

**This East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Development Plan Document was adopted at a full meeting of East Cambridgeshire District Council on 21 April 2015**

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 What is the Local Plan?**

- 1.1.1 This Local Plan sets out a blueprint for the future growth of East Cambridgeshire. It looks at how much, where and when development should take place. It seeks to ensure that development in the district is 'sustainable' and meets the needs of the local area.
- 1.1.2 The Local Plan covers the period up to 2031. But it is likely that the Plan will be reviewed well before then, in response to changes in local needs and circumstances, or national policy. For further details, see section 2.6 below on monitoring and review. The Local Plan replaces the 'East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy' (2009).
- 1.1.3 The Local Plan will be the main basis for making decisions on planning applications. When adopted, planning decisions should be in accordance with the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Local Plan sits alongside the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which must also be taken into account when deciding planning applications, and preparing Local Plans.
- 1.1.4 This Local Plan is split into 2 key parts, as follows:

### **Part 1: Spatial strategy and policies**

This section sets out a strategic vision for future growth, and a series of detailed policies to guide development.

### **Part 2: Village and Town Visions**

This section sets out how each settlement should change and improve, and identifies sites for development.

## **1.2 Preparation of the Local Plan**

- 1.2.1 The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- 1.2.2 The preparation of the Local Plan involved a number of key stages which are discussed below:

Stage 1: Evidence base

- 1.2.3 The preparation of the Plan has been informed by extensive background research and information. This includes research on a range of topics, including housing delivery and supply, transport needs, infrastructure requirements, and economic development. It also includes production of a 'Sustainability Appraisal' which looks at the economic, environmental and social impacts of the Local Plan. It has also involved taking account of the plans and strategies of other organisations. The full range of background documents can be viewed on the Council's website at [www.eastcambs.gov.uk](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk).

### Introduction and strategic vision

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#### Stage 2: Issues and options

1.2.4 This stage involved identifying the key issues affecting the district and villages/towns, and exploring different options for future development.

- *Strategic development:* A district-wide consultation was carried out to gather views on key strategic issues facing the whole of East Cambridgeshire.
- *Village/town visions:* An innovative 'bottom-up' approach to development planning was adopted to produce a 'Vision' for each village and town in East Cambridgeshire (as set out in Part 2 of this Plan). This involved the District Council working in close partnership with Parish/Town Councils to organise public consultations with every local community in order to explore their local needs and priorities. It built on the production of the Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell Masterplans (non-statutory Council vision documents, produced between 2009 and 2013). As such, local people were offered a chance to influence the future of their communities, and become more involved in the planning process. Full details of this innovative approach are set out in the 'Consultation Statement' background document on the Council's website.

#### Stage 3: Publication of the draft Local Plan

1.2.5 The draft Local Plan was published in February 2013, for a six week period of public consultation. About 500 people/organisations made responses during this period. The draft Local Plan was formally submitted to Government on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

#### Stage 4: Examination

1.2.6 The Local Plan was subject to examination between 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

#### Stage 5: Adoption

1.2.7 This Plan was adopted on 21 April 2015.

## 1.3 Working with neighbouring authorities and key stakeholders

1.3.1 The District Council is expected to work together with other local authorities and public bodies across administrative boundaries, to plan for the housing, transport and infrastructure that local people need. This is known as the 'duty to cooperate'.

1.3.2 To help facilitate this process in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, a Joint Members Group and 'Joint Strategic Planning Unit' have been established. This has helped to facilitate the production of an agreed Joint Spatial Planning Statement<sup>1</sup>, coordination between authorities, and joint work on the evidence base. A non-statutory 'Strategic Spatial Priorities' document has also been jointly produced by the local authorities<sup>2</sup>. Full details of the process of co-operation and joint working is set out in the 'Duty to Cooperate Evidence Report' which accompanies this Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Statement on the Development Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by the Local Authorities (July 2012).

<sup>2</sup> 'Strategic Spatial Priorities: addressing the duty to co-operate across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough' (Jan. 2014).

## **1.4 Neighbourhood Plans**

- 1.4.1 As referred to above, the District Council has worked extensively with Parish/Town Councils and local communities to identify local needs and priorities which are reflected in the Visions in Part 2 of this Local Plan. Although the Visions capture the current aspirations of each community, it is recognised that circumstances change, and other local priorities may arise. A review of the Local Plan would be one way of addressing the need for changes to the Village/Town Visions. However, the Government has also introduced a number of new planning tools for local communities through the Localism Act, including the ability to produce ‘Neighbourhood Development Plans.’
- 1.4.2 Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish Councils, and can identify how an area (i.e. a settlement, area or street) should grow and change. The Neighbourhood Plan process provides another opportunity for local people to influence what is built in their area – although it should be noted that Neighbourhood Development Plans need to be in conformity with the Local Plan and can only provide for equal or additional growth. A Neighbourhood Development Plan becomes part of the statutory plan for East Cambridgeshire, and its policies will sit alongside, or replace those in the Local Plan where they overlap. Communities who wish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan are advised to contact the Council’s Forward Planning team for further advice.
- 1.4.3 The District Council recognises the importance of community-led initiatives, and has also included a policy in this Local Plan which supports ‘community-led development’ on the edge of villages. This provides an alternative to the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, and means the Plan is flexible enough to help meet community needs as they arise without the need to carry out a review. Further details are set out in Policy GROWTH 6 below.

## **1.5 Further information**

- 1.5.1 If you have any questions or queries about the Local Plan, please call the Strategic Planning team on 01353 665555 or email [ldf@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@eastcambs.gov.uk).
- 1.5.2 Further information (including technical background documents and Supplementary Planning Documents) can be viewed on the Council’s website at:

[www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework)

## **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 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 about 85,000<sup>3</sup>. The population has increased significantly in recent years and growth is expected to continue.

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 45% of the district's population, with the remaining population spread between about 50 villages and other parts of the district.

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



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<sup>3</sup> East Cambridgeshire population of 84,700 – mid-2012 estimate: Cambs County Council Research Group.

### Introduction and strategic vision

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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 proximity to Ely, and the town centre is also suffering decline. 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. Despite increases in the number of jobs in the district over the last decade, there are high levels of out-commuting to jobs in the Cambridgeshire area. A very high proportion of local businesses employ fewer than 10 people.

2.2.5 The landscape and economy 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:

- 1,910 hectares 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>4</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. However, as noted above, there are variations across the district, and pockets of deprivation exist.

## 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 managing high levels of growth and the effects of 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 housing, compared to Cambridge, has stimulated rapid population growth in East Cambridgeshire. This has meant a significant increase in the level of out-commuting and pressures on local

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<sup>4</sup> Halifax Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey 2012.

