

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE FURTHER DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Committee: Full Council

Date: 16 November 2016

Author: Richard Kay, Strategic Planning Manager

[R116]

1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 For Council to determine whether to approve, for the purpose of public consultation, the Further Draft version of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan. The Further Draft Local Plan can be viewed at Appendix 2.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 That Council:

- (A) Approves for public consultation the Further Draft Local Plan (including associated draft Policies Maps)
- (B) Approves a six week consultation period, likely commencing on 10 January 2017 and ending on 20 February 2017;
- (C) Delegates to the Director of Corporate and Commercial Services, prior to its publication for consultation, any minor, non-consequential amendments (such as correcting typographical errors) and any presentational improvements.

3.0 **BACKGROUND/OPTIONS**

Preliminary Draft Local Plan

3.1 The Council, at its meeting in January 2016, approved the Preliminary Draft Local Plan for public consultation for six weeks during February and March 2016.

3.2 The Preliminary Draft version of the Local Plan set out the following:

- A preliminary target for the total number of homes needed in East Cambridgeshire (12,800, between 2014 – 2036);
- Options for how such growth could be spread across the district;
- Sought suggestions for new land allocations (sometimes known as a 'call for sites');
- Set out draft criteria based policies on a range of matters.

3.3 The consultation (which included a well attended parish conference) resulted in over 450 responses being received. Of these:

- 201 were made relating to the document and criteria based policies as published for consultation

- 165 were site suggestions in response to the 'call for sites'
- 57 were seeking Development Envelope changes, and
- 54 were suggesting sites for Local Green Space designation.

A summary 'Key Issues Raised' report of comments received was published in May 2016, and is available on our website.

Process Post Preliminary Draft Consultation

- 3.4 Following the close of consultation on the Preliminary Draft, all comments received have been considered and, where appropriate, changes made to the policies and supporting text.
- 3.5 A further Parish Conference has also been held (2 June) to raise awareness of the sites which were suggested to us. Parish Councils were also involved in a special consultation (May-July) whereby each Parish Council was asked to comment (using a specially prepared form, known as 'Form E') on each site suggested for development. The Form asked, for example, whether the Parish Council supported the site, what 'rank' they gave it (compared with other sites suggested in their parish) and any other comments or issues which they were aware of for the site. This was a very successful exercise, and almost all Parish Councils (except those which had no sites suggested in their parish, of course) took a great deal of time to complete the forms, and send in useful information and views.

Consideration of Sites

- 3.6 A total of about 230 sites for development have been assessed, which include the 165 sites submitted during the consultation process, plus a re-assessment of existing allocations (as set out in the April 2015 adopted Local Plan) and those sites with recent planning permission. Individual site visits took place, plus a large volume of information was gathered about each site (for example: flood risk, nature conservation, landscape impact, highway impact, capacity of nearby schools, access to services and facilities, as well as the information and 'ranking' provided by the applicable Parish Council).
- 3.7 Following site visits and the site assessment process, a total of just over 100 sites are recommended by officers to be included within the Further Draft Local Plan as 'preferred allocations' for development, for the purpose of consultation.
- 3.8 Of these allocations, in most cases we have broadly followed the desires of the parish council 'ranking' and choices, and therefore it is hoped most parish councils will be broadly contented with the sites being proposed. This is not, however, always the case (eg Fordham), and this 'difference of opinion' between a parish council and officers is due to officers having to consider a wide range of technical evidence and professional considerations. For these locations, such as Fordham, officers have paid particular attention to getting the policy wording right for the less-supported allocations, so that the concerns expressed by the Parish Council as to why a site should not be picked will hopefully be mitigated by the firm policy which sets precisely what can and cannot go on a particular site (such as setting a ceiling for

development, or requiring certain access provision, or certain community facilities to be provided).

