

4. HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The planning system has to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing. In South Cambridgeshire the pressures for housing development remain strong and if left unchecked, would destroy the very qualities and characteristics that attract people to the area in the first place. South Cambridgeshire has experienced a continuing high level of residential development since the end of the Second World War, with the result that a relatively high proportion of the housing stock is of recent origin.

4.2 Since 1991, over 5,000 new dwellings have been built in South Cambridgeshire, bringing the total stock up to 53,566 (2001 census). This is anticipated to increase to around 59,500 by 2006 which is the end date of this Local Plan. A considerable amount of this growth is already committed i.e. land with planning permission, but not yet built. The Local Plan needs to identify further sites within the District to accommodate the growth up to 2006 having regard to the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 guidelines for South Cambridgeshire.

4.3 The Settlement Chapter outlines the strategy of concentrating development in the larger villages where the generally higher level of services and facilities can reduce the need to travel - it is within the context of this strategy that housing allocations have been identified and supported by detailed policies which bring forward elements of community benefit such as affordable housing.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide an adequate and continuous supply of residential land in appropriate locations to meet Structure Plan provision to 2006.
- To ensure the provision of housing for local people (including affordable housing) in locations which are convenient for employment opportunities.
- To ensure there is provision of a range of residential accommodation to meet the needs of all sectors of the community.
- To protect and enhance the environment by ensuring that new development is of high quality and to resist those forms of development which are harmful to amenity.
- To consider the needs for travellers' sites.

THE STRUCTURE PLAN HOUSING REQUIREMENT

POLICY HG1: The District Council will make provision for approximately 11,300 new dwellings in the District during the period mid 1991 to mid 2006. The District Council will keep under review the need for housing land in South Cambridgeshire with the aim of ensuring that at any time sufficient land is available for development to meet all forms of planned housing requirements in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan.

4.4 This Plan aims to ensure that enough land is genuinely available to provide a realistic prospect of meeting the Structure Plan housing requirement of 11,300 new dwellings in South Cambridgeshire during the period 1991 to 2006. Most of this land has already been developed or committed, leaving a relatively modest quantity to be identified. The outstanding requirement is calculated as shown in Figure 1 below:-

Figure 1: Outstanding Structure Plan housing requirement as at mid-2001

Structure Plan requirement for mid 1991 to mid 2006		11,300
Components of Supply		
1.	Completions to mid- 2001 (excluding Cambourne)	5,983
2.	Completions at Cambourne (all actual and forecast completions to mid 2006)	2,000
3.	80% of unimplemented estate planning permissions (excluding Cambourne) [4,587 unimplemented permissions – 410 Cambourne completions = 4,177] [4,177-2,890 incomplete/uncommenced Cambourne units = 1,287] [1,287 x 80% = 1,029]	1,029
4.	Forecast windfalls 2001-2006	1,000
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>10,012</i>
5.	Outstanding requirement to be identified at mid 2001	1,288 (say 1,300)

Notes:

(1) Component 3 above is derived by deducting the present Cambourne completions from the original Cambourne permissions (3,300 – 410 = 2,890) and then deducting the remaining Cambourne permissions from the District total of estate permissions (4,112 – 2,890 = 1222). A discount of 20% is then made to allow for an element of non-implementation and/or failure to implement during the plan period.

(2) Component 4 above continues the Structure Plan's assumption that windfall completions will average about 200 per annum over the plan period. This has proved remarkably accurate, since non-estate completions (i.e. on sites of 8 or fewer) have totalled 2010 in the period mid-1991 – mid-2001. PPG3 introduces a new method of calculating windfalls based on making an allowance for brownfield windfalls of all types (i.e. large as well as small) but making no allowance for any greenfield windfalls. There is insufficient information available at present to enable this to be done accurately according to the PPG3 methodology but, insofar as there is any, the indicators are that the effect would be broadly neutral during the remaining life of the plan. Larger brownfield windfalls in South Cambridgeshire may have averaged about 48pa over an 8-year period, whereas greenfield windfalls may have averaged about 40pa over 10 years.

