is soundly built.
- 5.5.5 It is important to ensure that proposals to re-use and redevelop rural buildings do not adversely affect the character of the existing building (if it is to be retained) or the locality. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to re-use an existing building rather than replace it. For example, there are a number of old farm buildings of visual or historic interest in the district, and the loss of these buildings should be avoided. Proposals which involve their loss will need to demonstrate substantial planning benefits – such as environmental enhancement or economic regeneration. The re-use of existing buildings in the countryside should not involve substantial extensions beyond the original floor area.
- 5.5.6 Consideration also needs to be given to the potential impact on the highway network, arising from re-use or redevelopment. Proposals will need to demonstrate there is no significant adverse impact (alone or cumulatively) in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated. Schemes resulting in significant numbers of employees and visitors may

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sometimes not be appropriate in remote countryside locations due to increased traffic and noise.

**Policy EMP 4: Re-use and replacement of existing buildings in the countryside**

The re-use or replacement of existing buildings in the countryside for business (B1, B2, B8), tourist or community-related uses will be permitted where:

- It can be demonstrated that the building is of sound and substantial construction
- The form, bulk and design of the existing and proposed building are in general keeping with their surroundings
- The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the building or the locality
- The proposal does not involve the loss of buildings of visual or historic interest – unless it can be demonstrated that its replacement would produce substantial planning benefits, such as environmental enhancement or economic regeneration.
- The proposal would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated

Proposals for the residential re-use or replacement of rural buildings will only be appropriate where the above criteria are satisfied, and applicants can demonstrate that business use is not viable or deliverable.

## **5.6 Horse racing**

5.6.1 Newmarket is a major international horse racing, breeding and training centre. Many of the stud farms and breeding establishments, plus the July Racecourse are located in the villages and countryside surrounding Newmarket, within East Cambridgeshire. The horse racing industry provides a major contribution to the local economy in the south of the district, and provides an alternative use for farm holdings falling out of agricultural use. It also makes a considerable contribution to the landscape, particularly in terms of tree planting. Given the industry's importance to the district, the Council considers it is appropriate to support its continued development and success.

5.6.2 The operation of many horse breeding and training establishments can easily be adversely affected by noise or disturbance, and the following policy seeks to protect them against insensitive development. It further seeks to support development essential to the needs of the horse racing industry, and to prevent the inappropriate loss of stud buildings or land to other uses. Essential development may include stables, ménage or other equine buildings. The applicant will be required to demonstrate why the proposal is essential to the horse racing industry, by submitting appropriate evidence as part of a planning application.

**Policy EMP 5: Horse racing**

The Council will support and encourage the horse racing industry by preventing development that would cause disruption or disturbance to horse breeding or training.

Proposals for development in the countryside considered essential to the horse racing industry should:

- Where built development is proposed, involve the re-use of existing buildings where possible,

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and if not, their replacement in accordance with Policy X;

- Only involve the construction of new buildings if they do not adversely affect the character and setting of the area.

Proposals to change the use of stud land or buildings to uses other than ones essential to the horse racing industry will not be permitted where this would undermine the future viability of a horse racing stud, or adversely affect the character or setting of an area.

## 5.7 Tourist facilities and visitor attractions

- 5.7.1 Tourism contributes significant expenditure to the district's economy<sup>17</sup> and there is scope for further growth in this sector. East Cambridgeshire has a range of environmental and heritage assets including Wicken Fen, Ely Cathedral, Anglesey Abbey, Oliver Cromwell House and a wealth of attractive countryside and fine churches. Developing new tourist facilities and visitor attractions will broaden the base of East Cambridgeshire's attraction as a tourist centre and encourage longer visitor stays.
- 5.7.2 Tourist facilities and attractions include visitor and information centres, toilets, tea rooms, picnic sites, museums, and galleries. Tourist uses should be required to locate in the most accessible and central locations possible – in order to promote accessibility and reduce the need to travel. However, it is accepted that there is likely to be a need for some tourist facilities and attractions in countryside locations. For example, where particular uses require a rural location (e.g. picnic sites and wildlife centres), or in order to support the expansion of existing tourist facilities and attractions in the countryside to improve the tourist offer.
- 5.7.3 This policy seeks to ensure that new or extensions to tourist facilities and attractions in the countryside are generally limited to the exceptions in the paragraph above. In association with this, applicants will be required to submit evidence to justify why schemes require a rural location, and evidence of their connection to existing facilities/attractions. Proposals which do not meet these exceptions will be assessed against Policy X in this Plan. Applicants will also be expected to submit detailed evidence of genuine need to support the case for the proposal. This should include an analysis of market supply and demand (including evidence of similar establishments in the locality and their visitor numbers), and business plans.
- 5.7.4 Proposals for new tourist facilities and attractions in the countryside will be encouraged to make best use of existing buildings, as set out in Policy x above. If new build schemes are proposed, applicants must also submit evidence that all reasonable opportunities to re-use or redevelop existing rural buildings has been explored. Where new buildings are proposed, these should be sited to minimise visual impact – for example, normally as close as possible to existing buildings on the site, and in locations where maximum use is made of natural screening.
- 5.7.5 In all cases, proposals for new tourist facilities and attractions will be expected to be in scale with their surroundings and avoid harm to the character and appearance of the area. In particular new tourist development should not adversely affect nature or wildlife habitats, which can be tourist attractions in their own right. Applications should also demonstrate that opportunities for sustainable travel arrangements have been explored, and suitable proposals should be incorporated as part of schemes. For example, opportunities for the provision of enhanced cycling and walking links, or enhanced public transport.

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<sup>17</sup> East of England Tourism Board, Economic Impact of Tourism – East Cambridgeshire, 2000

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**Policy EMP 6: Tourist facilities and visitor attractions**

Proposals for new or extended tourist facilities and visitor attractions in the countryside will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- The development requires a rural location, or is associated with the expansion of existing tourist facilities and attractions in the countryside
- There is genuine need for the scheme which supported by a sound business plan
- If it involves new build, that all opportunities to re-use/replacement of rural buildings have been explored
- There would be no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area or on nature and wildlife habitats
- The scheme is in scale with its location, particularly in relation to the amount and nature of traffic generated; and
- Opportunities have been explored for sustainable travel arrangements.

**5.8 Tourist accommodation**

- 5.8.1 The district's close proximity to Cambridge, Newmarket, King's Lynn and Norwich make it an attractive destination for day visits and an increasingly popular destination for overnight stays. The Council's Tourism Accommodation Assessment (2005) identifies a growing demand for tourist accommodation, particularly within the hotel, caravan and camping sectors. Additionally, ongoing improvements to the navigable waterways, including the Fens Waterways Link, means East Cambridgeshire is ideally placed to capitalise on growth within the leisure marine and boating holiday market.
- 5.8.2 Hotel development is identified as a key town centre use, which can add vitality and viability to town centres. Concentrating hotel development in sustainable town centre locations close to shops, services and public transport can help to reduce the need to travel and benefit the environment. As such, proposals for new hotel development or extensions to hotels will be assessed against Policy X which relates to town centre uses, and seeks to ensure a sequential approach is applied.
- 5.8.3 Whilst making provision for new hotel accommodation in the District, it is important to retain existing hotel stock. Facilities such as the Lamb Hotel in Ely provide a key role in meeting business and tourist demand in city and adding to the vitality and viability of the town centre. To prevent the loss of such sites, the Council will only permit the loss of any hotel accommodation to other uses where it can be demonstrated that the continued use as hotel would not be economically viable. In assessing viability, evidence will be required of occupancy rates and other relevant factors such as business plans, locational factors and ease of access for visitors by a variety of transport routes. Applicants will also need to submit documentary evidence that the site has been marketed for sale or let at a reasonable price for a period of at least 12 months.
- 5.8.4 Proposals for other types of tourist accommodation will need to be supported by evidence of genuine need. Applicants will be expected to submit similar detailed evidence of market supply and future demand.
- 5.8.5 Accommodation should be located within settlements wherever possible. However, for caravan/camping/marinas/moorings it is recognised that locations on the edge of settlements may also be appropriate – and also where schemes are proposed as part of the expansion

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of existing accommodation (providing that they are in scale with the location, and accord with other criteria in the policy). Proposals for other unserviced holiday accommodation (e.g. holiday cottages) will only be appropriate in the countryside where they involve the re-use or redevelopment of existing rural buildings, in accordance with Policy X. In order to minimise the impact on the countryside, schemes should be limited to 1 or 2 holiday cottages only, and will not be appropriate where they involve new buildings. Where any type of unserviced accommodation is permitted, occupation will be restricted to short term holiday lets, in accordance with Policy X.

**Policy EMP 7: Tourist accommodation**

Proposals for new hotel development or extensions to hotels will be assessed against the terms of Policy X.

Proposals resulting in the loss of sites currently, or last used, for hotel accommodation will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the continued use of a site for hotel accommodation is no longer economically viable, nor has the potential to become viable, and that all reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let the property at a reasonable price for a period of at least 12 months.

Proposals for new or extended caravan, caravan-lodge, camping sites, marinas and moorings will be supported where:

- The need for the additional accommodation can be justified
- Schemes are located within, or well related to, an existing settlement boundary, or on sites where existing service providers require additional space to expand; and
- There is no significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, or nature and wildlife habitats; and
- The scheme is in scale with the rural location, particularly in relation to the amount and nature of traffic generated; and
- In the case of marinas and moorings, development would not impede navigation or lead to hazardous boat movements, harm the quality of the fisheries, or conflict with traditional river uses such as fishing, sailing and rowing.

Proposals for holiday cottage accommodation will be supported where:

- The need for the additional accommodation can be justified; and
- Schemes are located within, or well related to, an existing settlement boundary; and

In the case of schemes in the countryside, they involve the re-use of an existing building in the countryside for a maximum of 2 dwellings (and accord with criteria in Policy X), and do not involve new build accommodation.

## **5.9 Holiday and seasonal occupancy conditions**

5.9.1 There is demand for self-catering holiday accommodation across the district, particularly in the touring caravan, static caravan, caravan-lodge and boat sectors. Unserved holiday accommodation can bring benefits to the rural economy, particularly where under-used buildings are brought back into productive use, or where development forms part of a rural diversification scheme. However, development pressures for housing and high land prices in East Cambridgeshire means that there is a potential risk that such units, once permitted, may be used as permanent residential accommodation.

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- 5.9.2 The intention of this policy is to create a clear distinction between residential accommodation (which may or may not be used as second homes) and caravans/properties that are used as commercial holiday lets and therefore bring economic benefit to the area. Commercial holiday lets can support the rural economy through visitor spend at local shops, attractions and facilities, whilst placing much less pressure on local services such as doctors and schools, than permanent residential occupancy.
- 5.9.3 Conditions will therefore be placed on new unserviced holiday accommodation to ensure that properties are available as short-term commercial holiday lets for a substantial part of the year. This approach is in accordance with the Valuation Office definition of self-catering accommodation that states accommodation must be available for short periods totalling 140 days a year. The Valuation Office also advises that letting for 'short periods' means letting for periods of a month or less, to different individuals on each occasion.<sup>18</sup>
- 5.9.4 Additionally, in some cases holiday accommodation, whether by the character of its construction, design or location, will also be unsuitable for continuous occupation. In such instances, the Council may restrict occupation to certain months of the year. Seasonal occupancy may also be appropriate to protect the local environment, for example, from visual intrusion or disturbance, impact upon nature conservation and habitats, or physical erosion within the site or its surroundings that occupation during certain times of the year may cause.

**Policy EMP 8: Holiday and seasonal occupancy conditions**

Holiday occupancy conditions will be placed on new unserviced holiday accommodation requiring that:

- The accommodation is occupied for holiday purposes only and shall not be occupied as any person's sole or main residence; and
- It shall be available for commercial holiday lets for at least 140 days a year and no let must exceed 28 days; and
- The owners/operators of the site shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings/occupation, including the owners/occupiers main home addresses, and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.

A seasonal occupancy condition will be attached where accommodation is not suitable for year-round occupation by nature of its construction, location or design, or proximity to a habitat that needs extra protection at certain times of the year.