- 3.9 Separately, the suggested development envelope changes we received have been considered, though in most cases the development envelope change request was aligned with a site suggestion request. Of other non-site related requests, only one (Wentworth) is proposed to be accepted, which was related to a recent small scale permission. Other requests which were commonly suggested would amount to inappropriate encroachment into the countryside.
- 3.10 Of the suggested Local Green Spaces, all have been assessed against the criteria that were set out in the Preliminary Draft, and site visits undertaken. The sites that met the criteria (about half) have been included within the Further Draft Local Plan (as presented), and are shown on the respective Inset Policies Maps.

Further Draft Local Plan

- 3.11 The Further Draft version of the Local Plan, as attached, is the second stage (of three) in engaging with the public as to how the district could grow and change over the next 20+ years. This Further Draft contains the following:
- The proposed number of homes needed in East Cambridgeshire (11,400, between 2014 – 2036, revised down from the Preliminary Draft following the latest national household formation forecasts issued in the summer and subsequent updated objectively assessed need figures);
 - A policy which confirms a broadly proportionate distribution of growth across the district;
 - Amended, as appropriate following consultation, criteria based policies;
 - A new policy has been included relating to infill development;
 - A new set of village/town chapters, confirming the preferred site allocations together with any settlement specific policies, where required; and
 - A full set of draft Policies Maps, which identify the specific allocations and other matters.
- 3.12 Special mention should be made about **Kennett**. Here, a single very large site (500 dwellings, and other facilities) is proposed for CLT-led residential-led development, the site being considerably larger than the existing village itself. It is being recommended as an exception to the broad thrust of the plan, which elsewhere seeks a broadly pro-rata distribution of growth across the district. Further detailed consideration of this site will be necessary over the winter, especially in relation to access issues (including cross-border highway considerations). However, Kennett is specifically named in the devolution deal as an area suitable for a large scale CLT development, and this matter was of considerable weight when officers were determining whether the site should be recommended for allocation.

Preparation and Consultation

- 3.13 Assisting officers during the period from the Preliminary Draft consultation to the documentation presented today has been Local Plan Member Working Group. As a

reminder, this is a non-decision making Working Group of eight Councillors (six Conservative, one Liberal Democrat and one Independent), set up to help steer and give advice to officers on a range of issues. This Working Group has met five times since the close of consultation on the Preliminary Draft (20 April, 18 May, 21 June, 25 July and 20 September), and has helped inform the preparation of the attached. Further details on the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, and minutes (once agreed) are available on our website, midway down this page:

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/local-plan-review>

- 3.14 For the avoidance of doubt, and in accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Working Group has made no decisions in terms of what should be included in the Local Plan, nor should it be assumed that individually or collectively Members of that Working Group endorse the attached. It is a matter for Full Council alone to make decisions on the Local Plan.
- 3.15 Subject to Full Council approval, public consultation on the Further Draft Local Plan will likely take place between 10 January and 20 February 2017 (six weeks), in accordance with the requirements set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This timeframe avoids consulting over the Christmas and New Year period.
- 3.16 All comments received at the Further Draft stage will be reviewed and any necessary changes will be made. The Local Plan Member Working Group will continue to meet through 2017, with a Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan (the third and final version prior to the Local Plan undergoing its independent examination) scheduled to be produced in Spring 2017, possibly bringing it to Full Council on 25 May 2017.
- 3.17 It should be noted that, in addition to comments on what is proposed in the Local Plan, landowners and other interested parties are permitted to suggest new sites for development (i.e. ones we have not considered to date).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Council is asked to approve the Further Draft version of the Local Plan, for the purpose of public consultation. Approving the Further Draft Local Plan for public consultation at this time would ensure that the Local Plan continues to progress broadly in accordance with the agreed timetable.
- 4.2 Council today is able to make amendments to the Local Plan as presented, and such amendments will be made prior to consultation. However, officers believe the policies and sites proposed are robust and based on evidence, and are appropriate ones upon which to engage with the community to seek their views and gather any outstanding other evidence.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) completed – appendix 1.