NEW HOUSING PROVISION IN THE PLAN

4.5 Figure 1 indicates that the outstanding requirement for the period mid-2001 to mid-2006 is 1,288 dwellings. PPG3 introduces an approach to the provision of housing land based on a system of 'Plan, Monitor and Manage (PMM)', but the remaining period of this plan is too short to enable PMM to be implemented effectively at this stage. Nevertheless, the choice of allocations made in the Plan aims to reflect as far as possible the objectives of the search

sequence required by PPG3. This commences with the development of brownfield sites in urban areas, followed by urban extensions, and finally by new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. RPG6 interprets this in the context of the longer-term growth needs of the Cambridge Sub-Region. The main implications of policy 22 of RPG6 are for consideration in the review of the Structure Plan 1995 (adopted in 2003) and the next review of this Local Plan, but it is important that the allocations made now contribute towards the aims of that policy rather than hampering them or postponing the stage at which they can be implemented. Policy 22 requires a search sequence beginning with the built-up area of Cambridge, then the periphery of the city (subject to Green Belt considerations), then a new settlement, then sites within market towns and larger villages where there is (or can be) good public transport links to Cambridge, and finally extensions to settlements in the previous category.

4.6 This Local Plan provides a bridge across from the Structure Plan 1995 to PPG3 and RPG6 by providing the majority of the outstanding requirement in an urban extension at the Cambridge Northern Fringe (see policy HG2 below). The remaining requirement is then made up of smaller allocations, mainly in the larger villages, the Rural Growth Settlements and Limited Rural Growth Settlements, (see policies HG3 and HG4 below) and a small number in Group Villages (see policy HG5 below).

Schedule of housing allocations at mid-2001

Site Address	Site Size	Notional Allocation	Sites with Planning permission – unimplemented at mid 2001
Policy HG2 (Cambridge Northern Fringe)			
CNF West: Arbury Camp (mixed use scheme)	33ha	900	
Policy HG3 (Rural Growth Settlements)			
Impington 1: N of Impington Lane (residue)	1.41ha	42	
Melbourn 2: Land at Water Lane	1.20ha		36
Melbourn 3: Dolphin Lane (this is principally an open space allocation – see site specific policy)		5	
Sawston 1: Land at Portobello Road	0.96ha	29	
Waterbeach 1: N of Bannold Road	2.4ha	85	
Willingham 1A: S of Berrycroft and East of Balland Field	1.03ha		31
Willingham 1B: Land W of High St/N of Over Rd	4.80ha	144	
Policy HG4 (Limited Rural Growth Settlements)			
Bassingbourn 1: N of High Street (residue)	0.76ha	15	

Gamlingay 1: N of Church Street	1.30ha	2	18
Girton 1: N of Thornton Rd	6.70ha	140	
Papworth Everard 3A: E of Ermine St S	3.94ha	99	
Papworth Everard 3B: W of Ermine St N(residue)	0.30ha	10	
Papworth Everard 3C: W of Ermine St S	10.36ha	259	
Papworth Everard: Village centre (Mixed use scheme)	6.80ha		109
Policy HG5 (Group Villages)			
Highfields Caldecote 1 (residue)	11.8ha	52	165
Comberton 1: E of Swaynes Lane	1.10ha		21
Fowlmere 1: E of Long Lane	0.93ha	28	
Guilden Morden 1: land at Church Lane	0.50ha	16	
Longstanton 1: N of Over Road	21.0ha		500
Meldreth 1: N of Chiswick End	1.0ha	30	
Oakington 1: N of Coles Lane	1.30ha		39
Oakington 2: S of Water Lane	1.06ha	32	
Over 1: N of Chapman Way (residue)	0.36ha		8
Steeple Morden 1: N of Ashwell Road	0.97ha	*	
Policy HG6 (Infill Villages)			
Heathfield 1: West of Kingsway & Woburn Place	2.5ha	75	

* Number as may be compatible with the criteria set out in the site-specific policy.

Cambridge Northern Fringe

POLICY HG2: A minimum of 900 dwellings will be provided at the western end of the Cambridge Northern Fringe as part of a housing-led mixed-use development in accordance with Policy CNF1.

4.7 In accordance with the objectives of sustainable development set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing', this site offers the opportunity for a housing-led mixed use development on the urban edge of Cambridge. It is the most sustainable location for housing development in South Cambridgeshire. Major improvements to infrastructure,

particularly transport, will be needed and will therefore be required as part of the proposed development. Further guidance on the development of the land allocated in Policy HG2 is given in Chapter 103 of the Local Plan which sets out the development strategy for the Cambridge Northern Fringe.