## **6 Environment and climate change**

### **6.1 Introduction**

- 6.1.1 Achieving a high quality built and natural environment is a key theme of this Plan. This chapter sets out a series of policies which will be used to ensure that development proposals protect and promote the special qualities of the district and minimise impact on the environment. The chapter includes policies which seek to:

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<sup>18</sup> Valuation Office Rating Manual 5 – Section 480: Holiday Homes (self catering)

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- Sustain and create landscapes and townscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity (section 6.1)
- Create well-designed, safe and attractive new developments (sections 6.3 and 6.4)
- Increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable and low-carbon energy (sections 6.5-6.7)
- Retain, protect and enhance features of biological or geological interest (section 6.8)
- Protect people and property from the risks of flooding (section 6.9)
- Minimise and reduce all forms of pollution, including light and noise pollution, and ensure no deterioration in air and water quality (section 6.10)
- Protect the green belt from inappropriate development (section 6.11)
- Protect and enhance the historic environment (sections 6.12-6.17)

**6.2 Landscape and settlement character**

- 6.2.1 Attractive and distinctive local landscapes help to raise both the overall quality of the environment and the quality of people's lives. They contribute to creating places where people want to live, work, play, visit and invest. A high priority is therefore given to the protection, conservation and enhancement of traditional landscape character. New development that is well designed and helps to sustain and create landscapes and townscapes with a strong sense of place and local identity is important to achieving this objective. The importance of planning for the protection and enhancement of landscape character is endorsed strongly by the NPPF.
- 6.2.2 The countryside in East Cambridgeshire is characterised by three distinctive and contrasting landscape types: the fens, chalk hills and clay hills, which are consistent with the qualities defined in the national Landscape Character Assessment.
- 6.2.3 In the north, the fens form one of the richest arable farming regions in Europe. The large open, flat and low lying (frequently below sea level) landscape under wide skies, crossed by numerous waterways and drainage channels, provides fine long distance views of landmark trees, farm buildings and settlements. 'Islands' of land that rise above the surrounding levels, were the traditional sites for settlement, and today remain the main focus for development.
- 6.2.4 South of the fens the landscape changes to gently undulating chalk hills extending between Cambridge and Newmarket. In recent times this area has been devoted to growing cereal crops, creating a broad scale landscape of large fields, low hedges and relatively few trees. Around Newmarket, the growth of the horse racing industry has created a distinctive pattern of small, tree-lined paddocks and stud farms giving a wooded character to the landscape.
- 6.2.5 To the south of this chalk belt lie the south east clay lands, which have an undulating landscape of gently rolling hills and scattered woodland. A number of small hamlets and villages have developed in sheltered locations, often originally built to take advantage of the natural springs.
- 6.2.6 Settlements within the district range from farmsteads through hamlets and small villages to small towns and the City of Ely. There are considerable differences across the district related to the landscape areas described above and creating distinctive characteristics. The fens are characterised by larger, often linear rather loose knit, settlements concentrated on raised ground in wide open areas dotted with farmsteads. The villages on the chalk vary considerably in size and tend to be more nuclear in form. The clay lands are



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characterised by a preponderance of small villages and hamlets. A common characteristic of all the settlements is the way in which they are shaped by the landscape, from the search for dry land in the fens, through the relationship to land and water transport in the chalk, to those sheltered along the spring line in the shallow valleys of the clay. These factors have led to generally well-defined settlements with a clear distinction between built up area and open countryside.

- 6.2.7 The character areas are described in more detail in the County Council's 'Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines' 1991, which remain the baseline evaluation of landscape in the County. The Guidelines stress the need to pay special attention to the design of edges of towns and villages and their integration with and relationship to the wider landscape. This requires the location, scale and height of development, views into and out of the settlement and the detailed edge treatment to be considered carefully. These matters are particularly important given the predominantly flat landscape of the district. A clear distinction between countryside and developed areas, including that between gardens and farmland, should be maintained and ad hoc changes damaging this relationship will not be permitted. Careful infill development to reinforce the form of a settlement can improve the edge relationship.
- 6.2.8 The Council's 'Ely Environmental Capacity Study' provides a detailed assessment of the landscape character of Ely and its environs. A new SPD will be produced to look at the landscape setting of Ely and other key settlements. Other studies that contribute to the evidence base about landscape and the character of settlements in the district include Conservation Area Appraisals for various town and villages adopted as SPD. This information should be used by developers to ensure that proposals reflect the distinctive character, qualities and sensitivities of the area. More information on Conservation Areas is contained in Policy XXX.
- 6.2.9 The flatness of the fens and southern rolling hills, interspersed with small low lying villages, results in broad open skies, which are a key part of the distinctive landscape character. At night the rural nature of the area means that only urban areas are brightly lit, islands of light in a dark and tranquil sea. It is important that these qualities are protected from inappropriate development, especially from increased light pollution from street lighting, floodlighting and domestic lighting, and that new development retains the openness and tranquility of the area and protects wildlife.
- 6.2.10 In protecting landscape and settlement character the Council will expect: important existing views into and out of settlements to be maintained and enhanced and new one to be created; important open spaces to be retained; and wildlife features to be undisturbed, as detailed in other policies within this plan. The distant views of Ely Cathedral are of national importance and have been defined in the Ely Environmental Capacity Study.

**Policy ENV 1: Landscape and settlement character**

Proposals for development should be informed by, be sympathetic to, and respect the capacity of the distinctive character areas defined in the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines.

Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, form, design, materials, colour, edge treatment and structural landscaping will create positive, complementary relationships with existing development and will protect, conserve, and where possible enhance:

- The pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features, such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls, and their function as ecological corridors for wildlife dispersal
- The settlement edge, space between settlements, and their wider landscape setting

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- Visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features
- Key views into and out of settlements
- The unspoilt nature and tranquility of the area
- Public amenity and access
- Nocturnal character of rural areas free from light pollution.
- Suitable compensatory provision must be made in the event of unavoidable harm.

### 6.3 Design

- 6.3.1 Well-designed, safe and attractive new development which respects its surroundings can help to raise the quality of towns and villages and have a significant impact on everyday life. Good design is a key element in sustainable development and the Council believes strongly in raising the standard of design in all proposals to assist vitality, promote prosperity and create a 'sense of place' in communities and neighbourhoods. The NPPF stresses the importance of good design in sound planning and allows for local planning authorities to resist poor design.
- 6.3.2 Good urban design can help to ensure that the best use is made of land while creating quality places. The development of an area or large site should be guided by an overall vision and masterplan to ensure a high quality is achieved by bringing together the various elements, including buildings, landscape, open space, play space and circulation by pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles. Phased development may be necessary and appropriate on larger sites, but this must not be used as an excuse for uncoordinated, piecemeal development that lacks a unifying vision. Uncoordinated development should not prevent adjacent land or other nearby sites from coming forward, for example, by impeding future access, and will be resisted. The principles of good design will also be applied to small sites.
- 6.3.3 The importance of distinctive new developments complementing and relating to their surroundings, whilst being safe and accessible to all, is established in the strategic objectives of the Local Plan. Development must be of the appropriate scale, design and materials for its location and conform to the design principles set out in the policy below. All new buildings and spaces must enhance and respect their surroundings and contribute towards local identity, whilst securing and maintaining a high level of movement, quality in the public realm and general amenity for residents and workers in the district. The particular importance of design in areas of historic conservation is detailed in Policy XXX. However, seeking to respect tradition should not inhibit innovation and good modern design that contributes positively to the character of towns and villages through new developments and urban extensions.
- 6.3.4 The Local Plan objectives also address the impacts of development on climate change. Good design can reduce energy consumption and improve sustainability through mitigation. The Council will actively promote development incorporating: new technology that promotes energy and water conservation; and landscaping that mitigates climate change effects. Further details are set out in Policy XXX on sustainable design and construction.
- 6.3.5 A related issue is sustainable waste management. In addition to existing waste streams, new waste is generated by both the process of development and the subsequent use. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2011 sets out a requirement for developments to make provision for waste storage, collection and recycling in accordance with the content of the RECAP Waste Management

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Design Guide. The RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2012. The Design Guide provides advice on the design and provision of waste management infrastructure as part of residential and commercial developments and will be applied by the District Council to development within East Cambridgeshire.

- 6.3.6 Good connectivity, permeability and movement between spaces require a high standard of design and are an aspect of the district the Council wishes to enhance. The Council is committed to reducing dependence on the car, minimising the impact of car parking, and improving accessibility for pedestrians, people with impaired mobility, cyclists, horse riders and public transport. All development proposals will be required to incorporate safe, attractive and convenient road design, access and parking arrangements and pedestrian routes as detailed in Policies XXX and XXX. Development schemes should aim to protect and enhance existing links and green chains and look for opportunities to improve and extend the networks.
- 6.3.7 Crime, and the fear of crime, are among the top concerns of local communities, and this is reflected in the strategic objectives of this Plan. Design can make a significant contribution towards reducing the opportunity for crime, and create more pleasant and reassuring environments in which to live and work. In addition to appropriate design of buildings, open spaces must be safe and believed to be safe so that their enjoyment for play, walking, sport and general amenity can be realised and appreciated fully. Increasing natural surveillance, layout of roads and paths, planting, positioning and use of open space, and secure standards of doors and windows are areas for particular consideration. In achieving these objectives it is important to use creative design for open public access, accessibility and natural surveillance to avoid creating forbidding, fortress like developments. In town centres covered by CCTV systems developers will be required to consider these facilities and incorporate them in their designs.
- 6.3.8 For development in key areas, the Council will prepare and adopt development frameworks to guide development and ensure that potential benefits are maximised. For larger and more sensitive schemes, the Council will require developers to submit a masterplan alongside an outline application. Typically, a masterplan should establish the broad location of land uses, roads, services, open space and landscaping, and look at principles such as access and movement, built form and phasing. Masterplans should also demonstrate how the site will deliver the key aims of any relevant site-specific policy, and how a high standard of comprehensive planning can be achieved. Developers will be expected to involve the local community in the production of a masterplan. In some cases, design codes will also need to be submitted for approval between outline and reserved matters application stages.
- 6.3.9 The Council adopted the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document in 2012. This contains more detailed guidance on how design should compliment landscape, setting, local architectural traditions, and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the context without harming the quality and character of the existing built heritage. Guidance on the appropriate design of shopfronts and advertisements, which is important to the character of town and village centres, and hence their vitality, is set out in the Shopfronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document, 2010. Other detailed local context information can be found in Conservation Area Appraisals, the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines, which should be taken into account. Reviews of these documents will occur during the lifetime of the Local Plan and the most up to date material should be used.

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- 6.3.10 The Government requires Design and Access Statements to be submitted with most planning applications. These Statements are intended to demonstrate how a proposal is functional, attractive and accessible to all. Comprehensive guidance on the format and content of a Statement is provided on the Council's website. Further information on design can be obtained from CABI/the Design Council, including 'Building for Life', which is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The Council will establish design review arrangements in line with the requirement of the NPPF to assist in raising the quality of architectural and urban design across the district.
- 6.3.11 Also helpful in street design are the publications 'Manual for Streets', which gives advice on the creation of high quality residential streets, and 'Manual for Streets 2', which looks at broader areas of street design. National guidance to assist in designing out crime is contained in 'Secured by Design', and developers are advised to contact Cambridgeshire Constabulary for further advice. The Council encourages developers to incorporate these principles in their proposals. Developers are also encouraged to go beyond minimum access standards contained in Building Regulations to provide higher standards of accessibility for all within public spaces and individual buildings.

**Policy ENV 2: Design**

All development will be designed to a high quality, enhancing and complementing local distinctiveness and public amenity by relating well to existing features and introducing appropriate new designs.

Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not take advantage of opportunities to preserve, enhance or enrich the character, appearance and quality of an area will not be acceptable and planning applications will be refused.

The Council will prepare and adopt development frameworks to guide the development of key sites. For large-scale developments and developments in sensitive areas, a masterplan will need to be submitted alongside an outline application. In addition to key design principles, masterplans should include details on infrastructure delivery and phasing. Design codes will be required for certain proposals and should be submitted for approval between outline and reserved matters application stages.

Major schemes may be expected to go through a formal design review process, which will need to be financed by the developer.

