

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Guidance on Development Plan Policies for Housing & Employment



STRUCTURE PLAN & LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this document is to clarify the current status of the Development Plan for Fenland District in respect of Housing and Employment Policies.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Development Plan for Fenland consists primarily of two parts, namely:

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan**
- **Fenland District Wide Local Plan.**

2.2 The Structure Plan establishes the overall development strategy and scale of growth for the County as a whole and for each District i.e. Fenland. This document is prepared by the County Council (and Peterborough Unitary Council).

2.3 The Local Plan has to be “in general conformity” with the Structure Plan and sets out the location of the development contained in the Structure Plan and provides detailed planning policies for a District. This document is prepared by the District Council.

2.4 Although the Fenland Local Plan is now some 10 years old the Structure Plan was adopted in September 2003. It is therefore important to establish the policy implications of the Structure Plan on the Local Plan.

2.5 There is therefore a gap between the new Structure Plan and the adoption of a replacement Local Plan (or Local Development Framework). This document therefore sets out what the policy position from the two documents is during this interim period.

2.6 The Structure Plan is consistent with recent Government and Regional guidance. The Planning Inspectorate will therefore give the Structure Plan policies primacy in determining any Appeal that goes to them. That is not to say that the Local Plan is redundant, far from it.

2.7 The Local Plan contains detailed policies that remain consistent with the new Structure Plan and will continue to be used in Appeals. It is therefore essential that one knows how the two documents join up during this interim period.

2.8 In the meantime, to support Fenland’s new Council and impetus for change, Officers will be working through the Local Plan Advisory Panel to secure the implementation of the Council Leader’s Vision statement and new Structure Plan in new Policies for Fenland. The product of this work will be the **Draft Deposit Local Plan / LDF.**

NEW STRUCTURE PLAN HOUSING POLICIES

Policy No.	Description of Policy	Content of Policy	Comments
Strategy			
P1/1	Strategic Approach to Development	To be in the 4 market towns Sequential test Sustainability based	New Policy
P1/2	Strategic Environmental Restriction to Development	Restrictions on development in the countryside unless essential.	New Policy
Housing			
P5/1	Distribution of Housing Development	8,100 Total for Fenland 6,600 "Rest of Fenland" 1,500 Chatteris area	New Policy
P5/2	Re-use of Existing Land	Target of 35% for Fenland	New Policy
P5/3	Density	30 dwellings/hectare minimum	New Policy
P5/4	Affordable Housing	Requires FDC Housing Needs Survey	Develop through Local Plan review
P5/5	Homes in Rural Areas	Only small scale housing development in the villages.	New Policy Criteria (affordable, character and setting, jobs, sustainable, public transport etc) to be developed through Local Plan review

EXISTING LOCAL PLAN HOUSING POLICIES

Policy No.	Description of Policy	Content of Policy	Comments
H1	Scale of provision (housing totals)		No longer applies due to new Structure Plan figures.
H2	Phasing		No longer applies due to new Structure Plan.
H3	Settlement Development Area Boundaries (DABs)	No Housing outside Development Area Boundaries (DABs)	Retained Consistent with Structure Plan Policies P1/1 and P1/2 DAB lines to be reviewed as part of Local Plan review.
H4	Market Towns	Scale of provision (housing totals)	No longer applies due to new Structure Plan figures.
H5	Housing in Town Centres	Encourage provision and resist loss.	Retained
H6/H7	Limited Rural Growth Settlements (LRGs)	Defines larger villages. Provides dwelling totals.	Retained
H8	New housing on unallocated land in LRGs	Groups and infilling allowed.	Retained Consistent with Structure Plan policy P5/5
H9/H10	Group Settlements	Defines group villages. Gives dwelling totals. Maximum of 8 dwellings allowed.	Retained No NEW sites to be permitted pending Local Plan review, unless they have been previously allocated.
H11/H12	Infill Only Settlements	Not more than 2 dwellings allowed.	Retained Consistent with Structure Plan policy P5/5
H13/H14	Affordable Housing	Requires FDC Housing Needs survey.	Retained Use current policy until Local Plan review.
H15	Infill housing in the countryside.	Limited infill allowed subject to criteria	Retained As amended by Interim Changes and Supplementary Planning Guidance
H16/H17	Agricultural dwellings	Allowed in the open countryside subject to needs of the activity.	Retained
H18	Replacement dwellings	1 for 1 allowed subject to criteria	Retained
H19	Conversion of rural buildings outside DABs	Allowed subject to criteria	Retained