ALLOCATIONS IN RURAL GROWTH SETTLEMENTS

POLICY HG3: The following are allocated for residential development in Rural Growth Settlements:			
Site Address	Site Area	Notional Allocation	Planning Permission unimplemented at mid 2001
Impington 1: N of Impington Lane (residue)	1.41ha	42	
Melbourn 2: Land at Water Lane	1.2ha		36
Melbourn 3: Dolphin Lane*		5	
Sawston 1: Land at Portobello Road	0.96ha	29	
Waterbeach 1: N of Bannold Road	2.4ha	85	
Willingham 1A: S of Berrycroft & E of Balland Field	1.03ha		31
Willingham 1B: Land west of High St/North of Over Rd	4.80ha	144	
Development at the above sites will be at a density of at least 30dph and include a mix of housing types and sizes.			
* A small allocation is made at Dolphin Lane, Melbourn, but this is principally an open space allocation (See Policy Melbourn 3).			

4.8 The Rural Growth Settlements are generally the most sustainable villages in the District (see Policy SE2). A considerable amount of growth has taken place at these villages during the plan period. Only a relatively small number of new allocations are required.

ALLOCATIONS IN LIMITED RURAL GROWTH SETTLEMENTS

POLICY HG4: The following sites have been allocated for residential development in Limited Rural Growth Settlements:

Site Address	Site Area	Notional Allocation	Planning Permission unimplemented at mid 2001
Bassingbourn 1: N of High Street (residue)	0.76 ha	15	
Gamlingay 1: N of Church St	1.30 ha	2	18
Girton 1: N of Thornton Rd	6.70ha	140	
Papworth Everard 3A: E of Ermine St South	3.94 ha	99	
Papworth Everard 3B (residue)	0.3 ha	10	
Papworth Everard 3C: W of Ermine St South	10.36 ha	259	
Papworth Everard: village centre (mixed use scheme)	6.8ha		109

Development at these sites will be at a density of at least 30dph, except at Papworth Everard where it will be at least 25dph. In all cases developments shall include a mix of house types and sizes.

4.9 The Limited Rural Growth Settlements are described at Policy SE3. They represent the second most sustainable group of villages in the District. Many have accommodated a considerable amount of growth during the plan period. Substantial potential still remains at Papworth Everard in the form of the closing stages of a village expansion programme agreed some years ago. This is intended to address the need to diversify the village which previously had a high proportion of elderly people and people with physical disabilities as a result of the presence of the hospital.

4.10 Despite the allocation of a number of sites in Willingham in the adopted Local Plan of 1993, relatively little development has taken place there. The new allocations replace land which is unlikely to be developed during the plan period.

ALLOCATIONS IN GROUP VILLAGES

POLICY HG5: The following sites have been allocated for residential development in Group Villages:

Site Address	Site Area	Notional Allocation	Planning Permission unimplemented at mid 2001
Highfields Caldecote 1: between Highfields and East Drive	11.8 ha	52	165
Comberton 1: E of Swaynes Lane	1.1ha		21
Fowlmere 1: E of Long Lane	0.93ha	28	
Guilden Morden 1: Church Lane (residue)	0.5 ha	16	
Longstanton 1: N of Over Road	21.0ha		500
Meldreth 1: N of Chiswick End	1.0ha	30	
Oakington 1: N of Coles Lane	1.3ha		39
Oakington 2: S of Water Lane	1.06 ha	32	
Over 1: N of Chapman Way (residue)	0.36 ha		8
Steeple Morden 1: N of Ashwell Road	0.97 ha	*	

*** The number will be compatible with the site specific policy**

4.11 The 1993 Local Plan made a number of allocations in or on the edge of Group Villages that were considerably larger than the groups of up to 8 or so houses that would normally be permitted in such villages. These allocations were made to encourage the provision of affordable housing. Since that time the national policy background for affordable housing has changed to the extent that it is no longer necessary to continue with allocations leading to the provision of a considerable number of market houses in smaller villages with relatively few facilities and little public transport. A number of former allocations have therefore been deleted.

4.12 However, allocations have been made relating to unused or brownfield land within the village frameworks of Highfields Caldecote, Comberton, Fowlmere, Guilden Morden, Meldreth, Oakington and Steeple Morden, as explained more fully in the relevant village chapters in Part 2 of the Plan. Five further sites had extant planning permissions at mid 2001 that had not been implemented. They are retained in the policy to provide a context for any further planning applications.