The Council will encourage innovative, creative good modern architectural design that complies with the principles set out below. All new development proposals, including new buildings and structures and extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures will be expected to:

- Make efficient use of land while respecting the density, urban and village character, public spaces, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area
- Be developed in a comprehensive way, avoiding uncoordinated piecemeal development, to create a strong and attractive sense of place and local distinctiveness
- Where appropriate, contain a variety and mix of: uses; heights and types of buildings; public spaces paths and routes; and landscaping; and provide variety and visual richness
- Retain existing important landscaping and natural and historic features and include landscape enhancement schemes that are compatible with the Council's Landscape Guidelines for recreation and biodiversity
- Ensure that the location, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area and each other, as well as creating quality new schemes

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in their own right

- Protect important views into and out of settlements and key views of landmark buildings, especially ensuring that there is no detrimental effect on the appreciation of Ely as an historic cathedral city in the quality of the approaches and the quality of distant and close up views of the Cathedral
- Ensure there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers, and that occupiers and users of new buildings, especially dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity
- Provide structure and legibility to navigate through developments by making use of existing views, vistas, landmarks and built and natural landscapes and creating new ones
- Provide enclosure to streets and spaces through the grouping, positioning and height of buildings and landscape features, and road layouts
- Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces, and enhance the public realm, including maximising opportunities to provide public art where appropriate
- Incorporate the sustainable construction principles and methods contained in Policy XXX
- Comply with the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document - the Council will encourage innovative solutions to minimising and handling waste and recycling on development sites.
- Incorporate the highway and access principles contained in Policy XXX into designs to ensure:
  - The conflict between motor vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists is minimised, and where appropriate establishing home zones;
  - Safe and convenient access is provided for people with disabilities;
  - Good access to public transport services;
  - That networks of pedestrian and cycle routes (linking to existing routes where opportunities exist) give easy access and permeability within developments and to adjacent areas: and
  - Protection of rights of way.
- Ensure that car parking is discrete, accessible, supports permeable environments and integrated, so it does not dominate existing and proposed new places, and is provided in accordance with Policy XXX
- Ensure that places and buildings are accessible to all, including the elderly and those with impaired mobility, and consider the life time use of developments, especially housing
- Create safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety
- Integrate SuDS into developments so they provide wider green infrastructure benefits
- Have regard to the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide 2012

## 6.4 Shop fronts and advertisements

6.4.1 Shop fronts form an important element in the street scene, both individually and in terms of their collective impact. Therefore, when designing a new or replacement shop front, it is important to consider the visual impact upon both the building and the overall character of the area. Proposals will be assessed against the Shop Front Design Guide SPD, Policy ENV 2, ENV 3, and historic environment policies as appropriate.

6.4.2 Advertisements play an important role in creating a sense of character and place. Some signs may be erected without the need for consent<sup>19</sup>, however, where consent is required

<sup>19</sup> Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations

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the Council will seek to ensure that the form and design of signs and advertisements does not adversely impact the character of the area.

**Policy ENV 3: Shop fronts and advertisements**

Proposals for works to shop fronts and signage should be sympathetic to the building and surrounding environment and contribute to the vitality of shopping areas. They will be approved where they comply with the guidance set out in the Shop fronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document, 2010.

**6.5 Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction**

- 6.5.1 Maximising energy efficiency and reducing resource consumption in new development can help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and thereby the contribution to climate change effects. Policy XXX seeks to ensure that all development schemes achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources, including measures to minimise energy use, improve water efficiency and promote waste minimisation and recycling. This will involve consideration of building design, layout and orientation, the use of sustainable (including re-used) materials, and planning a scheme's resilience in terms of the future implications of climate change. New technologies for handling waste/recycling should be considered for inclusion in large developments. Developments should minimise construction waste and encourage reuse and recycling wherever possible, as set out in the design section paragraph XX and Policy XX. Incorporation of these measures will also help to reduce the running costs of buildings and create attractive and healthy places for people to live and work by use of natural light and ventilation.
- 6.5.2 While there is significant new development planned for the district, the vast majority of buildings will be those built in earlier times when standards, e.g. of heat insulation, were much lower than at present. The Council will work with property owners to improve the efficiency of these buildings through initiatives that may be developed centrally or locally over the life of this Plan. Improvements in the efficiency of existing buildings will, where possible, be sought through conditions where changes requiring planning consent are proposed and /or through a retrofit programme supported with developer contributions. The Council will seek to ensure that efficiency improvements do not compromise the essential qualities of historic buildings and Conservation Areas.
- 6.5.3 The provision of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy schemes can also help reduce the environmental impacts and this is covered in Policy XXX on renewable energy in new construction.
- 6.5.4 The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) measures the sustainability of a new home against nine categories of sustainable design and supports the government target that all new homes will be zero carbon from 2016 and all other types of building will be zero carbon from 2019. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions requirement for each code level will effectively be made mandatory through the Building Regulations: currently developments must meet the energy standards for CSH Level 3, whilst developments from 2013 must meet Level 4 and developments from 2016 must meet Level 6 (zero carbon). However, energy is only one component of sustainable design – the Council will expect all developments to meet all aspects of the relevant current code level as a minimum.
- 6.5.5 In order to meet these sustainability targets, the Council will expect developments to incorporate renewable or low carbon energy sources on site. If it can be demonstrated that the incorporation of renewable energy resources are not practical on site, near site or off

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site in the district, provision will be sought through commuted payments to reduce energy usage in the locality. Further guidance on design for sustainable construction is set out in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

- 6.5.6 Policy XXX accords with national guidance, and sets out the Council's requirements. This target will be reviewed through the monitoring framework of the Plan and should be increased as technologies improve. Energy to meet this requirement might be provided by a district heat network.

**Policy ENV 4: Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction**

All proposals for new development of one dwelling or more, or 100 sq m or more, or the refurbishment, expansion and regeneration of existing buildings, should aim for zero carbon development by maximising energy efficiency and minimising energy demand and other resource use through sustainable design and construction. As a minimum, all developments will be expected to meet all aspects of the relevant level of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have considered maximising all aspects of energy efficiency, including:

- The extent to which they achieve a greater reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than is required by Building Regulations
- The extent to which they achieve all aspects of the relevant level of the Code for Sustainable Homes;
- How schemes achieve these aims.

The Council will negotiate with applicants over the most appropriate solutions for historic buildings and Conservation Areas.

**6.6 Carbon offset**

- 6.6.1 Part of the definition of zero carbon development includes the concept that after delivering a certain level of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction on-site (carbon compliance) developers can then opt to offset remaining emissions through a range of measures known as 'allowable solutions'. One such measure is the choice of paying into a Community Energy Fund (CEF), which is used to invest in energy efficiency and renewable and low carbon energy projects in Cambridgeshire, with an emphasis on community benefits. Work is currently going on to investigate the potential of developing a Cambridgeshire CEF, linked to the national Allowable Solutions Framework, which would need creation of a policy mechanism to enable collection of funds. Such a fund would require agreement across all local authorities in Cambridgeshire with robust governance arrangements, which will need to be developed building on the Cambridgeshire Renewable Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) Report and the Community Energy Fund (CEF) Report.

**Policy ENV 5: Carbon offsetting**

Development proposals will be expected to meet all or the majority of their required reduction of carbon emissions on-site. Where these cannot be fully met on-site the Council will be prepared to accept a financial contribution to a Community Energy Fund to make up the difference.

The contribution will be used to finance renewable energy projects within the local area identified through the Cambridgeshire Carbon Reduction Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) or subsequent

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updates or similar approaches.

## 6.7 Renewable energy generation

- 6.7.1 Opportunities for renewable energy generation in the district include larger scale solar radiation, wind power, anaerobic digestion, biomass and ground heat sources and micro and small-scale technologies. Combined heat and power systems may be used to provide efficient energy to larger developments. There are opportunities for community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy in towns and villages. This may be linked to the improvement and development of community facilities as proposed in paragraph x. Large-scale generation in operation in the district includes the straw burning plant at Sutton and the solar farm at Wilburton.
- 6.7.2 Proposals for renewable energy schemes will be supported wherever possible. The wider environmental, social and economic benefits will be given significant weight in planning decisions. In the balancing exercise, full consideration will be given to potential impacts on the environment and amenity, key views, in particular of Ely Cathedral, important wildlife sites, protected species and residential amenity, and significant adverse effects will be avoided. A landscape assessment will be a key part of this evaluation. Various types of technology will give rise to different impacts, and Policy XXX sets out the broad criteria against which any scheme for renewable energy will be assessed. The Council will expect developments for energy generation to remediate potential adverse impacts, especially in relation to visual impact, through careful location, design and landscaping following the design principles set out in this Plan.

### **Policy ENV 6: Renewable energy developments**

Proposals for renewable energy and associated infrastructure will be supported, unless their wider environmental, social and economic benefits would be outweighed by significant adverse effects that cannot be remediated and made acceptable in relation to:

- The wider environment and visual landscape impact
- Key views, in particular those of Ely Cathedral;
- Protected species;
- Residential amenity; and
- Safeguarding areas for nearby airfields

Sites of international nature conservation importance should not be adversely affected unless there are no alternative sites and there are imperative reasons of overriding strategic public interest and acceptable mitigation is included.

Sites of national or local nature conservation importance and Green Belt areas should not be adversely affected unless any significant adverse effects are outweighed by wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

The visual and amenity impacts of proposed structures will be assessed on their merits, both individually and cumulatively and measures to remediate adverse impacts will be required.

Provision should be made for the removal of facilities and reinstatement of the site, should they cease to operate.



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**6.8 Biodiversity and geology**

- 6.8.1 Biodiversity can be described as ‘the wealth of wildlife around us’ and contributes significantly to our quality of life. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 imposes a legal duty on local authorities to protect and enhance biodiversity. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) considers the conservation of all aspects of biodiversity within the natural environment and identifies habitats and species in special need of protection. In addition, the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority local habitats (e.g. fens) and species (e.g. great crested newt), and targets where action is needed to enhance and protect biodiversity within the County.
- 6.8.2 The flora and fauna of Cambridgeshire are an integral part of the environment that must be protected, and the Council considers that with sensitive planning and development it is possible to promote and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation. The Council’s approach reflects the Government’s strong commitment to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, not only sites but also for ‘coherent ecological networks’, set out in the NPPF. The NPPF also requires distinctions to be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection is proportionate to their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to the ecological networks.
- 6.8.3 The district is home to a number of sites of international, national and local importance for nature conservation, and their protection and enhancement is a high priority for the Council. These sites are shown on the Proposals Map and a list of them together with an explanation of their designation is given in Appendix x.
- 6.8.4 The most important sites in East Cambridgeshire are internationally designated, including:
- The Ouse Washes, which is a Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation and a RAMSAR site;
  - Chippenham Fen, which is a Special Area of Conservation, a RAMSAR site (and also a National Nature Reserve); and
  - Wicken Fen, which is a Special Area of Conservation, RAMSAR site (and also a National Nature Reserve, and incidentally one of Britain’s oldest nature reserves and the first reserve acquired by the National Trust, in 1899).

These sites have statutory protection and trigger specific legal procedures under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 when development is proposed.

- 6.8.5 The Wicken Fen Vision, under the National Trust, is a long-term plan to create a new nature reserve covering around 53km<sup>2</sup> between Cambridge and Wicken Fen. This will be the biggest project of its kind in lowland England. The aim is to provide a sustainable home for a diverse range of species whilst providing good access for people.
- 6.8.6 There is a range of nationally important sites across the district including the two National Nature Reserves referred to above, and 19 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (with one, Ely Pits and Meadows, designated partly for its geological value). Policy xx seeks to ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect the quality and integrity of these sites and they will be given a high level of protection. Planning permission will not normally be granted for development which would have an adverse effect, and the advice in the NPPF on dealing with planning applications will be strictly adhered to. Other important sites in the district include 81 County Wildlife Sites, 24 areas of Ancient Woodland, two Local Nature Reserves (at Isleham and Little Downham), and 12 Protected Roadside Verges (most of which are also County Wildlife Sites). All are listed in Appendix

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x. Protection will also be given to these sites of regional and local importance, consistent with the NPPF, as they have a fundamental role to play in meeting overall national biodiversity objectives and targets. Further information on the district's County Wildlife Sites is contained in the Council's 'County Wildlife Sites Supplementary Planning Document' 2010.