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1: Equality Impact Screening

Appendix 2: East Cambridgeshire Further Draft Local Plan (circulated separately)

NOTE: the associated draft Policies Maps are available on the website only, whilst a copy of the Maps will be available on the evening of Full Council

Background Documents

'Key Issues Raised' Report - May 2016:

Available at:

http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ECDC%20Prelim%20Draft%20Local%20Plan%20-%20Key%20Issues%20Report%20-%20final%20May%202016_0.pdf

Location

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Appendix 1 - **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING TEMPLATE (IST)**

Initial screening needs to take place for all new/revise Council policies. The word ‘policy’, in this context, includes the different things that the Council does. It includes any policy, procedure or practice - both in employment and service delivery. It also includes proposals for restructuring, redundancies and changes to service provision. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an EIA for this activity.

Name of Policy:	Further Draft Local Plan (draft for consultation Jan 2017)
Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):	Richard Kay
Department:	Strategic Planning
Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):	Nil
Date Initial Screening Completed:	4.10.16

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

This is the second stage in a lengthy process of producing a new Local Plan. This Further Draft Local Plan captures the key issues that we already know about and sets a steer as to how we will tackle the gaps.

The Further Draft Local Plan has been prepared following a review of the existing Local Plan 2015, and following consideration of comments received on the Preliminary Draft Local Plan, Feb 2016. The Further Draft Local Plan includes 32 draft policies, addressing a wide range of planning matters and (once the plan is adopted) will be used to determine planning applications. It also contains policies and allocations for individual settlements.

The Further Draft Local Plan identifies a requirement for 11,400 new dwellings and 6,900 new jobs.

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

Once the Local Plan is adopted, its policies will apply across East Cambridgeshire. The policies will be used by the Council to determine planning applications, and sets the framework for growth across the district. Therefore, all residents and business of, and visitors to, the district will be affected by the proposals, to a lesser or greater degree.

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

The Further Draft Local Plan has principally been informed by the current adopted Local Plan 2015, a comprehensive evidence base and widespread consultation which has (and will continue to) take place as it progresses, including three separate stages of consultation. Everyone is permitted (and encouraged) to get involved in the consultation.

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

Ethnicity	Yes	Age	Yes
Gender	No	Religion or Belief	No
Disability	Yes	Sexual Orientation	No
Gender Reassignment	No	Marriage & Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy & Maternity	No	Caring Responsibilities	No

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

Policy LP6: 'Meeting local housing needs' is proposing to require developers of large sites to make provision for housing which meets the needs of specific groups, thereby having positive impacts on such groups. For example, the policy requires new development to provide a proportion of affordable housing on site. Certain groups such as some ethnic minority groups, disabled people and older people may be more likely to require affordable housing than the remainder of the population and therefore are positively impacted by the policy. The policy also requires housing to be adaptable to meet changing needs over time and a proportion of new housing to achieve higher dwelling access standards. These measures positively address issues related to age and disability.

Policy LP7 proposes to enable appropriate sites and pitches to come forward for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. These groups may include those with protected characteristics, namely ethnicity.

(e) Does the policy affect service users or the wider community?	1.1 /YES/
(f) Does the policy have a significant effect on how services are delivered?	1.2 /NO/
(g) Will it have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	/NO/
(h) Does it involve a significant commitment of resources?	/NO/
(i) Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities, e.g. disabled people's access to public transport etc?	/NO/

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment (EIA). If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service and then referred to the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) for scrutiny and verification. Please forward completed and signed forms to the Principal HR Officer.

Note by completer (Richard Kay) of this note: At this emerging stage of preparing the Local Plan, a full EIA has not been complete. This is because the plan is provisional at this stage, and is subject to consultation and, subsequently, amendment. A full EIA will be prepared, if necessary, for the next consultation stage.

Signatures:

Completing Officer:	<u>Richard Kay</u>	Date:	<u>4/10/16</u>
Head of Service:	<u>Emma Grima</u>	Date:	<u>4/10/16</u>