NEW STRUCTURE PLAN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Policy No.	Description of Policy	Content of Policy	Comments
Strategy			
P1/1	Strategic Approach to Development	To be in the 4 market towns. Sequential test. Sustainability based.	New Policy
P1/2	Strategic Env. Restriction to Development	Restrictions on development in the countryside unless essential.	New Policy
Employment			
P2/1	Employment strategy	Encourage, expansion, supporting and general statements.	New Policy
P2/2	Location of Employment	To be in the market towns.	New Policy
P2/3	Strategic Locations	To be in March, Chatteris and Wisbech (not Whittlesey).	New Policy
P2/6	Rural Economy	Facilitated on an appropriate scale subject to criteria eg re-use of buildings, diversification, home-working, vitality of rural areas.	New Policy

EXISTING LOCAL PLAN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Policy No.	Description of Policy	Content of Policy	Comments
EMP1	Development in Primary Industrial and Business Areas (PIBAs in market towns only)	Industrial development outside PIBAs but within DABs allowed. Outside DABs expansion of existing firms only.	Retained
EMP2	Scale of Provision (Employment land totals)	Totals and location	Retained Previous allocations will be respected. Local Plan review will look at implications of new Structure Plan allocations.
EMP3	Industrial development outside DABs	Similar to Structure Plan policy P2/6.	Superseded by Structure Plan policy P2/6 which provides a more positive diversification policy.
EMP4	New businesses in the countryside.	If unrelated to any existing business then not permitted.	Ditto EMP 3 above.
EMP5	Workplace Homes	Homes at place of employment allowed subject to criteria.	Retained

ADOPTED STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES

Strategic Policies

Approach to Development (SP)

P1/1

The great majority of land for new development will be located:

- Within Cambridge and Peterborough consistent with the role and character of those cities
- As expansion of Peterborough, and as expansion of Cambridge subject to changes to the Green Belt boundary
- Through the creation of a small town at Longstanton/Oakington close to Cambridge
- In, and where appropriate, adjoining the Market Towns of Chatteris, Ely, Huntingdon, March, St.Ives, St.Neots, Wisbech and, on a lesser scale, Ramsey and Whittlesey

Local Plans may provide for a limited proportion of the overall development provision to take place at identified Rural Centres on a scale appropriate to the size, location and function of such centres, especially where it can make a contribution to the specified social and economic needs of those communities or to groups of communities.

When identifying sites for development in Local Plans at each of the above locations, or when reviewing commitments or assessing development proposals, Local Planning Authorities will apply the following selection criteria:

- involving the use of previously developed land and buildings within existing settlements should be afforded the highest priority
- Provision within existing settlements should be preferred over the use of land outside settlements, subject to the need to safeguard important open spaces
- On the periphery of settlements previously developed land and buildings should be preferred over the use of land that has not been developed previously

In all cases development should be located where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good public transport accessibility exists or can be provided.

Environmental Restrictions on Development (SP)

P1/2

No new development will be permitted within or which is likely to adversely affect:

- Internationally and nationally important nature conservation areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments or other nationally important archaeological sites or their settings
- Functional flood plains or other areas where adequate flood protection cannot be given and/or there is significant risk of increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Development will be restricted:

- In the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location
- Where there is an unacceptable risk to the quality of ground or surface water
- Where the best and most versatile agricultural land would be significantly affected
- To prevent sterilisation of workable mineral deposits
- Where there could be damage, destruction or loss to areas that should be retained for their biodiversity, historic, archaeological, architectural and recreational value.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Employment Strategy (SP)

P2/1

The economic growth of the Plan area will be supported:

In the Cambridge Sub-Region by:

- Encouraging the continued expansion of high technology and knowledge-based industry
- Securing investment in new infrastructure needed to relieve obstacles to growth using existing land allocations and making new allocations where appropriate
- The selective management of employment which does not need to be located in, or close to, Cambridge (see Policy P9/8)

In Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire by:

- Securing investment in physical infrastructure and supporting social, environmental and community initiatives which will assist economic regeneration
- Taking full advantage of the range of existing land allocations and vacant and underused sites in the area

In both areas by:

- Encouraging a wider range of business and industrial development
- Developing the skills of the labour force in line with the needs of the economy
- Enabling the diversification of the rural economy (see Policy P2/6)

General Location of Employment (SP)

P2/2

Where there is a need for new land allocations for employment, provision will be mainly concentrated in Cambridge, in Peterborough, in Market Towns and in Rural Centres where this could help reduce out-commuting, and also on the strategic sites identified in Policy 2/3.