- 6.8.7 The protection of designated sites is vitally important. However, East Cambridgeshire boasts many other features throughout the district, such as trees, woodlands, wetlands, ponds and hedgerows that are important parts of the overall hierarchy of biodiversity assets. These provide habitats, corridors and links for wildlife, forming an essential network which is necessary to ensure the diversity and survival of species. Often these features add positively to the character and appearance of the local area. This is especially the case in respect of trees, as Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in England. A number of trees of importance for their landscape or amenity value have Tree Preservation Orders attached, and trees in Conservation Areas can have an important effect on the character and appearance of the area. Aged and veteran trees and ancient woodland are particularly important. Similarly, hedgerows considered important for their landscape or wildlife value may be protected against removal by Hedgerow Regulation Notices. Some individual species, such as bats, barn owls, badgers and great crested newts are protected in their own right by national and European legislation.
- 6.8.8 The Council will therefore expect all development proposals to contribute towards the objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plans and protect and enhance the habitats and species listed in the Plan (referred to as 'important species' in the policy below). Information relating to the Biodiversity Action Plans can be found on the Natural England or the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) websites. Information on Cambridgeshire BAPs and other useful documents and information will be available through the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership, which is being established. Applicants should also consult the natural England Standing Advice for protected species: [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/spatialplanning/standingadvice/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/spatialplanning/standingadvice/default.aspx)
- 6.8.9 The fundamental approach to reconciling biodiversity and development should follow the hierarchy: avoidance – compensation – mitigation. All proposals should consider from the outset how this approach will ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. A Phase 1 habitat survey, or other appropriate ecological report, will enable this to be done rigorously and ensure that applications are accompanied by sufficient information to assess the effects of development on protected sites, species, biodiversity, geology and any other features, together with any proposed prevention (the preferred course of action), mitigation or compensation measures (which are the least favoured). The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre can provide general species distribution data for development sites and further information is available from the local Wildlife Trust and the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership. Where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species the Council will require applications for development to be accompanied by a survey assessing their presence and if present, details of how the proposal is sensitive to, and makes provision for their needs. The measures used must accord with the relevant protecting legislation. In all proposals where there is thought to be an impact on biodiversity or geodiversity, the Council will seek guidance from appropriate experts, such as the local Wildlife Trust.

Whilst it is important to conserve existing habitats and species, the integration of biodiversity and open space into new developments can aid both the environmental sustainability of schemes and make them more financially viable as they are more attractive places in which to live and work. Biodiversity measures may include the provision of open watercourse drainage systems, the planting of dense native hedgerows,

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and the provision of bat or owl boxes and underpasses for mammals. Development proposals should explore the opportunity to enhance biodiversity, and seek to create and improve habitat wherever appropriate. Further details of environmental gains, mitigation measures and protection against incremental loss of habitats will be contained in the Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document. The policies in this section have been informed by the East Cambridgeshire District Council Water Cycle Study Detailed Study: Stage 2 Report, 2011. Given the mobile, or at least dynamic, nature of biodiversity it will be important for the Council to pay attention to inter-district issues in ensuring a strategic approach to its conservation. This is reflected in the policy on green infrastructure set out below.

**Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and geology**

All development proposals will be required to:

- Protect the biodiversity and geological value of land and buildings and minimise harm to or loss of environmental features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, wetland and ponds;
- Provide appropriate mitigation measures, reinstatement or replacement of features and/or compensatory work that will enhance or recreate habitats on or off site where harm to environmental features and habitat is unavoidable; and
- Maximise opportunities for creation, restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats as an integral part of development proposals.

Development proposals where the main aim is to conserve biodiversity will be permitted; and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity into new development will be supported.

All applications for development that may affect biodiversity and geology interests must be accompanied by sufficient information, and an ecological report, to allow the potential impacts and possible mitigation measures to be assessed fully.

Where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species, applications must be accompanied by a survey carried out by a qualified individual assessing their presence and, if present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for, their needs, in accordance with the relevant protecting legislation.

Where potentially harmful development is permitted, as a last resort, provision for appropriate mitigation measures, reinstatement of features, and/or compensatory work that will enhance or recreate habitats on or off-site, will be required.

Where appropriate, there will be a requirement for the the effective management of designated sites and other features, controlled through the imposition of conditions or Section 106 agreements.

Planning permission will only granted on sites of national or international importance if;

- An alternative site is not available, and
- Sufficient mitigation measures can be implemented, and
- The proposal is of high strategic importance where the need for, and the benefits of, the development, will outweigh the detrimental impacts that the proposal may have on the designated area/asset.

Proposals which would cause harm to County Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland, aged and veteran

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trees, Local Nature Reserves, Protected Roadside Verges, any other irreplaceable habitats, and green corridors or important species<sup>20</sup> will not be permitted unless the need for, and benefits of development in that location outweigh the potential harm to nature conservation interests.

## 6.9 Flood risk

- 6.9.1 Flood risk is an important issue for the district, particularly given the topography of the area and the context of climate change with related sea-level rises and increased incidents of heavy rainfall. Areas close to the major rivers (the Great Ouse, the Cam and the New and Old Bedford rivers) have been subject to periodic flooding in the past, as have several of the smaller river valleys in the south of the district. Flooding causes significant damage to properties, infrastructure and agricultural land, potential pollution and, in serious cases, is a threat to human life. It is therefore essential that development does not add to these dangers.
- 6.9.2 The NPPF is clear on the importance of flood risk as an issue to be taken into account in planning. It is one of the few issues accepted as a major constraint on inappropriate development in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The importance is further underlined by the publication of 'Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework' (March 2012), which gives detailed guidance on flood risk. The tidal reaches of the Old Bedford River mean the Council is expected to collaborate with the Marine Management Organisation to ensure that policies across the land/sea boundary are integrated.
- 6.9.3 Flooding can arise anywhere from rapid run-off from impermeable or waterlogged land. However, flood risk in the district from watercourses falls broadly into two areas: the artificially drained fens in the north; and the naturally drained higher land around Newmarket. In the Fens, the risk is principally associated with the breach or overtopping of the Bedford Ouse and Ely Ouse system. All key settlements are defended, by virtue of their elevation, or by embankments built to appropriate minimum standards of defence. In the unlikely event of a breach or overtopping, the settlements most threatened by partially inundated are the outer edges of the more 'crowded' islands of Ely, Littleport and Sutton, where they have encroached onto low lying ground. Other settlements, such as Haddenham, Isleham, Little Downham, Stretham and Witchford are entirely situated at higher levels than would be affected by a breach. In the higher areas flood risk results from the natural overtopping of watercourses. The main settlements in this area are Bottisham, Burwell, Fordham and Soham. Those sections of settlements close to watercourses are predominantly undefended and exposed to low flood risk. In addition to the flood risk assessments described below, the policies in this section have been informed by the East Cambridgeshire District Council Water Cycle Study: Stage 2 Report, 2011.
- 6.9.4 The Environment Agency has identified specific zones of flood risk in East Cambridgeshire, and these are illustrated on flood maps which can be seen on the Environment Agency's website at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk). The categories of flood risk zones are listed below and are as used in the National Planning Policy Guidance Technical Guidance.
- Zone 1 (low probability)
  - Zone 2 (medium probability)

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<sup>20</sup> Those included in the UK and Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plans

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- Zone 3a (high probability) and
- Zone 3b (functional floodplain)

6.9.5 The NPPF says Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development based on the zones above to avoid wherever possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, i.e. development should always be in the lowest possible risk zone. However this may be subject to an exceptions test. For the exception test to be passed:

- It must be demonstrated that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and
- A site-specific flood risk assessment must demonstrate that the development will be safe over its lifetime taking into account the vulnerability of users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

Both elements of the test will have to be passed for development to be allocated or permitted.

6.9.6 As required by Government guidance, the Council has carried out work to refine the Environment Agency's flood risk maps. East Cambridgeshire carried out a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in 2011. The SFRA can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.eastcambs.gov.uk](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk). Further site-specific flood risk assessments will be required to address additional allocations of land for development.

6.9.7 Government guidance indicates that both the Environment Agency flood zone maps and the SFRA should be used to inform decisions on planning applications, and to guide the selection of allocation sites in LDFs. Both the Environment Agency and the SFRA flood risk zones are shown on the Proposals Map. All proposals with drainage and flooding implications should have regard to the guidance and byelaws of the relevant Internal Drainage Board.

6.9.8 Development proposals should, wherever possible, be directed to areas of low/minimal flood risk (Zone 1). However, development in areas at some risk of flooding may sometimes be unavoidable. The guidance identifies the types of land uses which may be appropriate in Zones 2, and Zones 3a/3b. Where relevant, applicants will be required to submit evidence to show that the sequential approach has been followed and the design solutions adopted.

6.9.9 Applicants will need to demonstrate that development proposals accord with both NPPF and Local Plan policies in relation to flood risk. Developers should contact the Environment Agency at an early stage to obtain more detailed flood risk zone information for individual sites. Detailed Standing Advice is available from the Environment Agency at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/82584.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/82584.aspx). A Flood Risk Assessment, endorsed by the Environment Agency, submitted with development proposals can help to ensure that flood risk and surface water run-off issues are comprehensively considered and addressed. The NPPF details the situations where specific Flood Risk Assessments should be submitted with applications.

6.9.10 Policy XXX seeks to ensure that development schemes provide appropriate measures for dealing with surface water run-off. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can provide the best method of minimising flood risk whilst benefiting biodiversity. Design and layout measures and the effective use of features such as permeable surfaces, soakaways and water storage areas should be incorporated in all new developments where technically possible. Systems that mimic natural drainage processes such as retention ponds, swales

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and wetlands/reed beds will be particularly encouraged. Water recycling on site will also be encouraged, as described in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

6.9.11 The Water Cycle Study indicates that the southern half of the district is generally suitable for infiltration SuDS. In these areas, developers are encouraged to provide SuDS that return as much clean runoff as possible to ground. However, the northernmost area of the district will generally be reliant on surface attenuation and runoff restriction – requiring land provision within development sites. A risk assessment in line with national guidance will be important in informing the design of surface water systems on some brownfield sites. The design should address the issue of ownership and maintenance of SuDS. The Floods and Water Management Act 2010 requires the County Council to act as the Sustainable Drainage Systems Approving Body, which must approve drainage systems in new developments and re-developments before construction begins.

6.9.12 Further information on SuDS is available from CIRIA, including 'Model agreements for sustainable water management systems - model agreements for SuDS (CIRIA C625, 2004), case studies and updates on the technology. Information is also contained in the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document in 2012.

**Policy ENV 8: Flood risk**

The sequential test and exception test will be strictly applied across the district, and new development should normally be located in Flood Risk Zone 1.

The modelled flood risk zones as identified in the SFRA and the Environment Agency Flood Maps will inform the application of the sequential test. Development will not be permitted where:

- It would intensify the risk of flooding during the lifetime of the development taking into account climate change allowances, unless suitable flood management and mitigation measures can be agreed and implemented; or
- It would increase the risk of flooding of properties elsewhere during the lifetime of the development, taking into account climate change allowances, by additional surface water run-off or by impeding the flow or storage of flood water; or
- It would have a detrimental effect on existing flood defences or inhibit flood control and maintenance work; or
- Safe access is not achievable from/to the development during times of flooding, taking into account climate change allowance.

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, endorsed by the Environment Agency, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks involved, and which takes account of future climate change, will be required for:

- All development proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and 'Modelled Zone 3'; and
- Development proposals on sites of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1

All applications for new development must demonstrate that appropriate surface water drainage arrangements for dealing with surface water run-off can be accommodated within the site and that issues of ownership and maintenance are addressed.

The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems will be required for all new developments unless, following an assessment of character and context, soil conditions and/or engineering feasibility dictate otherwise. SuDS may be incorporated within the Flood Risk Assessment.