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 below:

- **Delivering local jobs** – The district has one of the highest levels of out-commuting in the region (49% of the working population<sup>5</sup>), with many higher skilled workers commuting to Cambridge and elsewhere. It is likely that the level of out-commuting has increased 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. This should also help to increase the jobs density ratio<sup>6</sup>, and help to create more sustainable self contained communities.
- **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 has limited retail floorspace, 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, Stansted Airport and London. 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 and other key roads also experience significant congestion, with a high proportion of residents commuting to Cambridge and elsewhere for work. The challenge is to lower the level of out-commuting and tackle these capacity issues with investment in transport infrastructure.
- **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. 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 retention of local services is a key issue, particularly for rural communities. The challenge is to resist the loss of important facilities and support the delivery of new ones. This will be especially important in the context of the district's ageing population, and the dispersed rural nature of the district.
- **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

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<sup>5</sup> 2001 Census.

<sup>6</sup> Number of jobs per resident population age 16 to 64 years. See section 3.2 for more details.

new development is well designed and locally distinctive. Enhancing the character and distinctiveness of the district will help to benefit 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 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 spatial vision statements for the market towns and Burwell are provided in Part 2 of this document.

### A spatial vision for East Cambridgeshire

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, increasing the jobs density ratio, and creating more balanced communities with a better level of self-containment. A mix of residential development will be delivered to meet local needs (including affordable housing), whilst ensuring necessary infrastructure and community facilities/services are in place to support growth. In the wider countryside, appropriate small-scale development<sup>7</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 respond to local needs and requirements as far as possible in terms of type, size and tenure. In addition, large developments will be of exemplar quality<sup>8</sup>, and 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.

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<sup>7</sup> Such as small scale and affordable housing, recreation, tourism, community facilities, small scale employment and farm diversification.

<sup>8</sup> See Glossary for details.

### Introduction and strategic vision

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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>9</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 (including to settlements in neighbouring areas), and the A10 will be developed as a high quality public transport corridor. Better cycling and pedestrian facilities and links will be provided, including segregated cycle routes along key routes linking towns and villages. Other infrastructure improvement projects required to support growth will also be delivered.

The overall diversity and quality of East Cambridgeshire's countryside and natural environment will have improved and the historic environment conserved and enhanced. There will be better access to the countryside and green spaces for local communities which helps to improve people's quality of life. 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. Support the local economy and help create more jobs in the district, which meet local employment needs, reduces out-commuting, and helps to increase the sustainability and self-containment of communities in East Cambridgeshire.
2. Provide a range of new housing in appropriate locations, which meets local housing needs as far as possible.
3. Support and enhance the vitality and viability of town and village centres, as places for shopping, leisure and community activities.
4. Ensure that new development is of high quality and sustainable design which reflects local character and distinctiveness, provides attractive and safe environments, and is supported by appropriate facilities and services.
5. Protect and enhance the quality, local distinctiveness and diversity of the natural, historic and built environment.
6. Protect the open countryside and land within the Green Belt against insensitive and sporadic development.
7. Reduce the environmental impact of development and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by reducing pollution and waste, maximising water and energy efficiency, dealing with flood risk and surface water management, and promoting the use of renewable energy sources and sustainable construction methods.

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<sup>9</sup> For example, community halls, local shops and pubs, and health facilities.



**Introduction and strategic vision**

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8. Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use, by locating most development where there is good access to jobs, services and facilities, and supporting improvements in public transport and walking/cycling networks.
9. Ensure a high quality of life by maintaining and delivering strategic and local infrastructure and facilities needed to support local communities.
10. Support the expansion of the tourist economy and the ability of the district to act as a tourist destination which attracts high numbers of visitors for longer stays.

## **2.6 Monitoring and review**

- 2.6.1 The Local Plan covers the period up to 2031, but it is likely that it will be reviewed well in advance of this date, in order to respond to changing local circumstances and/or changes in national policy. In particular it will be important that there is a sufficient supply of housing and employment land in the district to deliver identified needs.
- 2.6.2 The Council will regularly monitor the supply of suitable land and the effectiveness and implementation of other policies through the Annual Monitoring Report. The report will set out appropriate indicators and targets, and be produced in January each year. If there is an insufficient supply of land, or other targets are not being met, it may be necessary to carry out a review or a partial review of the Local Plan. On a lesser level, it may be necessary to produce additional Supplementary Planning Documents to give guidance on the implementation of a particular policy.
- 2.6.3 The Council is committed to responding to the needs of its communities, and intends to maintain on-going dialogue with Parish Councils about local needs and priorities. The Council will monitor the outcomes of these on-going discussions to ensure that the Village and Town Visions remain up to date, and that the needs of communities are being met. If there are significant changes needed it may be necessary to carry out a partial review or full review of the Local Plan. Alternatively, Parish Councils may wish to produce Neighbourhood Plans of their own to deal with particular issues or deliver specific sites (see section 1.4 for further details).
- 2.6.4 The Council will co-operate positively with neighbouring planning authorities and with the joint planning arrangements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Council may need to review the Local Plan as a consequence of any future non-statutory spatial framework for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (see section 1.3 above), or to respond to other sub-regional needs and requirements.

## **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>10</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. The Coalition Government's localism agenda (including 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. The right level of housing can help to support economic growth, meet local housing needs, and facilitate the delivery of infrastructure. Having a housing target also allows a local authority to work with service providers and other organisations to ensure suitable infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of new development.
- 3.2.4 The housing requirement for East Cambridgeshire needs to be justified and based on an objective assessment of need (paragraph 47 in National Planning Policy Framework). This involves looking at housing needs and demands (including demographic evidence,

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 24/187 – as set out in the NPPF page 2.

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affordability levels, jobs growth) – but also taking account of supply, delivery and strategic matters which may have an impact (including land availability, infrastructure capacity and market deliverability). It also involves co-ordination with the strategy of neighbouring authorities, and working together to ensure the needs of the housing market area are met. The District's Council's housing requirement has been informed by the following key evidence documents:

- 'Technical Report on Population, Housing and Employment' (May 2013) - commissioned jointly by Cambridgeshire authorities and Peterborough and undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council.
- A new 'All Homes' chapter in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (May 2013) – looking at objectively assessed need across the Cambridge Housing Market Area. The work was jointly commissioned by the Housing Board and the Strategic Planning Unit for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