ALLOCATIONS IN INFILL VILLAGES TO MAINTAIN POPULATION

POLICY HG6: An area of 2.5 ha is allocated for housing development West of Woburn Place, Heathfield.

4.13 Whilst the development strategy focuses the majority of development at the Cambridge Northern Fringe and at the more sustainable settlements, there has been a longstanding strategy for new housing at Heathfield to address the particular issues facing this village, which has very few local facilities, and none of the village facilities that normally help to facilitate an integrated community. With the specific objective of bringing forward a scale of development that would provide community facilities to help support greater community sustainability, land has been allocated at Heathfield. Much of that housing has now been implemented but a modest allocation on land west of Kingsway and Woburn Place is included in the Local Plan.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON SITES WITHIN VILLAGE FRAMEWORKS

POLICY HG7: The Council will negotiate with applicants to secure the provision of accommodation to meet some of the continuing need for affordable housing in the District before it determines any application for planning permission for residential development of more than 10 dwellings on land within the framework of any village of more than 3,000 population. This threshold will not apply in villages with a population of 3,000 or fewer where there is a clear need for affordable housing in the particular local area.

Such affordable housing shall:-

- (1) be limited to units of types and sizes required to provide accommodation for those revealed to be in 'housing need' by an up-to-date survey;**
- (2) be available (a) for rent at *affordable rent* levels, (b) for *shared ownership leases* (or other equity share arrangements approved by the District Council) at *affordable shares* and managed by *registered social landlord(s)*, that are able to demonstrate their ability to fund the scheme, capacity to deliver, acceptability to the Housing Corporation (if grant funding required), and appropriate long-term management and maintenance arrangements or (c) for purchase as low cost market housing at a discount of at least 25% below the normal market price;**
- (3) (a) in settlements with a population of more than 3,000, represent approximately 30% of the total number of dwellings for which planning permission may be given, although higher or lower percentages may be agreed in the light of factors such as proximity to local services; access to public transport; the**

particular costs associated with the development; and whether or not the provision of affordable housing would prejudice other planning objectives warranting greater priority in the particular case; or

(b) in settlements with a population of 3,000 or fewer, represent up to 50% of the total number of dwellings for which planning permission may be given, dependent on the level of clearly identified local need, although higher or lower percentages may be agreed in the light of factors such as proximity to local services; access to public transport; the particular costs associated with the development; and whether or not the provision of affordable housing would prejudice other planning objectives warranting greater priority in the particular case;

(4) be occupied only by *qualifying persons*, subject to *cascade provisions* and;

(5) be secured in perpetuity as to the above provisions (or any agreed departure from them) by planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or an alternative form of equally effective provision.

Interpretation: The terms stated in italics above shall be interpreted as follows:

Housing need: Those in 'housing need' for the purposes of this policy will be individuals or households who are:-

(a) either in unsuitable accommodation within the District (as defined by the District Council's points system) or homeless, and

(b) unable to afford to rent or purchase suitable accommodation on the open market (i.e., in the case of rented property the accommodation cost would need to be more than 35% of net income: in the case of mortgaged property the individual or household would be unable to afford a deposit of 5% of a suitable house and would have a gross monthly income of less than 3 times the necessary monthly mortgage income after payment of the 5% deposit and inclusive of the cost of buildings insurance, mortgage protection policy and/or mortgage guarantee premium).

Affordable rent: The amount of rent which does not exceed the Housing Corporation's definition of a target rent.

Shared ownership lease: As defined by Section 622 of the Housing Act, 1985.

Affordable share: A Share held by the occupier - whether of a leasehold or other interest in the dwelling - which does not commence at a level greater than 30% of the whole and cannot progress except at the option of the occupier. The District Council will require to approve the form of lease or arrangement. Affordability demands that rents or other payments for occupation which are expressed to be variable in accordance with any index shall be subject equally to decrease as well as increase).

Registered social landlord: The District Council will approve any registered social landlord if the following criteria are met:

- (1) within the identified needs, the specification for the dwellings is agreed;
- (2) the management of the body is sound;
- (3) the amounts of rent or affordable shares will be within the prescribed limits;
- (4) funding is or will be available to carry forward the development quickly.

Qualifying persons: An applicant for affordable housing provided under this scheme will be a 'qualifying person' if they are in housing need [as defined above] and live in, or are employed in, or have close local connections with, the relevant village or parish or an immediately adjoining parish.