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**6.10 Pollution**

- 6.10.1 Some development schemes can result in pollution to air, water or land or all three; many will generate waste in some form. Controlling pollution of all types is part of the concern for the quality of the environment set out in the strategic objectives. The NPPF says that pollution from existing and new development should be addressed; and in preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the environment. The NPPF policies are aimed at air, light and water pollution, noise and dust and particle emissions. The Framework also endorses the role of Air Quality Management areas in the planning process. National policies on land contamination are also set out in the NPPF; and it seeks to use planning to minimise waste. The national Code for Sustainable Homes sets out standards that include consideration of pollution issues.
- 6.10.2 Air quality in the district is generally good, and there are no designated National Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). The Council carries out monitoring at roadside sites for nitrogen dioxide, and also monitors for particulates, and all show levels within the national targets. There are concerns about levels in parts of Ely, e.g. the Station Gateway, and the impacts of further development will have to be scrutinised very carefully.
- 6.10.3 Water quality is particularly important in the district as many watercourses have international or national environmental designations. New development must ensure that increases in run-off and sewage effluent discharge can be achieved without adverse impact on water quality. The Implementation chapter describes the constraints related to Sewage Treatment Works capacity. The Council places a high priority on protecting surface and groundwater from pollution arising from development, and will support initiatives that result in an improvement to water quality. One of the aims of European Union Water Framework Directive 2000 is to prevent deterioration in water status and improve water quality. Developers must strive to achieve the objectives contained within it.
- 6.10.4 Both light and noise levels are generally low in rural settlements and the countryside where the tranquil environment is highly valued, see paragraph x. Lighting and noise pollution arising from new development can individually and cumulatively have a significantly damaging impact on the countryside, on peoples' living environments, and on wildlife. Whilst lighting is desirable for safety, recreation and the enhancement of some buildings, inappropriate lighting can cause sky glow, glare, light-spill and represents energy waste. These issues are important considerations in dealing with new development proposals and the Council will require full details of any potential pollution to ensure the effects are minimised by mitigation measures where appropriate.
- 6.10.5 Land contamination in East Cambridgeshire arises most frequently from former industrial and agricultural uses, but can also result from accidents, spillages or be caused by elevated levels of naturally occurring substances. Land contamination is a key consideration as it causes harm to the environment, has the potential to affect adversely public health and safety, and unless dealt with appropriately, can inhibit the re-use of otherwise suitable brownfield sites. It is important that potential contamination is identified at the earliest stage in the development process to ensure that appropriate remediation measures are identified and addressed early in the preparation of proposals for a site. Remediation should remove unacceptable risk and make the site suitable for its new use. In addition to the NPPF, contamination is subject to pollution control legislation. Additional advice for developers on the process for assessing contaminated sites and information on remediation works is set out in the Council's SPD, 'Guidance on submitting planning applications on land that may be contaminated', 2010.

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- 6.10.6 Low levels of naturally occurring radon are present in certain parts of the district. The Building Regulations 2000 refer to BRE Note 211 'Radon: Guidance on Protective Measures for New Dwellings', which suggests basic protection where 3-10% of properties may exceed the threshold and full protection where over 10% exceed the action level (action level is 200Bq m<sup>3</sup>). In East Cambridgeshire, there are several areas which have been determined as having up to 3-5% or 5-10% of 'homes at or above the action level'. In these properties some basic protection may be necessary. Further information on areas affected, and control measures for new development are contained in BR211 Radon: Guidance on Protective Measures for New Dwellings (BRE), and Part C of the Building Regulations 2000. The Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive welcome pre-application enquiries from developers seeking to resolve contaminated land/pollution issues before an application is submitted. Further information on pollution issues is contained in part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and DEFRA Circular 01/2012.
- 6.10.7 Policy XXX sets out the criteria against which developments with potential pollution, contamination and waste implications will be considered. The Council will seek to ensure that levels of all are kept to a minimum and are acceptable to human health and safety, the environment and the amenity of adjacent or nearby land users. Environmental Health legislation regulates many forms of pollution, but it is clearly preferable to prevent conflict from new development arising in the first place. The weight given to each criterion will depend on the particular circumstances and relevant control authorities will be consulted as necessary. Careful consideration will be required where development is likely to, on its own or cumulatively, result in harmful levels of pollution, or where developments are located within safety consultation zones (for example, areas around pipelines, airports, railways and sewage treatment plants). The Council therefore encourages pre-application discussions with applicants where pollution is an issue. In some cases this may involve an Environmental Statement, prepared as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure the environmental impacts of a significant development proposal are comprehensively considered.

**Policy ENV 9: Pollution**

All development proposals should minimise, and where possible, reduce all emissions and other forms of pollution, including light and noise pollution, and ensure no deterioration in air and water quality. All applications for development where pollution is suspected must contain sufficient information to enable the Council to make a full assessment of potential hazards.

Proposals will be refused:

- Where, individually or cumulatively, there are unacceptable impacts arising from the development on:
  - The natural environment, general amenity and the tranquility of the wider rural area, including noise and light pollution
  - Health and safety of the public
  - Air quality
  - Surface and groundwater quality
  - Land quality and condition
  - Compliance with statutory environmental quality standards; or
  - In exceptional cases, where it can be clearly demonstrated that the environmental benefits of the development and the wider social and economic need for the development substantially outweigh any adverse impact in terms of pollution. In such cases, where



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pollution is unavoidable, mitigation measures to reduce pollution levels will be required in order to meet acceptable standards.

New development will not be permitted where there is a potential to conflict with existing developments that require particular conditions for their operation, or that are authorized or licensed under pollution control or hazardous substances legislation, where it would be likely to impose significant restrictions on the activities of the existing use in the future.

Development proposals on contaminated land (or where there is reason to suspect contamination) must include an assessment of the extent of the contamination and any possible risks. Proposals will only be permitted where the land is, or can be made, suitable for the proposed use.

In pursuit of this policy the Council will encourage and support developers in building dwellings that meet the standards of the relevant Code for Sustainable Homes.

Conditions may be attached to any planning permission, or Section 106 agreements used, to ensure adequate reduction and management of impacts.

## 6.11 Green Belt

6.11.1 Green Belts are primarily designed to control the spread of development and the coalescence of towns by keeping land permanently open. Government's NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belts in preventing urban sprawl and keeping land permanently open; strict control of development should ensure their open and rural character is not eroded.

6.11.2 Approximately 1,910 hectares of East Cambridgeshire are designated within the Cambridge Green Belt, around the villages of Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck. The purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt are to:

- Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
- Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting; and
- Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the City.

6.11.3 The Cambridge Green Belt was established formally in 1965 and has been a key strategic policy since then and continues to be vital to the proper planning of the Cambridge Sub-Region. The 'Review of the East Cambridgeshire Green Belt', commissioned by the Council in 2005, recommended a number of minor changes to the boundaries around Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck and also proposed the release of land on the edge of Bottisham. The extent of these alterations is set out in this Plan.

Development proposals which come forward in the Green Belt will be assessed against Government policy in the NPPF. Development will be strictly controlled, and generally linked to those uses which require a rural setting and preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Policy XXX builds on the approach in the NPPF and sets out the circumstances in which development may exceptionally be permitted. It is for those proposing development in the Green Belt to show the special circumstances that justify development.

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**Policy ENV 10: Green Belt**

A Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge which will define the extent of the urban area. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt releases proposed in East Cambridgeshire to accommodate the proposals in Policies XXX and XXX, are set out in this Plan.

There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt.

Subject to other policies within this Plan, the Council may support proposals in the Green Belt for:

- New buildings or development in connection with and ancillary to agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport and recreation or cemeteries or other uses that preserve the openness of the Green Belt; or
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of dwellings in the same use in line with Policy XXX; or
- Affordable housing on a small scale which meets the requirements of Policy XXX or
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of permanent buildings whether redundant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development or

Other development in very exceptional circumstances, where other benefits clearly and substantially outweigh harm to the Green Belt.

Where development is permitted within the Green Belt it must be:

- Located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green; and
- Subject to landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.

Where development is permitted adjacent to the Green Belt account will be taken of any adverse impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. Development on the edges of settlements that are surrounded by the Green Belt must include high quality landscape and design in order to protect the purposes of the Green Belt.

## **6.12 Conservation Areas**

6.12.1 The Council has designated 27 Conservation Areas in the district. These are listed in Appendix x and the boundaries are shown on the accompanying Proposals Map. These areas have been designated due to their particular architectural or historic interest, taking account of the overall quality of the area, mix and style of buildings, quality of open spaces, and other features which contribute to the overall character.

6.12.2 The Council is currently undertaking a programme of Conservation Area reviews, looking at boundaries, character and general condition through the production of Conservation Area Appraisals. In addition to the review of existing Conservation Areas the programme also includes the designation of new Conservation Areas. The Conservation Area Appraisals for both the revised and new Conservation Areas will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents to the Local Plan.

6.12.3 Designation emphasises the special care that must be taken over the design, layout and materials of development proposals to ensure the character and appearance of these areas is preserved and enhanced. Traditional features and local characteristics should be

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recognised and reflected in development proposals. However, new development does not always have to mimic the past, and high quality schemes which provide a successful visual contrast with their surroundings may also be appropriate.

6.12.4 Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas will be resisted, except in very exceptional cases where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the building is structurally unsound or of little or no importance to the character and appearance of the area. In all circumstances, demolition will only be allowed if planning permission has already been obtained for the redevelopment of the site, to ensure no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area.

6.12.5 Where necessary, the Council will use Section 215 notices and Article 4 Directions to maintain and enhance the quality of Conservation Areas.

**Policy ENV 11: Conservation Areas**

Development proposals, within, or affecting a Conservation Area should:

- Be of a particularly high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area
- Seek to retain attractive traditional materials and features such as original doors, windows, chimneys and boundary walls
- Only involve the demolition of buildings where:
  - They are structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect), beyond reasonable repair, and measures to sustain the existing use or find an alternative use/user have been exhausted; and in all cases
  - They have little or no architectural, historic or visual significance or have a negative impact on the Conservation area; and in all cases
  - Comprehensive proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have been submitted and have received planning permission.

**6.13 Listed Buildings**

6.13.1 Buildings are listed by the Secretary of State in national recognition of their special architectural or historic interest, and any works which affect the character of a Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. Within the district there are almost 930 Listed Buildings, about 100 of which are Grade I or Grade II\*. The high ratio of Grade I and II\* is due in part to Anglesey Abbey and the Ely Cathedral complex. The main aim of listing is to prevent alterations that are detrimental to the special character of the building or structure, including the interior.

6.13.2 The setting of a Listed Building is also important, and proposals which detract from the setting will be resisted. Similarly, where a Listed Building has landscape value, contributing to the wider setting of a settlement or the countryside, it will be necessary to demonstrate that development proposals do not adversely affect character or views.

6.13.3 There is a strong presumption in favour of the retention and preservation of Listed Buildings and demolition, in full or in part, will be approved only in the most exceptional circumstances as set out in Policy xx, after applicants have demonstrated that every effort has been made to keep the building. If demolition is permitted, the Council is likely to require an appropriate archive of the features and fabric that would be lost. The best way of preserving a Listed Building is by securing an active, economically viable use, and

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sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals that help to secure the long term future of the building. Such proposals will only be acceptable where there is no detriment to the structure, character, appearance or setting of the building.

- 6.13.4 Applicants proposing the alteration, extension or change of use of a Listed Building will be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposals would contribute to the building's conservation, whilst preserving or enhancing its architectural or historic significance.
- 6.13.5 Setting and contribution to the wider environment need to be fully considered and respected when proposing extensions, alterations or new buildings. Planning permission will be refused for any form of development that would adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building or a group of Listed Buildings.
- 6.13.6 The Council will use its statutory powers to enforce the repair of Listed Buildings where appropriate.

**Policy ENV 12: Listed Buildings**

Proposals to extend, alter or change the use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:

- Preserve or enhance the significance of the building and not involve substantial or total loss of historic fabric;
- Be compatible with the character, architectural integrity and setting of the Listed Building; and
- Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building.

Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where they would:

- Preserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset;
- Not materially harm the immediate or wider setting of the Listed Building. This setting may extend well beyond the immediate building curtilage and may include an extensive street scene or a wider urban design context, especially when the proposal is within a Conservation Area;
- Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building.

Proposals to demolish all or part of a Listed Building will not be permitted other than in wholly exceptional cases where:

- All possible measures to sustain the existing use or find an alternative use have been exhausted, including active and genuine marketing<sup>21</sup> of the asset;
- Reasonable endeavors have been taken to secure a public or charitable organisation to take on the asset and failed; and
- The building is structurally unsound (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect) beyond all reasonable repair and its redevelopment would bring wider public benefits; and in all cases;
- Comprehensive proposals for reconstruction or redevelopment have been submitted and have received planning permission.