3.2.5 The SHMA identifies a need for 13,000 dwellings in East Cambridgeshire between 2011 and 2031. However, under the 'duty to cooperate' the District Council has reached agreement with other Cambridgeshire authorities and Peterborough Council to deliver a total of 11,500 dwellings between 2011 and 2031. This agreement, involving a redistribution of housing between some of the authorities, is set out in the 'Memorandum of Cooperation between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough authorities' (May 2013). The Memorandum concludes that the target for East Cambridgeshire should be lower than 13,000 dwellings as the Council has *'made considerable progress to date with [its] local plan reviews, and therefore have established a good understanding of their areas' development opportunities and constraints. They have also taken account of the July 2012 joint statement by Peterborough and Cambridgeshire authorities which confirmed that the strategy is to secure sustainable development by locating new homes in and close to Cambridge and Peterborough, and to other main centres of employment, whilst avoiding dispersed development.'* **The agreed target of 11,500 dwellings for East Cambridgeshire represents an annual rate of 575 dwellings per year.** This rate is more than the previous Regional Strategy target for the district (430 per year) and is suitably challenging given the recent economic downturn and altered market conditions. Details regarding delivery are set out in Policy GROWTH 4 below. In summary, the evidence indicates that this level of housing growth:

- Will be sufficient to meet East Cambridgeshire's own housing needs, and is a coherent strategy in the context of neighbouring local authorities emerging Plans.
- Is a sustainable level of housing which should help to support the Council's strategic aim to provide a better balance between housing and employment and reduce levels of out-commuting.
- 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. 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).
- Is consistent with the strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region (as set out in the Joint Planning Statement).
- Will be supported by appropriate levels of new infrastructure and services; and,
- Will help to facilitate the delivery of appropriate levels of affordable housing to meet local needs over the Plan period.

#### Level of economic growth

- 3.2.6 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<sup>11</sup> (0.54) and it is the aim of this Plan to improve on these overall figures over the Plan period. Of particular concern is the recent trend for very high levels of out-commuting from new housing estates in Ely (as evidenced in recent surveys<sup>12</sup>).
- 3.2.7 Future employment needs have been identified and assessed as part of the Council's 'Jobs Growth Strategy' (2012) which acts as a technical background document to this Plan. This strategy sets out a minimum requirement of 9,200 new jobs in the district between 2011 and 2031 or approximately 460 per annum. This would bring the East Cambridgeshire jobs density ratio closer to 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.
- 3.2.8 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 use classes) in sustainable locations which meets the needs of local businesses.
- 3.2.9 A previous study by SQW in 2008 ('East Cambs Employment and Labour Market Study Update' 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 jobs would require a minimum of 70 hectares of land. 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 at least 69.62 hectares of new land will be identified. When combined with outstanding planning commitments and unused sites identified in the Council's Core Strategy, it is estimated that a total of 179.71 hectares is 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 office provision in the future, particularly in Ely in order to cater for demand from professional and technical services occupations. Additional employment land has also been identified in the

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<sup>11</sup> Number of jobs per resident population age 16 to 64 years. Jobs source – ONS 2009. Population source – County Council's mid-year population estimates 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Ely New Estates Surveys 2002 and 2007.

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Fordham area as this has seen the largest growth in floorspace and jobs over the last decade, and is well placed strategically given its proximity to the A14/A11 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 allocations 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 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.
- *The need for flexibility in employment land provision, and to recognise that employment densities can vary widely.* 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 as they cover such long time frames and macro-economic factors can have significant impacts at the local level.
- *The need to provide an effective spatial distribution across the district,* to achieve a better balance between jobs and homes in a range of settlements.

3.2.10 Section 3.4 below sets out details of proposed employment allocations, which will form a key part of the strategy in delivering jobs growth in the district. In addition to allocation sites for purely employment uses (B1, B2, B8), there are a number of mixed use allocations which include employment uses. This is seen as a critical new element of the Council's strategy to increase the number of jobs in the district and improve the jobs density ratio. By linking employment development to uses with a higher land value, it is anticipated this will help facilitate employment growth (see section 3.5.13 for further details).

#### Level of retail growth

3.2.11 As the population grows, additional retail development will be required to provide shopping opportunities at a local level. The Council's Retail Assessment (2012) assesses qualitative issues and quantitative requirements for additional retail floorspace to meet future needs. The Study concludes that there will be a need over the Plan period between 2012 and 2031 for:

- Convenience (food) retail – An additional 3,000m<sup>2</sup> (net) of new floorspace. 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) – An additional 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (net) of new floorspace. Ely is recommended as the main the focus for this provision.

3.2.12 These floorspace requirements represent minimum levels needed to cater for the increased population of the district. There may be scope for additional retail floorspace

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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 town centres. This would help the Council achieve its objective of strengthening the retail offer in Ely, Soham and Littleport. All applications for retail development will be assessed against Policy COM 1. Further information on how retail growth will be delivered in the district is set out in section 3.5 below.

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

In the period 2011 to 2031, the District Council will:

- Make provision for the delivery of 11,500 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 at least 179 ha of employment land for B1/B2/B8 uses, and providing for home working.

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

- Make provision for at least an additional 3,000m<sup>2</sup> (net) of convenience and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (net) of comparison retail floorspace in the district.

### 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. 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 objectives 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

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built-up parts of settlements to meet identified needs. This includes proposed allocations (see section 3.5 below) as well as appropriate windfall sites (as assessed by other policies in this Plan). 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 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 Inset Maps of the Policies Map. They are similar to those in the Core Strategy (2009), but with two key changes. Firstly, the development envelopes have been re-drawn to include new allocations on the edge of towns and villages and also current employment areas on the edge of settlements – where these form part of the main built-up framework of a settlement. Secondly, a comprehensive review has taken place of detailed boundaries to remove anomalies and update boundaries in light of changes. It should be noted that the development envelopes do not necessarily include all areas of built development. For example, there are numerous single dwellings or small groups of houses in the countryside, plus 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. There are also a number of employment areas and allocations which have been excluded as they are in the open countryside or are divided from the main built-up framework of a settlement by fields, roads or other clear boundaries.
- 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. This will apply to all sizes of sites within the development envelope. It should be noted that there are two key exceptions to this approach. Firstly, the Council is keen to retain land or premises used for employment purposes (B1/B2/B8 development). Therefore proposals involving change of use of employment sites and allocations will only be permitted as an exception – in accordance with Policy EMP 1. Secondly, the Council is keen to retain community facilities such as local shops, pubs, community meeting places, schools and open spaces. Therefore proposals involving their loss will only be permitted as an exception – in accordance with Policy COM 3.
- 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 HOU 4 relating to affordable housing, and Policy EMP 3 relating to new employment development in the countryside).



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- 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. The Council also wishes to strengthen the retail offer in Soham and Littleport to match their growth predictions. 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>13</sup> will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in the countryside, as assessed against Policy COM 1. One type of exception may include 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 centre locations - in accordance with the sequential test outlined in Policy COM 1 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 Chapter 7. 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 significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and that all other material planning considerations are satisfied. Two key exceptions to this will apply in the case of proposals involving the loss of employment land or community facilities – which will be assessed against Policies EMP 1 and COM 3 respectively. Retail 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 centre sites, in accordance with Policy COM 1 and other policies in Part 2 of this Local Plan.

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

- Community-based development (see Policy GROWTH 6), which may include uses such as affordable housing, small business units and renewable energy schemes.