Local Plans will review existing allocations and allocate a range of sites for the continued growth of employment and to broaden the local economy.

Development will be located in line with the objectives of Policy P1/1 so far as to:

- Work towards a balance of jobs and housing
- Maintain a range of types and sizes of premises for business requirements
- Encourage a range of employment opportunities for local people
- Reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car
- Enable the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling for work-related journeys
- Maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings
- Support rural services and facilities (see Policy P3/4)

Strategic Employment Locations (SP)

P2/3

Strategic employment sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be provided where there are good transport links, a locally available labour supply and the potential for business or industrial expansion.

Locations are as follows:

- Land at Alconbury Airfield will provide an opportunity for a strategic employment development during the Plan period, either for the existing distribution and transport related proposals or other appropriate uses
- The new settlement at Longstanton/Oakington will provide a key opportunity for new employment associated with high technology clusters in the Cambridge Sub-Region
- Land at Hampton will give high profile encouragement to investment in the Peterborough area
- March Trading Park will be promoted to improve marketability and generate investment for the town and its surrounding area
- The south-west approach to Wisbech will be promoted, with environmental enhancements, to improve marketability and generate investment for the market town and surrounding area
- On land to be released from the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge in accordance with Policy P9/3c, at locations close to Addenbrooke's, between Maddingley Road and Huntingdon Road and at Cambridge Airport for mixed use developments including the expansion of education and research facilities
- Land at Chatteris will assist in the economic regeneration of that town and act as a stepping stone for spreading the economic benefits of the "Cambridge Phenomenon" northwards

Rural Economy (SP)

P2/6

Sensitive small-scale employment development in rural areas will be facilitated where it contributes to one or more of the following objectives:

- Helping to achieve a balance of employment with the type and quantity of local housing
- Supporting new and existing businesses and research and technology clusters (see Policy P2/4)
- Providing opportunities for home working, or making good use of new information and communication technologies
- Enabling farm or rural diversification where appropriate to the local area, including appropriate rural tourism (see Policies P4/1 and P4/2)
- Enabling the re-use of existing buildings
- Enabling the re-use of vacant, derelict or under-used land within villages
- Helping to maintain or renew the vitality of rural areas

Employment allocations in Local Plans for rural areas will be predominantly located in Rural Centres (see Policy P1/1).

HOUSING POLICIES

Housing Distribution (SP)

P5/1

Provision will be made in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for 70,200 additional homes between 1999-2016 to be distributed as follows:

Area	Total
Cambridge City	12,500
East Cambridgeshire	7,300
Fenland	8,100
Huntingdonshire	9,500
South Cambridgeshire	20,000
Peterborough	12,800
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Total	70,200

Supplementary Planning Guidance will set out the phasing of development during the Plan period and allow for development needs continuing beyond 2016. Policies in Local Plans will set out the more detailed phasing of housing provision.

Re-using Previously Developed Land and Buildings (SP)

P5/2

Between 1999 and 2016 at least 50% of new dwellings will either be located on previously developed land or will utilise existing buildings. Provision within each Local Planning Authority will seek to achieve or surpass the following targets:

Cambridge City	65%
East Cambridgeshire	30%
Fenland	35%
Huntingdonshire	43%
South Cambridgeshire	37%
Peterborough	80%

If monitoring shows that the targets are not being met, Local Planning Authorities should take appropriate action to encourage the bringing forward of previously developed land.

Density (SP)

P5/3

The average density of new housing development will need to be increased across the Structure Plan area in order to maximise efficiency in the use of sites. In setting density standards appropriate to their area, Local Planning Authorities should take into account the following guidelines:

- Densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is the potential for, good public transport accessibility
- In appropriate locations in or close to the centres of Cities and Market Towns and in planned new communities, and in locations with access to high quality public transport services, significantly higher densities should be sought
- Densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable

Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character.

Housing in Rural Areas (SP)

P5/5

Small-scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account:

- The need for affordable rural housing
- The character of the village and its setting
- The level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.