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<sup>21</sup> Applicants should provide evidence that the building has been marketed for a period of no less than 12 months, at a price that reflects its condition

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**6.14 Locally Listed Buildings**

- 6.14.1 The Council will develop a local list with local amenity groups. This list will include buildings which make a valuable contribution to the local scene or local history, but which do not merit national listing. These will be given additional protection and their status will be a material consideration, but they will not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing.
- 6.14.2 Proposals for the change of use of a building or structure on the Local List will be required to demonstrate how this would contribute to its conservation whilst preserving or enhancing its architectural or historic significance.
- 6.14.3 Applications proposing full or partial demolition will be required to demonstrate that the viability of continued beneficial use restoration or conversion has been exhausted and its redevelopment would bring wider public benefits.
- 6.14.4 In cases where demolition is acceptable, the Council will seek to ensure that provision is made for an appropriate level of building recording to take place.

**Policy ENV 13: Locally Listed Buildings**

Proposals that affect a Locally Listed Building will not be permitted where it would have a detrimental impact on the visual, architectural or historic significance of the asset.

The Council will resist development that will:

- Involve the demolition or part demolition of buildings or structures on the Local List;
- Involve the inappropriate alteration or extension to buildings or structures on the Local List; and
- Have a detrimental impact on the setting or context of buildings or structures on the Local List.

**6.15 Archaeological sites and monuments**

- 6.15.1 East Cambridgeshire has a rich and varied archaeological heritage. In the north of the district, settlement from the early pre-historic period focused on the dry land of the Isle of Ely and surrounding fen margins, although well preserved artefacts and organic remains may occur in the areas of fen. Extensive evidence of Roman activity survives throughout the district, and in addition to the historic city of Ely, numerous medieval villages and towns survive to the present day. The Council wishes to make every effort to safeguard this archaeological heritage, which is vulnerable to modern development and land use. Known sites of national importance are designated as 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments', and these are shown on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix x. Other sites of regional or local significance are listed in the County Historic Environment Record, maintained by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 6.15.2 As most archaeological remains are yet to be discovered it is crucial that sites of potential interest are appropriately assessed. Development adversely affecting a site of known or identified national importance will be resisted and the impact of development on all types of remains should be minimised.
- 6.15.3 Where development is granted at sites of archaeological interest, the in-situ preservation of remain is preferred. Where this is feasible, provision should be made for a programme of excavation, recording, reporting and publication of the finds to take place before development commences. This is likely to be secured by a planning condition, the discharge of which will be agreed in conjunction with the County Council Archaeology

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Team. The Council will be guided in these issues by Government advice and advice from the Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Department.

- 6.15.4 Development proposals that would result in substantial loss or total harm to the significance of historic landscapes (designated and undesignated) will not be permitted.

**Policy ENV 14: Sites of Archaeological Interest**

Development proposals at or affecting all sites of known or potential archaeological interest will:

- Require the submission of an archaeological evaluation/assessment by a suitably qualified person; and
- Not be permitted where there would be an adverse effect on nationally important sites (known or unknown), including Scheduled Ancient Monuments

**6.16 Historic parks and gardens**

- 6.16.1 English Heritage has compiled a 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' which includes 4 sites within East Cambridgeshire and the Council has identified 6 other historic landscapes as being of local significance. All of these sites are shown on the Proposals Map and are listed in Appendix x.
- 6.16.2 The aim of this register is to draw attention to important historic parklands, pleasure grounds and gardens laid out before 1939 and which are considered to be an essential part of the nation's heritage.
- 6.16.3 Any development must have careful regard to the important landscape architecture of the site, and the setting of any historic buildings or features. The Council will expect sufficient information to be submitted with any application that affects a historic park or garden listed in Appendix x to enable the impact of development to be properly assessed.

**Policy ENV 15: Historic Parks and Gardens**

Proposals that affect a Historic Park or Garden will not be permitted where they would have a detrimental impact on its character, amenity or setting.

As part of any permission, the Council may seek the agreement of a management plan to secure the long-term preservation of the asset, promote good land management and encourage best use of resources.

**6.17 Enabling development associated with heritage assets**

- 6.17.1 Enabling development is a development proposal that is contrary to established planning policy and in its own right would not be permitted. Such a proposal may however be allowed where it would secure a proposal for the long-term future of a heritage asset.
- 6.17.2 At the heart of enabling development is an 'exchange' whereby the community accepts some disbenefit, as a result of permission being granted for development which would otherwise be unacceptable, in return for the long-term conservation of the heritage asset.
- 6.17.3 The policy will only be used where the public benefit of securing the future of a significant heritage asset through enabling development decisively outweighs the disadvantages of

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breaching normal policy presumptions. In considering enabling development proposals, developers are encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the planning authority.

**Policy ENV 16: Enabling Development**

Enabling development will only be permitted when all of the following conditions are met:

- 1 The enabling development takes the opportunity to enhance the heritage asset and its setting and will not materially harm the heritage value of the asset or its setting;
- 2 The public benefit of the survival or enhancement of the heritage asset outweighs the disbenefits of providing the enabling development;
- 3 The impacts of the enabling development are precisely defined at the outset;
- 4 The proposal avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the heritage asset and where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose;
- 5 The scale of the enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the heritage asset and all aspects of design and layout minimise disbenefits;
- 6 The heritage objective can be securely linked to the enabling development through a planning agreement;
- 7 Financial assistance to secure the long-term future of the heritage asset is not available from any other source;
- 8 It is necessary to resolve problems arising from the inherent needs of the heritage asset rather than the circumstances of the present owner or the purchase price paid;
- 9 The heritage asset will be repaired or enhanced to an agreed standard at an agreed stage in the course of the enabling development, preferably at the outset and certainly before completion.

## **7 Community services and infrastructure**

### **7.1 Introduction**

- 7.1.1 In order for communities to be successful, it is vital that they are well served by a full range of public, private, community and voluntary services and that facilities are appropriate to people's needs, affordable, and accessible to all. Community facilities and services are therefore key components of the social infrastructure required to create sustainable communities.
- 7.1.2 Community services and facilities include schools and other education provision, social services, adult education, libraries, community and youth services, healthcare, culture, places of worship, parish and village halls, police and emergency services, recreation and amenity space, green infrastructure, sport, transport, public utilities and other infrastructure. Services and facilities are particularly important in the rural areas. Many communities have experienced losses of important local services such as shops, post offices and primary schools. Support will be given to community-based initiatives that result in improvements to the local service and facility delivery and make those settlements more sustainable.

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**7.2 Retail and town centre development**

- 7.2.1 Town and village centres are at the heart of our community, and provide a focus for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural and community facilities. The Government is committed to sustaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of these centres, and making town centres a particular focus for development.
- 7.2.2 The policy approach seeks to focus main town centre uses (see paragraph 3.38) within the identified town centres in the district, wherever possible. The town centre boundaries are identified on the Proposals Map. Edge of centre and out of town locations may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances, according to the sequential tests and other tests set out in Policy xx.
- 7.2.3 It is recognised that small-scale local facilities such as corner shops, or localised leisure/community facilities are vital for the sustainability of many rural communities within the district. As such, Policy xx supports the development of such uses. It is also recognised that farm shops may be appropriate, where these accord with the criteria in Policy xxx.
- 7.2.4 In addition, although many tourist facilities and attractions (particularly those attracting significant numbers of people) should be located within settlements, there may be circumstances where tourist facilities/attractions require a rural location (for example, picnic sites, or wildlife centres), or where expansion is proposed in connection with existing tourist facilities or attractions in the countryside.

**Policy COM 1: Location of retail and town centre uses**

Within the defined town centres, proposals for retail and other 'town centre uses' will be supported where:

- The scale and type of development is directly related to the role and function of the centre, in accordance with the hierarchy identified in Policy GROWTH 2.
- There would be no adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the centre, or on any other centres.
- The development would enhance the character and attractiveness of the centre and its locality, and not adversely affect residential amenity.
- The local transport system is capable of accommodating the potential traffic implications, and necessary mitigation measures are provided to make the development viable in transport terms.
- Proposals on allocation sites are in accordance with Policy xx.

Outside the town centres of Ely, Soham and Littleport, proposals for retail and 'town centre uses' may be permitted under the following circumstances:

- The sequential approach has been followed and there are no suitable sequentially preferable sites available.
- The site is suitable for the proposed use and the building form and design is appropriate in the local context.
- The scale and type of development is directly related to the role and function of the centre or its locality, in accordance with the hierarchy in Policy CS5.
- For retail developments of 280m<sup>2</sup> net or larger, there would be no adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the nearest town centre, or on any other centres, as demonstrated in a Retail



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Assessment.

- The development would enhance the character and attractiveness of the centre and its locality, and not adversely affect residential amenity.
- The development would be accessible by a choice of means of transport (including public transport, walking and cycling), and the local transport system is capable of accommodating the potential traffic implications.
- The development would not directly or cumulatively cause significant harm to any existing town centre retailer or the overall vitality or viability of the town centre.

As an exception to this approach, support may be given to

- The provision of small-scale localised facilities in neighbourhoods outside town centres (such as corner shops and small-scale leisure facilities), where it can be demonstrated that:
  - The development would meet a clear localised neighbourhood need.
  - The development is not of a scale and type which should be located within identified town centres.
  - Other relevant criteria in Policy S1 are met.
- Farm shops, where these are of an appropriate scale and would not detract from the character and appearance of the area
- Proposals for tourist facilities and attractions which require a rural location, or are associated with the expansion of existing tourist facilities/attractions in the countryside – and which accord with criteria in Policy xx

**Retail uses in town centres**

7.2.5 The health, vitality and viability of town centres depends upon their accessibility, attractiveness and ability to retain and develop a wide range of facilities and attract continued investment. Retaining a significant proportion of A1 retail units in town centres is key in achieving this vision. This is especially important in Ely, as the main shopping centre in the district.

7.2.6 The town centres of Ely, Soham and Littleport are key areas for shopping, leisure and business activity in the district. The boundaries of the town centres are shown in the Proposals Map, along with defined 'Primary Shopping Frontages' and 'Secondary Shopping Frontages' within Ely where there is a greater concentration of retail units (Use Class A1). The extent of the primary shopping frontages may be subject to change over the plan period and the Council will keep them under review through regular town centre "health check" surveys.

Ely

7.2.7 New areas of primary shopping frontage have been designated in Ely city centre, recognising the importance of existing links between key retail areas and the opportunity to create a more extensive retail circuit. Policy xx is designed to maintain a predominance of retailing within the Primary Shopping Frontages of Ely. The Council will resist the loss of A1 shop units within these areas but allow a more flexible approach within the secondary shopping frontages. Over time, it is hoped that this approach will strengthen the function of the core shopping area and allow non-A1 uses to relocate towards the more peripheral areas.

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- 7.2.8 Non-retail uses such as financial services, cafés, restaurants and public houses can play a role in the viability of town centres and may be appropriate complementary uses, provided that the retail function of the centre is not undermined.
- 7.2.9 Vacancy rates for shop units constantly vary within Ely city centre. During more challenging economic times when retail vacancy rates can be higher, it may be preferable for the premises to be occupied by a community use instead of the unit remaining unoccupied. Retail economy is related to environmental quality and the Council is aware of the risk that premises which are not being utilised may degrade the wider environment. In order to prevent the gradual erosion of vitality and environmental quality in such situations, a temporary community use may be allowed in such circumstances. Developers should seek advice from the District Council in such cases.

Soham and Littleport

- 7.2.10 In the town centres of Soham and Littleport, a slightly more flexible approach is proposed. It is recognised that these areas play a different role to the core of Ely, and the provision of a wider range of services in these areas can encourage the enhanced sustainability of these settlements. Retail units are desirable but other uses may include professional and financial services, restaurants/cafés, pubs and takeaways, and cultural/community services. Nevertheless, the approach also recognises the importance of having a mix of sizes of shop units, in order to attract a range of uses and types of retailers, and the fact that there are only a small number of larger shop units in the town centres. The Council therefore seeks to protect against the loss of larger A1 retail units, which are defined as those with a net retail floorspace of 200m<sup>2</sup> or more. There are also specific sites which are afforded additional protection under Policies xx and xx.

Residential uses in town centres

- 7.2.11 The loss of ground floor town centre units to housing can have an adverse impact on the health, vitality and vibrancy of town centres, and it is often hard to reverse as it normally involves a significant physical change to the frontage. Within the Ely Primary Shopping Frontage change of use to residential at ground floor level will not be acceptable. Within the remainder of Ely city centre, and in the town centres of Soham and Littleport, the Council will seek to avoid the change of use to residential units at ground floor level, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative town centre use, relating to retail, leisure, business and cultural activities, is not reasonable and/or viable. As part of this, applicants will be expected to demonstrate evidence that efforts have been made to find alternative uses, including marketing of a unit for sale or let at an appropriate price for at least 12 months.