<sup>13</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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- Affordable housing exception schemes (see Policy HOU 4).
- Dwellings for essential rural workers (see Policy HOU 5).
- Residential care homes (see Policy HOU 6).
- Extension and replacement of dwellings in the countryside (see Policy HOU 8).
- Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites (see Policy HOU 9).
- Extensions to existing businesses (see Policy EMP 2).
- Small-scale employment development (see Policy EMP 3).
- Re-use and replacement of buildings in the countryside (see Policy EMP 4).
- Horse racing and equestrian development (see Policy EMP 5).
- Tourism development (see Policies EMP 7 and EMP 8).
- Renewable energy development (see Policy ENV 6).
- Enabling development associated with heritage assets (see Policy ENV 16).
- Farm shops (see Policy COM 1).
- Outdoor recreation and leisure facilities (see Policies COM 4 and COM 5).
- Telecommunications (see Policy COM 6).
- Agriculture, horticulture and forestry.
- Utility infrastructure and flood protection schemes.
- Specific allocations in the Local Plan (see Policy GROWTH 4 and policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan).

### 3.4 Infrastructure needs

- 3.4.1 When development takes place it makes additional demands on infrastructure, including water and energy supply, wastewater disposal, sustainable transport infrastructure, 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 key infrastructure requirements that are likely to be needed over the Plan period to support the levels of growth envisaged in Policy GROWTH 1. This list has been informed by the Council's 'Infrastructure Investment Plan' (2013) which uses future population estimates to anticipate likely requirements in relation to education, open space, sports facilities, health facilities, community facilities, and transport infrastructure. The list has also been informed by discussions with key infrastructure providers, including EDF Energy and Anglian Water. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive, and does not include site-specific infrastructure which may be required in connection with individual development sites to mitigate their impact. For example, the need for a new access to a site, or a pedestrian crossing point, which cannot be anticipated in all instances.
- 3.4.3 The policy also looks at how infrastructure requirements can be delivered. The process of identifying infrastructure needs is an essential starting point, and the Council plays an important role in coordinating 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 National Health Service (healthcare), Parish Councils (allotments and play areas) and utility companies (as well as the District Council itself).

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3.4.4 The planning system can be used in a number of other ways, including securing the provision of infrastructure or contributions towards infrastructure from developers. A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been adopted by the Council, and most residential and retail development is required to pay a CIL charge (for further details, see the Council's adopted CIL Charging Schedule). In some cases, it will also be necessary for development to make provision for site-specific infrastructure needed in relation to a particular scheme. This may be provided on-site (secured through planning conditions or Section 106 agreements), or through financial contributions from developers secured through Section 106 agreements. Section 106 agreements will need to meet tests set out in Regulations, and may be sought for a variety of infrastructure and benefits, including:

- Community facilities including library and public health services.
- Education facilities including primary, secondary and special schools.
- Sport, leisure, open space and recreation facilities.
- Transport infrastructure.
- Flood mitigation and improvement measures; and
- Environmental improvements.

Further details are set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions.

3.4.5 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.

3.4.6 The District Council commissioned a Water Cycle Strategy<sup>14</sup> in 2011 to assess the potential constraints to water supply and wastewater treatment within the district. The report concludes that there is an adequate water supply within East Cambridgeshire to accommodate additional growth. However the study identified a need for the existing Wastewater Treatment Works at Littleport and Soham to be expanded to enable further development, and that there may be a need to upgrade a number of other works to accommodate the levels of growth proposed in the Local Plan. Anglian Water will explore potential opportunities to make efficient use of existing wastewater infrastructure to accommodate additional housing development before determining whether there is a need for these other works to be upgraded. All upgrades to Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) will be managed by the statutory sewerage undertaker and the timing of development will be subject to the delivery of sufficient capacity at the receiving sewage treatment works. Table 3.1 summarises Anglian Water's position on the capacity of WWTWs within East Cambridgeshire.

3.4.7 It should be noted that Anglian Water has confirmed that the existing Wastewater Treatment Works at Ely can accommodate the expected level of growth outlined in the Local Plan, and that they have no operational requirement to provide a new sewage treatment works on a site to the north of Ely (to replace the existing facility located on Creswells Lane). This position is different to that stated in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan (2012), which identifies an area of search for a new WWTW to the north of Ely.

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<sup>14</sup> East Cambridgeshire District Council Water Cycle Study Detailed Study Stage 2 Report (September 2011).

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3.4.8 In addition upgrades to the foul network may be required and these will be assessed on a site by site basis. It should also be noted that surface water systems in parts of the district are at capacity, and new developments will have to ensure appropriate surface water drainage and discharge arrangements are secured. This will involve liaising with the relevant Internal Drainage Board as well as Anglian Water (for further details see Policy ENV 8).

Table 3.1 – Anglian Water's position on Wastewater Treatment capacity

Waste Water Treatment Works	Settlements within WWTW catchment area	Capacity issues
Ely Old and New WWTW	Ely, Barway, Chettisham and Queen Adelaide	Upgrades to Ely Old and Ely New WWTWs not required to accommodate further growth. No operational requirement to relocate Ely Old WWTW. Upgrades to foul sewage network required at Ely.
Littleport WWTW	Littleport	Upgrade to Littleport WWTW planned for February 2014.
Soham WWTW	Soham, Fordham and Wicken	Upgrade to Soham WWTW planned for March 2014.
Bottisham WWTW	Bottisham, Lode and Swaffham Bulbeck	WWTW currently operating close to full permitted capacity. Only modest development as outlined in the Local Plan could currently be accommodated. Consultation with Anglian Water would be required to ensure that capacity is available for further development or whether an upgrade is required.
Isleham WWTW	Isleham	Upgrade to Isleham WWTW may be required (post 2015).
Stretham WWTW	Stretham and Little Thetford	Upgrade to Stretham WWTW may be required (post 2015).
Witcham WWTW	Witcham, Sutton and Wentworth	Upgrade to Witcham WWTW may be required.
Witchford WWTW	Witchford	Upgrade to Witchford WWTW may be required.
Wilburton WWTW	Wilburton	Upgrade to Wilburton WWTW may be required (post 2015).

3.4.9 EDF Energy has made a high level assessment of existing electricity sub stations that 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 substations which serve Ely, Haddenham, Littleport and 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. New and improved infrastructure within the district will be delivered through the following measures:

- Development proposals will be required to make contributions towards infrastructure in accordance with the Council's adopted Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.
- Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and community facilities made necessary by the development, where this is not provided through the Community Infrastructure Levy. This will be through on or off site provision or through financial payments, and secured via planning conditions or planning obligations (Section 106 agreements). Further guidance is set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions. In the case of open space and play area facilities, this will

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only be sought from schemes of 20 or more dwellings.