Cascade provisions: If there are no qualifying persons identified at the time a unit of affordable housing is completed or becomes available for re-occupation, the accommodation will be offered to those meeting the same qualifying criteria in relation to the following sequential preference of areas: (i) other nearby parishes, (ii) parishes elsewhere in South Cambridgeshire or (iii) parishes in adjoining local authority areas in order of geographical proximity.

THE LEVEL OF NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4.14 The community's need for affordable housing is a proper planning consideration. Any identified needs may therefore be addressed through this Plan. The Council has undertaken a Housing Needs Survey, the results of which were published in August 1998. The methods adopted in the survey were broadly in line with the subsequent DETR Guide to Good Practice on Local Housing Needs Assessment, subsequently issued in July 2000. A recalculation of need according to the methods adopted in the Guide has not shown a material difference in scale of the resulting general need.

4.15 The level of need assessed at the time of the survey amounted to 2,479 households, representing 5% of all households in South Cambridgeshire. This need was made up of:

- (1) existing households in need both because of their inability to afford suitable housing in the open market and because their current accommodation was unsuited to their needs on account of (a) its physical condition, small size or other factors (e.g.

special needs such as frailty) or (b) the expense of their current accommodation in relation to household income;

(2) concealed households needing to move to their own separate accommodation within the next year, but unable to afford to do so; and

(3) homeless households registered with the Council where they would not have been picked up by the survey.

4.16 The survey also assessed future need throughout the lifetime of the Plan to 2006, concluding that needs could amount to 7,279 over the period. However, not all of this need requires to be met through new house building. The Council also has a package of other fiscal and management methods aimed at making the most effective use of the existing private and public housing stock. Nonetheless, the Council has concluded from the Housing Needs Survey that somewhere in the region of 3,500 to 4,900 additional affordable dwellings would be required to meet the need to 2006 in full. This is very far in excess of the level of new affordable dwellings currently being built which has averaged about 70pa from all sources in the period 1997-2000, compared with an average annual loss of 140pa to right-to-buy sales over the same period. At Cambourne about 270 dwellings will become available to South Cambridgeshire residents, together with a similar number for Cambridge residents and 60 for residents of East Cambridgeshire.

4.17 The Local Plan will only be able to require developers to provide affordable dwellings in those cases where new planning applications are being made. Given the level of existing planning permissions (and allocations where no affordable housing is being sought for various reasons) this means that only limited inroads are likely to be made into the expected shortfall in affordable dwellings before 2006. It is difficult to predict precisely how many units of affordable housing will result from application of the policy. However, the Council will monitor provision carefully and use the results to inform the next review of the Plan.

TYPES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIRED IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

4.18 Circular 6/98 advises that local plans should include a locally-based definition of 'affordable housing'. In the South Cambridgeshire context affordable housing is considered to be that which is available to those who cannot afford market-priced housing whether to rent or purchase. The Housing Needs Survey found that the overwhelming need was for housing at affordable rents. Because the second hand stock in South Cambridgeshire can offer accommodation for sale at less than 20% of the price of the cheapest new housing, low cost market housing will only be considered as affordable housing if it is discounted by at least 25%. The Council will therefore seek affordable housing principally in the form of: (i) rented housing (aiming to make this about 83% of total affordable housing provision); (ii) shared ownership housing (aiming to make this about 12-17% of total affordable housing provision); and (iii) low cost market housing which is discounted by at least 25%. Because the latter may be difficult to achieve no particular target proportional share is set for this form of provision, although some provision of this kind has already been achieved at Cambourne.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE SOUGHT

4.19 In view of the identified level of need the Council will normally seek 30% provision of affordable dwellings on all sites within the frameworks of larger villages (3,000+) that are the subject of planning applications for residential development above a minimum threshold of 10 dwellings. In villages with fewer than 3,000 population up to 50% provision may be sought without any threshold. In all cases such provision will be dependent on evidence of need, financial viability and the other factors set out in the policy. These percentages are not directly related to the level of need revealed by the survey since that would require provision of more than 100% affordable housing on the outstanding sites to which the policy is likely to apply (i.e. residential allocations and windfall sites without planning permission). In any case it is unlikely that the level of financial resources available to the Council and to other registered social landlords would support a target any higher than this. The 30% target is based on 'custom and practice' with the pragmatic aim of reducing the shortfall in affordable housing during the plan period. The villages over 3,000 population are:

- Bar Hill
- Gamlingay
- Histon & Impington
- Melbourn
- Waterbeach
- Cottenham
- Girton
- Milton
- Willingham
- Fulbourn
- Gt Shelford & Stapleford
- Linton
- Sawston

EXCEPTIONS POLICY FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

POLICY HG8: As an exception to the normal operation of the policies of this Plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on sites within or adjoining villages. The following criteria will all have to be met:-

- (1) the development proposal includes secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in 'housing need' as defined in policy HG7.**
- (2) the number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to, and appropriate to, the strict extent of the identified local need.**
- (3) the site of the proposal is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village.**
- (4) the development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape.**

Development under this policy must also comply with criteria (1), (4) and (5) of policy HG7 and the relevant interpretation provisions of that policy.

4.20 National policy allows for the exceptional release of small sites for affordable housing within or adjoining villages in circumstances where planning permission would not normally be given and where there is a demonstrable local need for affordable housing that cannot be met in any other way. These 'rural exceptions' sites provide a small but important source of affordable housing in rural areas and are regarded as additional to the provision of housing to meet the general needs identified by the Structure Plan 1995. In the period 1991-1997 the Council secured the provision of 197 affordable homes on rural exception sites, an average of 31pa.

4.21 In every case the needs of the particular village are carefully surveyed and assessed by the Council before a scheme is progressed. Occupancy controls are imposed to ensure that the benefits of affordability (usually gained by the low land value derived from the exceptional basis of the scheme) are preserved in perpetuity for subsequent occupiers.

4.22 PPG 2 "Green Belts" states that limited affordable housing may be appropriate within the Green Belt. However, given the nature of the Cambridge Green Belt, which is relatively small in extent, and the need to avoid prejudicing other strategic and local policies, the District Council will implement this policy with caution. Before planning permission is granted for such development, the District Council will have to be assured that no alternative appropriate sites can be found for the scale and type of development proposed and that the scheme fulfils all the criteria set out in the Council's policies, including those relating to the impact of new development on local surroundings.

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

POLICY HG9: The development of residential care homes through conversion or extension of existing facilities within or outside villages, or new build within villages will be permitted where:

- (1) the quality of design is in keeping with surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials;**
- (2) boundary treatment provides privacy and a high standard of visual amenity;**
- (3) the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties is protected;**
- (4) there is safe and convenient access for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians;**
- (5) parking facilities are in accordance with District Council standards;_and**
- (6) there is access to an adequate level of services to meet the need of the development.**

4.23 Demand for this type of site is likely to increase over the plan period because of the ageing of the resident population. Residential care homes include nursing homes, elderly persons' homes and special care homes. They are created either through the conversion and adaptation of large residential properties or through new-build and are often located in existing residential areas. It is therefore important that these homes are designed to a high

quality and in such a manner so as not to cause problems of disturbance, over-looking or over-shadowing and reflect, in visual terms, the local characteristics of the area. Since it is important that the elderly and those people with special needs should have access to a range of facilities such as shops, post offices and health services, together with social service support facilities, these developments should be located in or close to the larger villages where there is the greatest level of services and facilities.

HOUSING MIX AND DESIGN

POLICY HG10: Residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.

The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency. The District Council will support the preparation of Village Design Statements to secure these aims.

4.24 National planning policy guidance on housing is contained in PPG3. Achieving more sustainable forms of residential development is central to the aims of this guidance note. PPG3 sets out a sequential test for identifying housing sites, starting with previously developed land in urban areas, followed by urban extensions then finally new development around nodes in good public transport corridors. Policy P5/2 of the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 requires a minimum of 37% of new dwellings in South Cambridgeshire to be built on previously developed land between 1999 and 2016.

4.25 PPG3 also requires the efficient use of land, advocating higher densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare. The average housing density in England – and South Cambridgeshire - is currently around 25 dwellings per hectare (dph) therefore a significant increase is necessary to achieve these targets. The Structure Plan 2003 (policy P5/3) seeks a density range of 30-40+ dwellings per hectare, in line with PPG3, and explains that this can be achieved through innovative design and reduced car parking provision.

4.26 PPG3 also advises local authorities to take local housing needs into account to ensure that the appropriate mix of housing is provided in terms of dwelling size, type and affordability. Changes in household composition can lead to a shortage of a particular type of home. The Government's household projections indicate that the majority of new households will comprise a single person. As a result, there is likely to be a significant need for smaller housing units (1 and 2 bedroom dwellings), as opposed to large family homes.