**Policy COM 2: Retail uses in town centres***Ely Primary Shopping Frontage*

Within Ely Primary Shopping Frontage, as defined on Map xx, the development of A1 retail uses will be encouraged where this does not conflict with other policies of the Local Plan. The loss of A1 retail uses will generally be resisted.

- In exceptional circumstances, non-retail uses within Classes A2, A3, A4 and A5 may be permitted where they meet the following criteria:
- The proposal would not result in a concentration of non-A1 retail uses.
- The proposal would not detract from the dominant retail appearance of the street frontage, and

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where appropriate, positive measures to enhance or restore the character of the site or its immediate area have been incorporated.

- The proposal would generate significant pedestrian visits during shopping hours.
- The proposal would complement the existing mix of uses/retailers and the shopping function of the city centre.
- The proposal does not involve the loss of a shop unit measuring 200m<sup>2</sup> or larger (gross retail floorspace)
- The proposal does not involve ground floor residential development.
- The proposal has been marketed for A1 retail at an appropriate price for a minimum of 3 months.

If the unit has remained vacant for a minimum period of six months, a temporary change of use from A1 retail to non-A1 retail may be acceptable.

*Ely Secondary Shopping Frontage*

Within Ely Secondary Shopping Frontage, as defined on the Proposals Map, changes of use from A1 retail to other uses will be permitted provided that:

- The proposed use provides a service that complements the shopping function of the city centre.
- There is no adverse impact on residential amenity.
- The proposal does not involve ground floor residential development.

*Soham and Littleport town centres*

Within Soham and Littleport town centres, as defined on the Proposals Map, changes of use from A1 retail to other uses will be permitted provided that:

- The proposed use provides a service that complements the shopping function of the city centre.
- There is no adverse impact on residential amenity.
- The proposal does not involve the loss of a shop unit measuring 200m<sup>2</sup> or larger (gross retail floorspace).
- The proposal accords with any relevant policies contained within the town visions.
- If residential development is proposed, that clear evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that alternative town centre uses are not viable.

**7.3 Retaining community facilities and open space**

7.3.1 The provision of community facilities is vital to maintaining the quality of life in local centres and boosting the social and economic vitality of the community as a whole. Community facilities include local shops, Post Offices, pubs, petrol filling stations, community meeting places, schools and higher education establishments and health care facilities, and formal and informal open spaces, allotments and sport and recreational facilities. The NPPF sees good community facilities as important in promoting healthy communities and prosperous rural economies. The Framework argues strongly for the retention of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields. The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value, nominated by the local community. When listed assets are to be sold or change ownership, the Act then gives community groups the opportunity to develop a bid and raise the money to bid for the asset when it comes on the open market.

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- 7.3.2 Looking at recent trends and the issues facing the economy and the public sector over the Plan period, a concern for the district will be the loss of existing facilities. Although any loss of community facilities is more likely to be an issue in the villages, where there is a limited range of shops and services, the loss of facilities in market towns can also have an adverse effect on the local community, even where the facility is not the last one in the settlement. The reduction of available local services and facilities can impact on the health of town centres/neighbourhoods, and can affect people living in the wider rural area served by a market town, as well as local inhabitants. The impact on people without access to a car and in areas served poorly by public transport can be particularly acute. In support of the strategic policies, the Plan seeks to prevent the loss of services and facilities unless there are exceptional reasons to justify it.
- 7.3.3 In the case of commercial community facilities such as shops, pubs and Post Offices, the Council will require evidence that the facility, in use or vacant, is neither viable nor likely to become viable before planning permission will be granted to change of use to residential or other non-community use. Development or change of use will only be permitted where the applicant provides evidence that:
- The premises have been marketed locally and nationally for 12 months in the current use free of ties and restrictive covenants and for an alternative local commercial or community facility, at a price agreed with the Council following an independent professional valuation and there has been no interest in continued use as a community facility; and
  - All reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility including all diversification options; and
  - As a result of (a) and (b) it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the council that continuation in the existing use is not viable; and
  - Adequate alternative provision exists, or replacement provision is made available, in an equally or more accessible location, normally within 400 metres walking distance; and
  - It has been otherwise demonstrated, through wide engagement with the Parish and directly with local people, that the local community no longer needs the facility and the community does not wish to exercise the right to bid.
- 7.3.4 In the case of non-commercial community facilities such as community halls, open spaces and healthcare facilities, where market testing may not be applicable, it should be demonstrated by the owner/operator that there is no community need for the facility. The local community should also be consulted regarding the relative importance of the facility in terms of its social role. This should take the form of proper documented evidence and should be agreed with the Council prior to the submission of a formal application for alternative development.
- 7.3.5 Open spaces and recreational formal facilities include parks, village greens, other amenity areas, allotments, play areas, playing fields. They are a vital resource for the local community and help to define the character and amenity of an area; they can also be a haven for wildlife. Where development is proposed on open spaces, in addition to the above, the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the land affected does not make an important contribution to biodiversity, the landscape and visual qualities of the area. The Council's Sports and Play Areas Assessment and Informal Open Space Assessment provide information on the community nature and visual contribution of open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities in the district. There are many valuable informal open spaces in the district and those that are within settlement boundaries may be subject to pressure for development. Where proposals result in the loss of open space provision, the relevant community and statutory stakeholders will need to be consulted.

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- 7.3.6 The loss of a community facility may exceptionally be justified where it also involves a proposal to make alternative provision to that facility, which is of equal or greater quality. Alternative facilities must be in an equally or more accessible location to the original.

**Policy COM 3: Retaining community facilities***Commercial community facilities*

Proposals that would lead to the loss of existing commercial community facilities will only be permitted if:

- It can be demonstrated that the retention of the facility is no longer financially viable and that all reasonable efforts have been made to sell or let the property at a realistic price for at least twelve months; or
- It can be demonstrated there is a lack of community need for the facility; or
- Alternative provision is made, of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in an appropriately accessible location; or
- Alternative community provision on the site meets a higher priority need.

*Non-commercial community facilities*

Proposals that would lead to the loss of existing non-commercial community facilities will only be permitted if:

- It can be demonstrated there is a lack of community need for the facility; or
- Alternative provision is made, of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in an appropriately accessible location; or
- Alternative community provision on the site meets a higher priority need.

*Community open space*

Proposals that would lead to the loss of existing community open space will only be permitted if:

- It can be demonstrated there is a lack of community need for the facility and it does not make an important contribution in amenity, visual or nature conservation terms; or
- Alternative provision is made, of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in an appropriately accessible location; or
- Alternative community provision on the site meets a higher priority need.

**7.4 New community facilities and open space**

- 7.4.1 Given the importance of community facilities, whether they are provided through the public or private sectors, the Council will support improvements to existing facilities and the development of new ones where there is an identified need. These will be expected to comply with the other policies in the Plan and the Council will look for particular attention to be paid to accessible locations, usually within the village or town, good design and sustainable construction and operation. The Council will require improved or new facilities or both to be provided with major new residential development. Policy S XXX deals with the role of developer contributions in providing and supporting services.

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**Policy COM 4: New Community facilities**

Proposals for the development of new community facilities to meet identified needs in accessible locations will be approved, where all other requirements are satisfied in accordance with this Plan.

**7.5 Strategic green infrastructure**

7.5.1 The NPPF defines green infrastructure as: 'A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.' The Framework requires local planning authorities to plan positively for green infrastructure and take into account its role in addressing climate change.

7.5.2 The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy published in 2011 provides a valuable framework for considering green infrastructure in East Cambridgeshire. It sets out four key objectives to:

- Reverse the decline in biodiversity;
- Mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- Promote sustainable growth and economic development; and
- Support healthy living and wellbeing.

7.5.3 Under these objectives important considerations for the district are:

- The role of larger scale green spaces in East Cambridgeshire (including Wicken Fen, Ouse Washes and land next to rivers) in enabling the district to mitigate or adapt to climate change;
- Supporting healthy living and wellbeing, as East Cambridgeshire faces the challenges of an ageing and less healthy population, and the importance of ensuring that people can access green Infrastructure and open space when they want to; and
- The provision of a functional and attractive landscape/green infrastructure that draws businesses and people to East Cambridgeshire, thereby helping to meet the challenges of securing sustainable growth and prosperity.

7.5.4 The Strategy identifies the Great Ouse, the Eastern Fens and Towns and Chippenham Fen as strategic areas. Green Infrastructure priorities for East Cambridgeshire include amongst other things:

- Meeting deficits in Green Infrastructure and open space (formal and informal) provision, especially in the north and east of the district; and
- Development of a series of district-wide strategically important green infrastructure elements that link district planning and development priorities.

7.5.5 Strategic area projects in the strategy include:

- Fens Adventurers Partnership, Green Fen Way - improvements to countryside access networks (both Public Rights of Way (PRoW)) and permissive paths in the Fens Adventurers area with the aim of benefiting rural tourism and businesses

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- Fens Waterways Link – to enhance river navigation to connect the Cathedral Cities of Lincoln, Peterborough and Ely as well as King’s Lynn, Denver, March, Ramsey, Huntingdon and Cambridge
- Wicken Fen and Anglesey Abbey - an ambitious 100 year project to establish a new nature reserve on 56 km<sup>2</sup> land between Cambridge and Wicken Fen, in the long-term creating a diverse range of habitats as well as providing different landscapes for visitors to explore
- The Great Ouse - the Ouse Washes are a key feature related to a number of projects and there is a specific Washes habitat creation project

7.5.6 The strategy also identifies opportunities for more local improvements in green infrastructure, including:

- Further development of Ely Country Park and Ely North to provide additional locations for outdoor activity in the urban-fringe;
- The Ely Ouse corridor
- Soham Commons restoration;
- Littleport Urban Greenway; and
- Proposals included in Draft Burwell Masterplan (September 2012)

7.5.7 Other types of green spaces outside of the strategic network, such as playing fields and local nature reserves, also make up an important part of the overall green infrastructure and contribute to biodiversity, amenity and the health of the area. Such spaces need to be protected and enhanced and reinforced by new provision associated with new development, particularly as required by policies on biodiversity (XXX) and community facilities (XX).

**Policy COM 5: Green Infrastructure**

Proposals which would cause loss of or harm to existing green infrastructure and open spaces protected under policy XXX will not be permitted, unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably and substantially outweigh any adverse impacts that it is likely to have on the contribution of the green infrastructure to the wellbeing of the district.

All development will be expected to contribute towards the establishment, enhancement or ongoing management of green infrastructure by providing additional on-site green spaces and contributing to the development of strategic green infrastructure network within the district.

The Council will support proposals for new and improved green infrastructure where these:

- Are consistent with the objectives of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2011;
- Provide increased public access for quiet recreation; and/or
- Provide increased provision for biodiversity; and
- Do not have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the district.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of green infrastructure projects of strategic significance which are expected to come forward during the Plan period and will be supported:

- Ely Country Park;
- Ely Ouse corridor;

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- Ely North urban extension open spaces;
- Soham Town Commons;
- Littleport Urban Greenway;
- Ouse Washes improvement and habitat creation; and
- Wicken Fen Vision;
- Fens Adventurers Partnership: Green Fen Way  
Fens Waterways Link

## 7.6 Telecommunications

- 7.6.1 Telecommunications is the general term for the transfer of information over varying distances through an array of technologies such as telephone, television, mobile phones and the Internet. High quality communications infrastructure includes the recent advances in broadband and wireless technologies. Broadband networks are being developed with the Coalition Government's vision for the UK to have the best superfast broadband network in Europe by 2015. The mobile phone industry has also rapidly progressed in recent years, with the use of 3G (3rd Generation) technology. Technology relating to 4G is due to be rolled out across the UK over the next few years.
- 7.6.2 High quality telecommunications are becoming increasingly important for economic growth, attracting new business and allowing existing businesses to remain competitive. Telecommunications also have social benefits, increasing social inclusion through better access to services that are web-based. Advanced infrastructure such as superfast broadband can also encourage homeworking and reduce car journeys.
- 7.6.3 The Council supports the expansion and provision of high-speed broadband technology in all parts of the district. 'Connecting Cambridgeshire' was launched in 2012 with the aim of providing access to superfast broadband to at least 90% of homes and businesses across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and better broadband connections for all other premises, by 2015. To enable this, it will be important for all new residential, employment and commercial developments to be future proofed by providing onsite infrastructure for broadband and other utility needs. This can be facilitated by providing ducting. For further details see Policy xx on Design in Chapter X.
- 7.6.4 The Council supports the development and provision of telecommunication infrastructures throughout the district, according to need. At the same time the Council is keen to minimise any adverse impact on the character of the locality and the environment. Applicants will need to have regard to issues of design and siting, and demonstrate that opportunities to share existing telecom sites or existing buildings have been fully explored. Proposals must comply with the criteria in Policy xx below.
- 7.6.5 As directed by Government, the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards, and if a proposal regarding a new or existing mast or base station meets the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) guidelines for public exposure then the planning authority should not need to consider the health aspects or any related concerns.