- The District Council will work closely with infrastructure providers at the earliest possible stage to ensure inclusion of infrastructure schemes within their programmes, plans and strategies, and delivery of specific infrastructure requirements in conjunction with individual development schemes and the expected timing of development coming forward.
- Land will be identified in the Local Plan for the provision of new infrastructure (see Part 2).
- The protection of existing infrastructure and facilities as outlined in Policy COM 3.

Key infrastructure requirements relevant to growth within the district include the following (this list is not exhaustive and is taken from the Council's Infrastructure Investment Plan):

#### Education

- New pre-school facilities at Burwell, Ely, Littleport and Soham, and expansion of pre-school facilities elsewhere within the district.
- New Early Years (nursery) facilities at Burwell, Ely, Soham and Littleport and expansion of existing facilities elsewhere.
- 2 new primary schools in Ely, 1 in Littleport and 1 in Soham, and expansion elsewhere in the district.
- A new secondary school at Littleport, and expansion of existing facilities elsewhere.
- New Area Special School in Littleport.

#### Green infrastructure, leisure and open space

- Strategic green infrastructure improvements as outlined in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, including the provision of Ely Country Park and Block Fen nature reserve, improvements to Soham Town Commons and the Ouse Corridor, and the Wicken Fen Vision.
- New Leisure Centre at Downham Road, Ely.
- Improvements to open space, sports facility and play area provision throughout the district (with the aim of meeting Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)).

#### Health facilities

- New primary healthcare facility (Doctors) at Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely.
- Expanded primary healthcare provision at Burwell, Littleport, Soham and Ely city centre.
- Redevelopment and enhancement of facilities at Princess of Wales Hospital, Ely.

#### Transport

- Highway and sustainable transport infrastructure improvements associated with the development of North Ely, including pedestrian and cycle routes to the station and the town centre.
- Major improvements to the A142 between Angel Drove and Stuntney Causeway.
- Dualling of the A10 between A142 Witchford Road and A142 Angel Drove.
- Improvements to Queen Adelaide Way.
- Improvements to the junctions of the A14/A142 and A14/A10.
- Capacity and junction improvements to the A10.
- Development of Soham Railway Station.
- Improvements to Ely Railway Station (passenger transport interchange, improved pedestrian and segregated cycle access and increased car and cycle parking) and Littleport Railway Station

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(increased car and cycle parking).

- Improved rail and bus services.
- Improvements to pedestrian and cycle networks within settlements and between settlements (including segregated cycle routes with appropriate crossings at key points where possible).

#### Other infrastructure

- Upgrading of existing Waste Water Treatment Works where required.
- Upgrading to electricity infrastructure, as required.
- Providing and/or upgrading telecommunications infrastructure.

## 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 or noting broad locations to meet the remaining shortfall can ensure that appropriate levels of growth are delivered.

3.5.3 The 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 'Site Assessment Results (February 2013) and Assessment of Deliverability in Market Towns (July 2014)' and in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal documents. 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 and deliverability of sites, including access, environmental constraints and viability.
- Strategic economic requirements for particular employment locations.
- Community aspirations for development, as expressed through community and Parish Council engagement during Local Plan preparation (see the Council's Consultation Statement for details). 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.

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3.5.4 The allocations are not solely limited to housing, employment and retail uses. A number of the allocations also include or relate to new community facilities and infrastructure – linked to identified local and/or strategic needs. 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

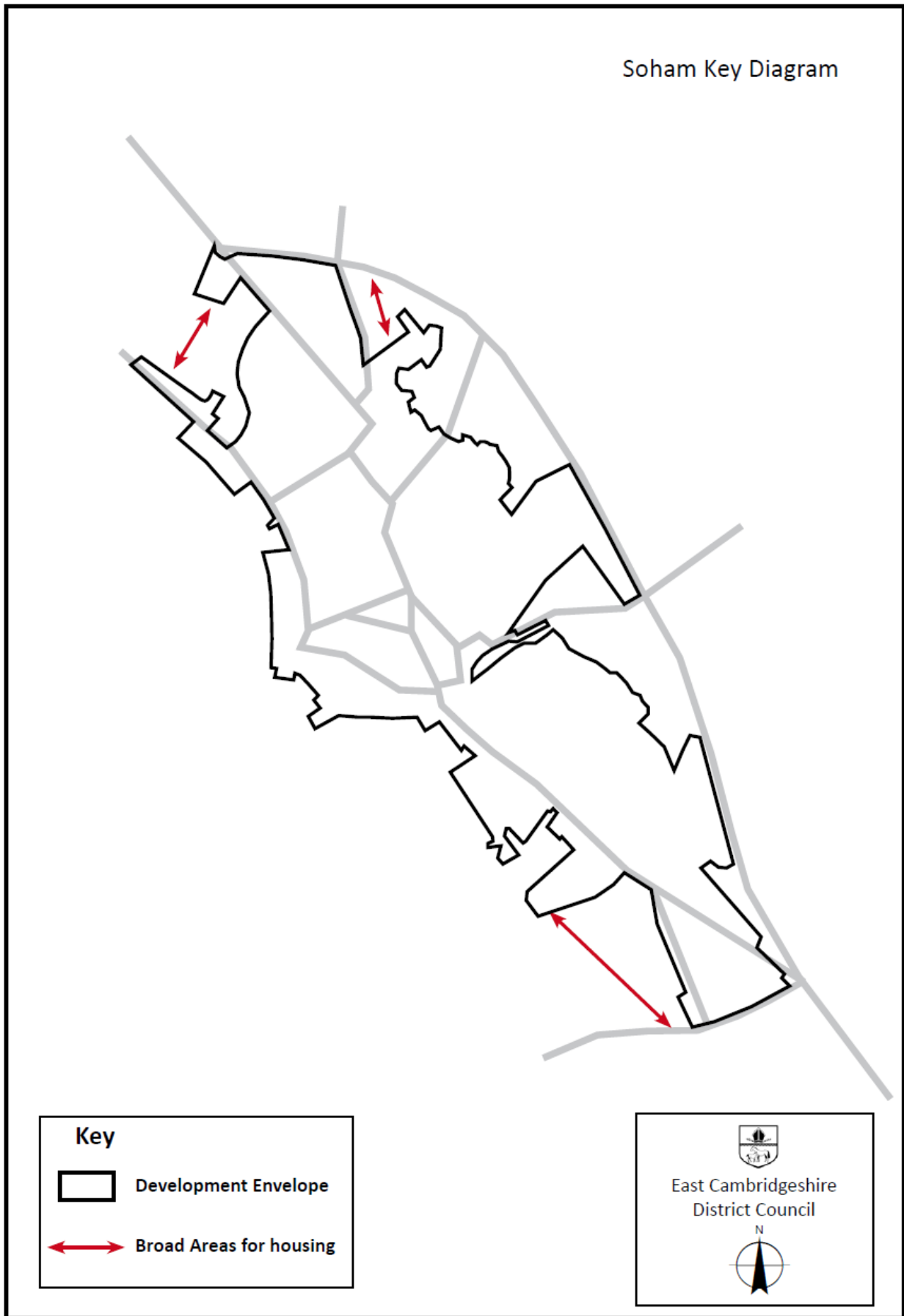
3.5.5 Housing will be delivered in the district from a range of potential sources, including:

- Outstanding commitments (including sites with planning permission, and outstanding allocations from the 2000 Local Plan<sup>15</sup>).
- Large potential sites within settlements – as identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Review 2014). The next review of the Plan may provide an opportunity to explore whether to allocate this source of supply in order to provide greater certainty over future delivery.
- Small windfall sites (within settlements and outside) – 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 (Review 2014).
- New allocations on the edge of settlements – as identified in Policy GROWTH 4 and Part 2 of the Local Plan.
- Broad locations on the edge of key settlements – as identified in the key diagrams below. Specific sites will be identified through the future Local Plan review.

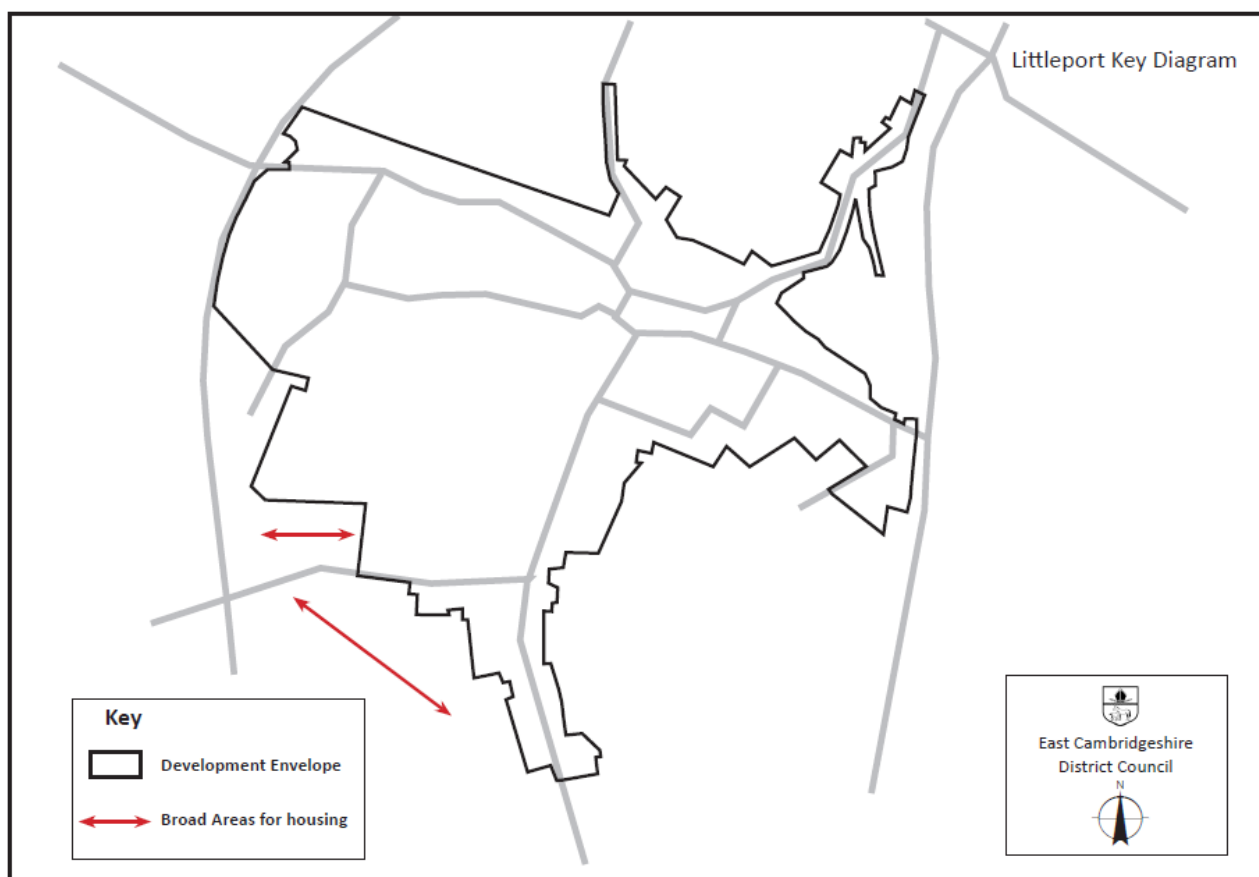
3.5.6 Table 3.2 summarises how and where housing is likely to be delivered in East Cambridgeshire over the Plan period. It identifies there will be sufficient overall supply of land to meet the district's housing requirement of 11,500 dwellings, as set out in Policy GROWTH 1. The latest projections (as at September 2014) indicate that an estimated 12,000 additional dwellings could come forward between 2011 and 2031. It is estimated that approximately 6,500 of these dwellings will be on new allocations, mainly on the edge of existing towns and villages. The table also includes reference to 'broad locations', which are identified in the key diagrams below. The diagrams are indicative only and identify broad areas on the edge of Soham and Littleport which were identified as 'phase 2' sites in the Soham and Littleport Masterplans, and could be developed in the future. The supply from this source is not anticipated to be required in strategic terms until the later part of the Plan period. Therefore the locations are broadly identified at this stage – and it is intended that the specific site boundaries will be identified through the next Local Plan review. There is sufficient identified capacity on the edge of Soham and Littleport to enable this source of supply to be realised. 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 4 (with site-specific policies contained in Part 2 of this Local Plan).

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<sup>15</sup> East Cambridgeshire District Local Plan (2000).







3.5.7 Further details of the various sources of housing supply, the breakdown by settlement, and predicted levels of supply year on year throughout the Plan period (the ‘housing trajectory’) is set out in the Annual Monitoring Report [until the Local Plan is adopted, the latest housing trajectory for the Local Plan will be contained in a separate Background Paper on ‘Housing Supply’ – see the Council’s website]. The housing trajectory in the Council’s ‘Housing Supply Paper’ September 2014 demonstrates that a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites incorporating an additional buffer of 5% can be identified in the district as required by Government. Further information on the tenure and type of dwellings is set out in Chapter 4 of this Local Plan.