4.27 However, high density development does not mean that quality standards should be compromised. PPG3 stresses the importance of good design and layout of new development in helping to achieve the Government's objectives of using land efficiently and improving the quality and attractiveness of residential environments. In the past, some development proposals have included increasing standard house types which could be found in other parts of the country, in terms of materials, scale and layout. The District Council therefore encourages housing proposals that take local distinctiveness into account, to ensure that the proposed development respects its immediate surroundings and the overall character of the village/settlement within which it is to be built. Such an approach does not necessarily reject innovative design nor does it seek to re-create the past but rather seeks to ensure a high quality

residential environment. The District Council is preparing a district wide design guide that will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

4.28 The Government has drawn attention to this issue in the publication of PPG1 “General Policy and Principles” and the “Quality in Town and Country” initiative. The latter stresses the importance of providing guidance to the public and developers regarding the kinds of issues that should be taken account when assessing design proposals both at the district level and individual settlements. At village level, the District Council, working in co-operation with local people, produced a Village Design Statement for Cottenham as part of a national pilot project. The document provides helpful advice regarding design issues in the village and was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1994. (Further reference is made to the document in Part 2 of the Local Plan.) Several villages are currently preparing their own Village Design Statements in conjunction with the District Council at Gamlingay, Great Shelford and Guilden Morden. The District Council will encourage the preparation of Village Design Statements for other villages in South Cambridgeshire through partnership with Parish Councils, the Local Highway Authority and the local community.

BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

POLICY HG11: Development to the rear of existing properties will only be permitted where the development would not:

- (1) result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing residential properties;**
- (2) result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access;**
- (3) result in highway dangers through the use of its access; or**
- (4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.**

4.29 Proposals for new dwellings located behind existing frontage development need to be considered particularly carefully to ensure that development is not permitted which would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing properties or on the character of the area, particularly in villages with a strong linear character.

POLICY HG12: Planning permission for the extension and alteration of dwellings will not be permitted where:

- (1) the design and use of materials would not be in keeping with local characteristics;**
- (2) the proposal would harm seriously the amenities of neighbours through undue loss of light or privacy, being unduly overbearing in terms of its mass, or would adversely affect surrounding properties by virtue of its design, layout, location or materials;**
- (3) there would be an unacceptable loss of off-street parking or garden space within the curtilage;**
- (4) there would be an unacceptable visual impact upon the street scene;**
- (5) boundary treatment would provide an unacceptable standard of privacy and visual amenity.**

4.30 Whilst many of the concerns have been levelled at the overall impact of large new residential developments, in many instances it is the impact of small additions or adaptations of existing buildings that, either individually or cumulatively, have lead to significant changes to the character of many South Cambridgeshire villages. In some cases these forms of small scale development do not require planning permission. However, where planning consent is required for such works the District Council will critically look at proposals having regard to the issues of scale, design, materials and the degree of impact upon surrounding properties and street scene.

4.31 Where any form of development is proposed within or adjacent to Conservation Areas, or it affects Listed Buildings or buildings of particular architectural merit, the relevant policies and proposals of the Environment and Conservation Chapter of this Local Plan should be consulted.

HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Extensions to dwellings in the countryside

POLICY HG13: Extensions to dwellings in the countryside (ie. outside village frameworks defined in this Plan) will be permitted where:

- (1) the proposed development would not create a separate dwelling or be capable of separation from the existing dwelling;**
- (2) the extension does not exceed the height of the original dwelling;**
- (3) the extension does not lead to a 50% increase or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling;**
- (4) the proposed extension is in scale and character with the existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings;**
- (5) the proposed extension has regard to the criteria in Policy HG12 of this Plan.**

4.32 In addition to the factors that are important in judging proposed extensions to houses within village frameworks, extensions to dwellings outside those frameworks need careful consideration for their impact on the landscape in the generally open countryside of South Cambridgeshire. Moreover, housing needs in the District make it important to impose some limitation on the permissible proportionate increase in dwelling sizes with the aim of preventing a gradual reduction in the stock of smaller and medium sized dwellings in the countryside areas.

4.33 Policy HG13 seeks to provide guidelines to assist the achievement of the above two aims. However, it is recognised that there may be some instances in which other material considerations justify a departure from criteria (2) and (3). The policy applies to dwellings where it can be shown that the use of the dwellings has not been abandoned.