### **Policy COM 6: Telecommunications**

The Council will permit the development of new telecommunications equipment, provided that:

- The applicant has demonstrated that alternatives have been investigated to share existing



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telecommunication facilities or site equipment on or within existing structures or buildings; and

- Proposed development will not cause significant or irreparable interference with other electronic equipment, air traffic services or instrumentation operated in the national interest; and
- Proposals are sited and designed to minimise impact on the character and appearance of the area, using innovative design and/or camouflaging where necessary; and
- The proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the locality, sites protected for nature conservation or heritage assets; and
- If approved, provision is made for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site to its former condition should it cease to be operational; and
- The application is supported by necessary evidence to justify the proposal, including the outcome of consultation with key organisations, and a statement that IC guidelines on non-ionising radiation protection will be met.

It is important for new development to have ease of access for future installation, maintenance and updating of technology. Conditions will also be applied to permissions requiring the removal of any mast/apparatus and reinstatement of the site to its former condition if the equipment becomes redundant.

## 7.7 Transport impact

- 7.7.1 The transport impact of new development is a key planning issue, which needs to be fully assessed in order to ensure that development proposals are safe, well connected and do not damage residential amenity. The NPPF supports the need to avoid adverse impacts through development and to mitigate them where they may occur. However, it requires the response to be proportionate and says that development should be refused on transport grounds only where the residual cumulative impacts are severe.
- 7.7.2 The planning and design process should ensure access to a site is safe and convenient, and the needs of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities and occupants of vehicles, are taken into account. This should include provision of routes for walking and cycling in order to encourage sustainable forms of movement as an alternative to the car. Further guidance in terms of travel routes and vehicular access is set out in Policy xxx; and in more detail in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.
- 7.7.3 The volume and type of traffic generated by a development is a key consideration and the Council needs to ensure that road safety is not jeopardised by allowing proposals that would generate levels of traffic beyond the capacity of the surrounding road network. Traffic generation can also impact on the quality of people's lives, the character of an area and the environment. Particular attention should be paid to proposals that generate a large net increase in trips, involve heavy lorry movements, or result in high levels of on-street parking nearby. This policy approach should be read in conjunction with Policy XXX on parking provision.
- 7.7.4 Planning applications need to address the transport implications of the proposed development. Many schemes will need to include the submission of a Transport Statement, setting out potential trip levels and any local transport issues. This will depend principally on size and location and will be required for all major applications. Schemes which create significant transport implications will require the submission of a detailed Transport Assessment with the planning application. This should set out in full the impacts and potential mitigation measures, to illustrate how the volume of trips generated will be accommodated and how accessibility to the site by all modes of transport will be achieved. Construction traffic should be considered in the Assessment. Developers should seek advice from the District Council and County Council prior to submission of an application

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as to whether a Transport Statement and Transport Assessment will be required. Applicants are advised to discuss the content of the Transport Assessment with the County Council to ensure that it is agreed to the satisfaction of the Council as Highway Authority.

- 7.7.5 Proposals that are likely to have significant transport implications are also required be accompanied by a Travel Plan<sup>22</sup>. Applicants should seek advice from the Council prior to submission of an application as to whether a Travel Plan will be required, and if so to agree its scope.

**Policy COM 7: Transport impact**

Development should be designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and should promote sustainable forms of transport appropriate to its particular location and maximise the opportunity at the early design stages for increased permeability and connectivity to existing networks.

Development proposals shall:

- (a) Provide safe and convenient access to the highway network;
- (b) Provide a comprehensive network of routes giving priority for walking and cycling;
- (c) Protect existing rights of way or allow for agreed diversions in exceptional circumstances
- (d) Consider the travel and transport needs of people with disabilities;
- (e) Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods, supplies and services;
- (f) Be capable of accommodating the level/type of traffic generated without detriment to the local highway network and the amenity, character or appearance of the locality;
- (g) Be accompanied by a Transport Statement where appropriate; or if the proposals are likely to result in significant transport implications, be accompanied by a Transport Assessment. The coverage and detail of this should reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications;
- (h) Be accompanied by a Travel Plan for residential and non residential developments that are likely to generate significant amounts of traffic; and

Within (g) and (h) indicate any steps to mitigate impacts relating to noise, pollution, amenity, health, safety and traffic.

**7.8 Parking provision**

- 7.8.1 The availability of car parking can have a significant effect on people's choice of transport. Car parking can also impact upon the appearance of a development and the efficient use of land, as parking takes up a great deal of space. The NPPF says local parking standards for residential and non-residential development should be developed taking into account: the accessibility of the development; type, mix and use of development; the availability of public transport; car ownership levels; and the aim to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles. However, at all scales of development, parking must be designed integrally and carefully alongside proposals and allocated, treated and landscaped sensitively so as not to become over dominant, obtrusive and damaging to the overall character, enjoyment and appearance of existing and new places.

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<sup>22</sup> Travel Plans enable options for sustainable travel and reductions in car use to be explored.

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- 7.8.2 East Cambridgeshire is a mainly rural area, with limited public transport, and car parking has a role in improving access to local services and facilities. The under-provision of parking on-site in new developments may lead to on-street parking, creating potential highway safety problems and unsightly street environments. It is therefore considered that development schemes should generally meet the car and cycle parking standards set out in Appendix x. However, flexibility is also required to take account of different circumstances indicated by the NPPF. The application of the standards should consider where lower levels of provision would result in better design and protect or enhance the character of Conservation Areas in town, village and local centres, and in other locations where large parking areas can be damaging to visual amenity and/or function, character, integrity and the overall sense of place. Concealing, landscaping and breaking up parking and servicing areas, and alternative/different ways of accommodating them, will be required to avoid their potentially adverse impact. Applicants will be required to submit justification for proposed parking levels as part of the planning application. In relation to accessibility, applicants proposing lower standards will need to demonstrate the existence of sustainable high quality and frequent public transport services and high quality pedestrian and cycle links.
- 7.8.3 The Council will encourage business and mixed use development schemes to provide shared car parking facilities as this can help to reduce the overall number of parking spaces required and make better use of land. This may involve visitor parking, shared public car parking spaces, or provision for grouped private car parking within commercial schemes.
- 7.8.4 Good cycle parking will be required within residential and non-residential development to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport. Standards are set out in Appendix x. These are set as a minimum, as the availability of secure cycle parking is a key factor in determining whether people choose to cycle or not. Cycle parking for employees should, wherever practicable, be covered in a convenient and secure location. Individual secure covered cycle storage should be provided for dwellings.
- 7.8.5 Consideration also needs to be given to motorcycle, moped and scooter parking. This should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis depending on the results of the Transport Statement and Transport Assessment.
- 7.8.6 Further advice on parking is included in the Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. Garages should be large enough for comfortable use by modern cars; and car parking areas should be well designed and contribute to an attractive environment. Consideration should be given to providing charging points for electric vehicles in public and private parking areas.

**Policy COM 8: Parking provision**

Development proposals should provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking, and make provision for parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards (including parking for people with impaired mobility).

In exceptional circumstances, parking standards may be reduced in order to reflect the accessibility of the site by non-car modes, or if lower levels of provision would protect or enhance the character of Conservation Areas or other sensitive locations.

Car free development may be considered acceptable where there is clear justification having regard to the location and the current and proposed availability of alternative transport modes.

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Where opportunities arise, for example, on large single business use and mixed-use sites, shared use parking and car sharing will be encouraged as part of an agreed Travel Plan to minimise provision where the location and patterns of use allow.

**7.9 Developer contributions**

- 7.9.1 In addition to the community facilities defined above, local and strategic infrastructure services are vital to the social and economic life of communities in the district. Infrastructure includes the transport network, communications networks, drainage and flood protection, and utility services (water supply, foul sewerage networks, sewage treatment works, and energy supply). New development can place additional demands on infrastructure and community services/facilities, as well as having impacts on local and wider amenity. The NPPF sees sound infrastructure as important to future economic prosperity and expects Local Plans to address the needs positively. The importance of ensuring both viability and timely delivery are stressed.
- 7.9.2 Development schemes will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and services/facilities, and mitigating impacts, where this is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.9.3 The provision of infrastructure will be addressed largely by the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the District Council published a draft charging schedule in July 2012. Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided by developers. CIL will largely replace the current system of securing contributions from developers through Section 106 agreements. However, Section 106 agreements will continue to be used to secure local site-related mitigation of impacts and infrastructure such as open space, access and habitat protection, and affordable housing. CIL will therefore operate in tandem with a scaled-back system of Section 106 agreements. Planning conditions will also continue to be used to ensure development is carried out to the required standard.

Clarification on the split between Section 106 and CIL will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. This will also elaborate on how the contributions sought from developers will be related to the type of development, its potential impact on the site/local area, strategic priorities, economic viability matters, and levels of existing infrastructure and community service provision. It will also set out details on the range of potential infrastructure and service/facility requirements, and the level of provision expected. The SPD will also explore the range of potential environmental improvements needed, either on or off-site arising from new development. The SPD will provide the basis for negotiations between developers and the Council, and will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Working with providers, the co-location of services and facilities will promote community activity and make the best use of resources.

- 7.9.5 Contributions and payments or mitigation measures may be sought through CIL and S106 in relation to the following:
- Affordable housing
  - Education and child care provision
  - Health and social care
  - Employment and training
  - Community facilities (including meeting halls, library services, youth activities, and cultural services)

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- Town/village centre public realm improvements
- Conservation of heritage assets
- Public art
- Formal and informal public open spaces
- Outdoor play, sport and recreational facilities
- Strategic green infrastructure
- Nature conservation and wildlife mitigation/compensation measures
- Transport (including footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, highway infrastructure, public transport, community transport, car parks and travel planning)
- Communications infrastructure
- Drainage/flood prevention
- Waste/recycling facilities

Guidance on the provision of some of these features is available in the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

- 7.9.6 Any developments that claim to be unable to meet the costs of S106 contributions towards infrastructure and mitigation measures will be the subject of negotiations. In such cases developers will have to demonstrate non-viability by an 'open book' approach, which involves sharing information on development costs and profit margins with the Council. Developers will have to demonstrate exceptional or particular circumstances to justify a reduction in contributions. Reductions will not be acceptable in relation to contributions required towards infrastructure which is essential in order to allow the development to proceed, e.g. the provision of vital drainage/flood protection measures and the provision of transport improvements to the highway network that are required to ensure public safety.

**Policy COM 9: Developer contributions**

The provision of infrastructure will be linked directly to phasing of development on land throughout the district to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on existing infrastructure, the environment or residential amenity. It will be coordinated and delivered in partnership with other authorities and agencies.

The Council will use planning conditions or planning obligations to secure these contributions and measures.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- Provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and community services/facilities made necessary by the proposal including:
  - Contributions to meet Community Infrastructure Levy charges to ensure the proper provision of infrastructure within the district; and
  - Contributions to meet the needs of the specific development and to ameliorate undesirable impacts
- Where appropriate, contribute towards the on-going maintenance and management of services and facilities provided as part of (a)

The type, amount and phasing of contributions sought from developers will be related to the form of the development, its potential impact on the site and surrounding area, and levels of existing infrastructure and community services/facilities. Where appropriate, any such provision will be

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required to be provided on-site. Where this is not possible, a commuted payment will be sought.

Where appropriate community facilities should be co-located to encourage the reinforcement or establishment of a focal point for community activity.

Proposals for development will be expected to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure capacity required to support the development and to mitigate the impact of it on existing infrastructure exists, or will exist prior to that development being occupied.