Table 3.2 – Summary of estimated housing supply 2011-31

Location	Completions 2011/12 – 2012/13 <sup>16</sup>	Outstanding commitments as at 1.4.13 <sup>17</sup>	Large potential sites	Small windfall sites	Specific rural sites	Allocations	TOTAL
<b>Market towns</b>	458	950	315	241	0	5849	7782
<i>Ely</i>	95	145	56	68	0	3679	4043
<i>Soham</i>	260	256	40	114	0	1620	2290
<i>Littleport</i>	103	549	188	59	0	550	1449
<b>Villages</b>	200	321	276	421	70	659	1947

<sup>16</sup> Source: Cambridgeshire County Council Housing Completions and Commitments data April 2013

<sup>17</sup> Source: as above.

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Rural windfall estimate	-	-	471	-	-	471
Broad locations	-	-	-	-	-	1,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>1271</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>1133</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>6508</b>
						<b>12,000</b>

### Employment delivery

- 3.5.8 The Local Plan needs to consider how employment opportunities can be delivered. This will partly depend on economic factors outside the remit of the planning system. However, ensuring that land is available and appropriate for various types of employment use gives some certainty to land owners and developers, and can help facilitate development. A significant supply of allocated sites are proposed, for reasons explained in section 3.2.
- 3.5.9 Table 3.3 provides a broad summary of how and where B1/B2/B8 employment land is likely to be delivered in the district between 2013 and 2031. It includes details relating to outstanding commitments (sites with planning permission which have yet to be implemented) and proposed allocation sites. The proposed allocation sites include a number of sites which were identified in the Core Strategy but have yet to be delivered, and a number of 'new' allocations. However, it should be noted that there are also likely to be 'windfall' developments that come forward over the Plan period, which are not possible to predict, but may be supported by policies in Chapter 5 of this Plan. For example, extensions to existing businesses, or the development of small new sites close to towns and villages.
- 3.5.10 A full list of the specific proposed allocations is set out in Policy GROWTH 4 – along with minimum jobs growth targets for the individual sites (as derived from the Council's Jobs Growth Strategy). The specific size of employment area is not yet known in the case of North Ely and the Ely Station Gateway area, and will be determined through further masterplanning work of these areas (see the Ely Vision in Part 2 of this Plan for further details). On mixed use housing/employment schemes it should be noted that the jobs growth targets are provided as a guide – and that an element of the jobs target may be achieved through initiatives such as homeworking rather than new build employment space.
- 3.5.11 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. This is a key part of the Council's strategy to increase the delivery of employment land in the district, and improve the jobs density ratio. 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.
- 3.5.12 The employment 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). It also indicates that

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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. Allocations in these locations therefore reflect these particular needs.

Table 3.3 – Summary of estimated B1/B2/B8 employment land supply 2013-31 (hectares) (source: Cambs County Council Employment Monitoring Data April 2013)

Settlement	Outstanding commitments <sup>18</sup>	Allocations identified in the Core Strategy	'New' allocations	Total allocations (hectares)	TOTAL hectares
Ely	19.42	40.5	20.52	61.02	80.44
Soham	1.54	11	8	19	20.54
Littleport	1.93	4.77	8.6	13.37	15.3
Bottisham	0.23	1	0.2	1.2	1.43
Burwell	-0.65	5.5		5.5	4.85
Haddenham	-0.12		0.8	0.8	0.68
Sutton	16.38				16.38
Fordham	0.66	7	29.5	36.5	37.16
Isleham	0.01		1	1	1.01
Pymoor	0.56				0.56
Swaffham Prior			1	1	1
Burrough Green					0
Stretham	-0.08				-0.08
Cheveley	0.09				0.09
Wicken	-0.42				-0.42
Witchford	0.77				0.77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40.32</b>	<b>69.77</b>	<b>69.62</b>	<b>139.39</b>	<b>179.71 ha</b>

### Retail delivery

3.5.13 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 (including comparison non-food and convenience food floorspace). 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 or expansion of existing retail units or the development of new sites. These 'windfall' developments will need to accord with Policy COM 1.

3.5.14 Tables 3.4 and 3.5 provide a broad summary of how and where new retail floorspace is likely to be delivered in the district over the Plan period 2012-31, from the first two sources – and also taking account of completions from the monitoring year 2012/13. However, although it includes a broad estimate of capacity on allocation sites, 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. Further details

<sup>18</sup>The figures exclude Lancaster Way Business Park and the Octagon Business Park which have previously gained permission but are allocated in this Local Plan.

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are provided in the allocation policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan. It can be seen that the overall estimated supply is estimated to be greater than the minimum 'target' of 3,000m<sup>2</sup> (convenience food) and 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (comparison non-food) new retail floorspace established in Policy GROWTH 1.

Table 3.4 – Summary of estimated convenience retail supply 2012-31 (net retail floorspace) (Source Cambridgeshire County Council Retail Monitoring Data April 2013)

Location	Completions 2012/13 (m2)	Outstanding convenience floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> )	Allocations	TOTAL
Ely			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 local centres North Ely – up to 1,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Octagon Business Park (Angel Drove) – 881m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Station Gateway local shops – up to 539m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	NK
Bottisham		60		60
Burwell		233		233
Soham		1,393	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgens, Church Hall and Coop areas - NK</li> <li>• Station Road local shops - NK</li> <li>• Eastern Gateway local shop - NK</li> </ul>	>1,393
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,686m2</b>	<b>2,420m2</b>	<b>&gt; 4,106m2</b>

Table 3.5 – Summary of estimated comparison retail supply 2012-31 (net retail floorspace) (source: Cambridgeshire County Council Retail Monitoring Report Data April 2013)

Location	Completions 2012/2013 (m2)	Outstanding comparison floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> )	Allocations	TOTAL
Ely	-22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Grange - 4,200m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Waitrose car park area - NK</li> <li>• 2 local centres North Ely – up to 1,000m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Station Gateway local shops – up to 539m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Octagon Business Park (Angel Drove) – 7,913m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	>13,652
Burwell		30		30
Fordham	238	116		116
Little Downham	50			
Littleport	315			
Soham		465	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgens, Church Hall and Coop areas - NK</li> <li>• Garden Centre – NK</li> <li>• Land off Station Road - NK</li> </ul>	465
Sutton		72		72
Wilburton		270		270
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>581m2</b>	<b>953m2</b>	<b>13,652m2</b>	<b>&gt; 15,186 m<sup>2</sup></b>

#### **Policy GROWTH 4: Delivery of growth**

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

- Approximately 6,500 dwellings on the edge of towns and villages.

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- Approximately 139 hectares of employment development (B1/B2/B8 uses) plus additional floorspace in other sites listed in the table below.
- At least 13,652m<sup>2</sup> comparison retail floorspace in Ely, plus additional comparison and convenience floorspace on sites listed in the table below; and
- Key infrastructure and community facilities, including new schools, expanded health facilities, leisure facilities and open space.

The sites identified below 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 minimum jobs growth target as well as the amount of land allocated. Note: \* = number of units/floorspace yet to be determined.