EXISTING LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Housing Policies

Settlement Development Area Boundaries

H/3

Housing development will not normally be permitted outside the Development Area Boundaries of the market towns and villages as defined on the inset proposals maps.

Within the Development Area Boundaries residential development will normally be permitted provided it does not result in the loss of a site which is essential to the settlement's character, and the development is sympathetic to the character and amenities of the location and does not give rise to serious amenity or high-way problems, or seriously conflict with other policies of the Local Plan.

Housing in Town Centres

H/5

The District Council will normally support proposals which involve the reintroduction of dwellings into town centres provided such development complies with other policies of the Plan.

The District Council will normally resist development proposals which result in the loss of existing dwellings in town centres unless the development proposed will be of significant community benefit.

Limited Rural Growth Settlements

H/6

It is proposed that the following villages are selected as Limited Rural Growth Settlements: Benwick, Coates, Doddington, Elm, Friday Bridge, Gorefield, Guyhirn, Leverington, Manea, Parson Drove (including Church End), Wimblington and Wisbech St. Mary.

H/7

It is proposed, after allowing for housing completions to mid 1990, to make provision for 2185 dwellings in the Limited Rural Growth Settlements on the following basis:

Settlement	Dwellings
Benwick	160
Coates	70
Doddington	200
Elm	210
Friday Bridge	125
Gorefield	130
Guyhirn	180
Leverington	265
Manea	360
Parson Drove	100
Wimblington	245
Wisbech St.Mary	140
Total	2,185

Housing Policies

H/8

New housing development on unallocated land within Development Area Boundaries in Limited Rural Growth Settlements will normally be limited to groups and infilling.

Group Settlements

H/9

It is proposed that the following villages are selected as Group Settlements: Christchurch, Coldham, Eastrea, Murrow, Newton, Turves and Tydd St Giles.

Within these villages new residential development will normally be restricted to not more than eight dwellings per site. Exceptionally, a housing group may consist of up to fifteen dwellings where it is contained within the framework of a village and makes the best use of a particular site.

H/10

It is proposed, after allowing for housing completions to mid 1990, to make provision for 410 dwellings in the Group Settlements on the following basis:

Settlement	Dwellings
Christchurch	50
Coldham	10
Eastrea	50
Murrow	80
Newton	50
Turves	100
Tydd St Giles	70
Total	410

Infill Only Settlements

H/11

It is proposed that the following villages are selected as Infill Only Settlements: Colletts Bridge, Foul Anchor, Pondersbridge, Rings End, Tholomas Drove and Tydd Gote.

H/12

Within the Development Area Boundary of villages listed in Policy H11 residential development will normally be restricted to not more than two dwellings:

- On a site which forms a gap in an otherwise built up frontage to an existing road, provided that it is not sufficiently large to accommodate more than two dwellings (of similar curtilage size to those adjoining)
- On a site formed by the sub-division of an existing residential curtilage
- Through the sub-division of an existing dwelling
- By the redevelopment of an existing built site
- And does not seriously conflict with other policies of the Plan

Affordable Housing

H/13

The District Council will seek to secure an adequate supply of affordable housing on appropriate allocated or windfall sites. Developments should incorporate a reasonable mix and balance of house types and sizes to cater for a range of housing needs, including affordable housing based on the District Council's criteria for affordable housing, comprising:

- i) Sites over 0.5ha irrespective of the number of dwellings or 15 dwellings or more in those settlements of 3,000 people or less, or
- ii) Sites over 1.0ha irrespective of the number of dwellings or 25 dwellings or more in those settlements of more than 3,000 people

H/14

The District Council will, in exceptional circumstances, consider releasing unallocated land outside Development Area Boundaries for the provision of affordable housing to meet special local needs (which are not likely to be met in any other way). The District Council will seek to ensure that affordable housing is subject to the following provisions:

Affordable housing criteria (Policies H13 and H14).

- i) All dwellings should be at affordable levels in perpetuity or for such period as the Council may deem acceptable.
- ii) All dwellings should meet the demonstrable needs of local people and should be available to local people in perpetuity, or on a long term basis at affordable levels for those identified as being in need. Local means people who have proven strong local ties to the settlement, parish or adjacent parishes.
- iii) The scheme should be capable of satisfactory long term management.
- iv) The site should be in or adjoining a settlement where there are adequate local services and facilities (school, shops, public transport, utilities, etc). The development should also be of a scale appropriate to the size and character of the settlement and should not be harmful to the character of the settlement or the surrounding countryside.
- v) The scheme should meet all other Planning and Highway requirements.
- vi) The District Council will seek appropriate legal agreements to ensure that dwellings permitted on such sites for local needs remain available for this purpose in the longer term.
- vii) No scheme which involves the sale of one or more dwellings on the open market to cross subsidise affordable housing on the same site, will be acceptable under Policy H14.