<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	1300-1500 jobs for whole site. To include minimum of 2.8 ha of B1/B2/B8 land	2 local centres – up to 1,000m <sup>2</sup> convenience, up to 1,000m <sup>2</sup> comparison	2 primary schools and pre-schools, Country Park extension	ELY 1
The Grange	50	*	4200m <sup>2</sup> retail		ELY 2
Paradise area	64		*Leisure	Public car park	ELY 3
Waitrose area	20		*Retail		ELY 4
Nutholt Lane area	30	*			ELY 5
Station Gateway area	400-630	Broadly equivalent to 3.8 ha (minimum of 800 jobs)	Station local shops – up to 1,078m <sup>2</sup>	Transport interchange	ELY 7-8
Octagon Business Park		1.92 ha	13.34 ha		ELY 9
Land at Downham Road			*Sports centre, pool and cinema		ELY 10
Lancaster Way Business Park		40.5 ha (1973 jobs)			ELY 11
Ely Distribution Centre		12 ha (469 jobs)			ELY 12
<b>SOHAM</b>					
Brook Street	400				SOH 1
Station Road	90	0.5 ha (140 jobs)	*Station shop	Station building and car park	SOH 2
Eastern Gateway	600	0.5 ha (132 jobs)	*Local shop + garden centre	Land for extended Medical Centre, school/pre-school and Commons	SOH 3
Land off Fordham Road	90				SOH 4
Land south of Blackberry Lane	160				SOH 5
Land north of Blackberry Lane	100				SOH 6
Land adjacent to the cemetery	115				SOH 7
Land east of the Shade	45				SOH 8
West of The Shade		2 ha (232 jobs)		Primary school	SOH 10
East of A142 bypass		11 ha (429 jobs)			SOH 11
Budgens			0.55 ha		SOH 12

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Church hall area	10	*	0.4 ha	*	SOH 13
Coop area	10	*	0.3 ha	*	SOH 14
<b>LITTLEPORT</b>					
Woodfen Road	250	7 ha (341 jobs)			LIT 1
Highfields	300				LIT 2
West of 150 Wisbech Road		1.6 ha (172 jobs)			LIT 3
North of Wisbech Road		4.77 ha (218 jobs)			LIT 4
West of Camel Road				Secondary and, primary, pre-school and Area Special School	LIT 6
<b>BARWAY</b>					
The Barn, Randalls Farm	5				BAR 1
East of 5 Barway Road	5				BAR 2
<b>BOTTISHAM</b>					
Land east of Bell Road	50				BOT 1
Tunbridge Lane Business Park		1 ha (95 jobs)			BOT 2
<b>BURWELL</b>					
Newmarket Road	350			Sports provision	BUR 1
Reach Road		2.5 ha (337 jobs)			BUR 2
Former DS Smith site		3 ha (293 jobs)			BUR 3
<b>CHEVELEY</b>					
Rear of Star and Garter Lane	2				CHV 1
Between 199-209 High Street	18				CHV 2
<b>FORDHAM</b>					
East of 24 Mildenhall Road	10				FRD1
Between 37-55 Mildenhall Road	6				FRD 2
East of 67 Mildenhall Road	10				FRD 3
South of Snailwell Road		7 ha (342 jobs)			FRD 4
North of Snailwell Road		5.5 ha (215 jobs)			FRD 5
Horse Racing Forensic Labs		9 ha (176 jobs)			FRD 6
North of Turners		8 ha (88 jobs)			FRD 7
South of Landwade Road		7 ha (228 jobs)			FRD 8
<b>HADDENHAM</b>					
Rowan Close	15				HAD 1
New Road	24				HAD 2
<b>Location</b>	<b>Estimated housing capacity</b>	<b>Employment land (hectares)</b>	<b>Retail/leisure</b>	<b>Key community facilities (not exhaustive)</b>	<b>Policy reference</b>
Station Road		0.8 ha (78 jobs)			HAD 3
<b>ISLEHAM</b>					
South of Lady Frances Court	15				ISL 1

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5a Fordham Road	10				ISL 2
West of Hall Barn Road	12				ISL 3
West of Pound Lane	3				ISL 4
Land at Church Lane	5				ISL 5
Hall Barn Road Industrial Estate		1 ha (98 jobs)			ISL 6
<b>LITTLE DOWNHAM</b>					
West of Ely Road	25				LTD 1
<b>PRICKWILLOW</b>					
Putney Hill Road	10				PRW 1
<b>PYMOOR</b>					
North-east of 9 Straight Furlong	10				PYM 1
<b>SUTTON</b>					
North of The Brook	50				SUT 1
<b>SWAFFHAM PRIOR</b>					
Rogers Road	20				SWP 1
Goodwin Farm, Heath Road		1 ha (116 jobs)			SWP 2
<b>WENTWORTH</b>					
Opposite Red Lion, Main St	2				WEN 1
East of 1 Main Street	2				WEN 2
<b>WICKEN</b>					
North-west of The Crescent	5				WIC 1
South of Church Road	5				WIC 2

### 3.6 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 3.6.1 As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the main purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of ‘sustainable development’. New growth in East Cambridgeshire needs to be ‘sustainable’, e.g. support the local economy, provide 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 – 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>19</sup> that a ‘model policy’ should also be included within Local Plans, which reiterates the national guidance. This policy is set out below.

<sup>19</sup> Planning Inspectorate statement – see <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planningsystem/localplans>

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

The District Council will work 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 which 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; and
- Strategic objectives of the Local Plan including those 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, and assessed against the policy below.
- 3.7.2 One mechanism for delivering community-led development is a Community Land Trust (CLT)<sup>20</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.
- 3.7.3 Many community-led schemes are likely to be located outside development envelopes, where open market housing is not normally permitted. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for an element of open market housing to be provided as part of a community-led scheme where the applicant can demonstrate through a financial appraisal that the inclusion of the open market housing is required to enable the delivery of affordable housing or other community assets, with significant benefits accruing directly to the community organisation through cross-subsidy. In addition, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the community benefits of such a scheme (such as the level of affordable housing or open space) are significantly greater than would be delivered on an equivalent open market housing site. Further details relating to the application of this policy will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document on Community-Led Development, which the Council proposes to produce in 2014.

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<sup>20</sup> A legal definition is provided in Section 79 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.



**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. However, the District Council will also expect schemes to broadly accord with criteria 5 and 6 below.

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

1. 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.
2. No significant harm would be caused to the character or setting of the settlement and the surrounding countryside.
3. The scale of the scheme is appropriate to the location and the level of identified local affordable housing need.
4. The scheme incorporates a range of dwelling sizes, types and tenures appropriate to identified local need.
5. 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.
6. 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; and
7. The scheme accords with all other policies of the Local Plan.

An element of open market housing on the site will only be acceptable where:

- It is demonstrated through a financial appraisal that this is essential to enable the delivery of affordable housing or other community benefits on-site; and
- 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.