Infill Housing

H/15

Where small groups of existing houses are located in the open countryside and not defined by Development Area Boundaries, limited infilling of small gaps which are capable of accommodating no more than two dwellings of a similar size and scale of surrounding dwellings within an otherwise continuously built up frontage (normally of at least six dwellings) may be acceptable provided that:

- i) It will not result in a significant material change to the character of the area
- ii) Set a precedent for further development which would materially change the area's character
- iii) The existing adjacent dwellings are not the subject of agricultural occupancy conditions or obligations

Gaps may not be filled where they form an important feature.

Agricultural Dwellings

H/16

In the open countryside (outside Settlement Development Area Boundaries) new dwellings will not normally be allowed, other than dwellings required for the efficient management of local agriculture, horticulture and forestry. All such excepted dwellings which must be supported by bona fide justifications will be subject to appropriate conditions restricting occupation.

H/17

The District Council will not normally approve applications to relax restrictive occupation conditions unless it can be shown that:

- i) The dwelling is surplus to the efficient management of the enterprise
- ii) Written evidence confirms that bona fide attempts have been made to market the surplus property for a minimum period of 12 months at a value which reflects the restrictive occupancy condition.

Replacement Dwellings

H/18

Replacement dwellings in the countryside may be acceptable on a one for one basis, provided:

- i) The original dwelling is a permanent building and not a temporary or mobile structure, e.g. wooden shack, caravan, railway carriage, etc
- ii) The original dwelling has not been abandoned or allowed to fall into such a state of dereliction and disrepair that it no longer has the appearance and/or function of a dwelling and any replacement would be treated as a "new" dwelling
- iii) The replacement dwelling is normally of a size, i.e. not normally more than 130% of original floor area, scale, design and materials appropriate to its rural setting and character of nearby development
- iv) The replacement dwelling is sited on or in close proximity to the footprint of the original dwelling or, if more desirable to the Local Planning Authority, elsewhere within the historic, residential curtilage, and
- v) The original dwelling is not of architectural or historic merit when restoration and renovation will be preferred to replacement.

Conversion of Rural Buildings

H/19

The conversion of rural buildings to residential use outside settlement Development Area Boundaries will only be permitted where:

- i) The building is a building of historical or architectural merit, or
- ii) The building forms an important feature in the landscape and ought to be retained, or
- iii) The building is constructed of traditional materials and forms part of an existing group of buildings. Where there is residential use such conversions should respect the size and scale of the original building, require minimal alteration or adaptation and not give rise to serious amenity or highway objections.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Employment

EMP1

Proposals will normally be favoured for the establishment of new or the extension or expansion of existing firms engaged in business, general industrial, storage or distribution uses within the primary industrial/business areas as defined on the inset proposals maps.

Elsewhere within the Development Area Boundaries such development will normally be permitted provided that:

- i) the nature and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to the locality
- ii) the development would not give rise to any serious amenity or highway objections or seriously conflict with other policies of the Plan.

Outside Development Area Boundaries the expansion of existing firms will only be permitted where criteria (i) and (ii) above are satisfied.

EMP2

It is proposed to make provision for 197 hectares (487 acres) of land for business, general industrial and storage or distribution uses as set out in Table 3 and as shown on the inset proposals maps.

EMP5

Workplace homes on land identified for such use or for business, general industrial, storage or distribution use will normally be accepted where:

- i) A proven need for the dwelling can be demonstrated (in relation to the accompanying use)
- ii) The occupation of the dwelling will be tied by legal agreement to the use
- iii) The development does not seriously conflict with other planning policies

Elsewhere within the Development Area Boundaries workplace homes will be accepted where such development would not create serious environmental or highway problems.

Workplace homes will not normally be acceptable on sites outside Development Area Boundaries where such development would be contrary to the Council's policies of protecting the character of the open countryside unless related to local agriculture, horticulture or forestry, tourism, the extraction of minerals or to the expansion of existing established firms.