4.34 Large extensions to dwellings which are the subject of an agricultural condition are less likely to be acceptable unless it can be demonstrated that the resultant accommodation can be supported by the viability of the holding and that its value would not be such as to be out of reach of workers employed in agriculture.

4.35 Limited extension or alteration of existing buildings in the Green Belt is regarded as appropriate development provided the development does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building. Policy GB2 of this Local Plan enforces this matter.

Replacement of a caravan or mobile home in the countryside

POLICY HG14: The replacement of a caravan or other mobile home in the countryside with a permanent dwelling will not be permitted.

Replacement dwellings in the countryside

POLICY HG15: Proposals for the replacement of a dwelling in the countryside will be permitted where:

(1) the proposed replacement dwelling is in scale and character with the dwelling it is intended to replace:

(2) the proposed replacement dwelling would not materially increase the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside.

4.36 Caravans and mobile homes are distinct from permanent dwellings since they can be removed. Given the restrictions on development in the countryside the replacement of caravans and mobile homes with permanent dwellings will be resisted outside village frameworks. Where it can be shown that the existing use of a dwelling has not been abandoned, replacement on a one-for-one basis may be permitted. As a new dwelling, it is likely to have a greater impact on the development than the dwelling it replaces and will benefit from permitted development rights when completed and occupied. Thus replacements ought to be similar in size and height to the original structure. The District Council will permit one-for-one replacements subject to the requirements of the General Permitted Development Order (i.e. a maximum enlargement of 15% of volume) and the need to provide satisfactory internal layout and amenities. This will apply to dwellings both inside and outside the Green Belt. (See also the Green Belt Chapter).

New dwellings

4.37 Policy SP12/1 of the Structure Plan 1995 states that housing development in the countryside will be strictly limited to uses that need to be located in the countryside:

“Development in the countryside will be restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, permitted mineral extraction, outdoor recreation or public utility services.”

4.38 New housing in the countryside will be restricted to that which requires a rural location. This aims to minimise the amount of built development in the countryside by imposing strict criteria on the types of appropriate development and encouraging the re-use of existing buildings in the rural area. There will be some cases, however, in which the demands of the farming or forestry work concerned may make it essential for one or more of the people engaged in this work to live at or very close to the site of their work.

4.39 In general, preference will be given to the re-use or replacement of existing buildings over those which propose the erection of a new dwelling in order to avoid further development in the countryside. Where new buildings are proposed to be erected they should be grouped around existing development to minimise the impact on the countryside.

4.40 The erection of a further dwelling would not be justified where an existing dwelling serving the unit or closely connected with it has either recently been sold off or in some way separated from it.

Agricultural dwellings

POLICY HG16: In the countryside (i.e. outside village frameworks defined in this Plan), new dwellings complying with Structure Plan 1995 policy SP12/1 will only be permitted on well-established agricultural units where it can be demonstrated that there is a clear, existing functional need relating to a full-time worker, and that suitable existing buildings in the area are not available or the conversion of appropriate nearby buildings would not provide suitable accommodation.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be subject to a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or forestry or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependents.

Relaxation of agricultural occupancy condition

POLICY HG17: The relaxation of an agricultural occupancy condition will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated the dwelling is no longer required by the unit or those working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or forestry or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependents.

When considering applications to relax such a condition, the District Council will require evidence of the steps taken to market the dwelling with the occupancy condition.

4.41 Although Structure and Local Plan policies resist new dwellings in the countryside, the District Council acknowledges that many agricultural workers require accommodation close to their enterprises for husbandry and security and other reasons. Where applicants are able to demonstrate genuine need for new dwellings associated with their enterprise, the District Council may grant planning permission. Since such an approach is a departure from restrictive countryside policy, the planning permission will be subject to a condition restricting occupation. Such a condition will only be discharged in exceptional cases.

4.42 When considering applications for new dwellings associated with an enterprise in the countryside, the following matters will be taken into account:

- (i) Planning permission will not be granted for new dwellings outside village frameworks, except where a functional need for one or more workers to be readily available at most times is clearly demonstrated as essential (as opposed to merely convenient) for the proper functioning of the enterprise, which could not be fulfilled

by another dwelling on the unit or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation;

- (ii) The need relates to a full-time worker or one primarily employed in agriculture, and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- (iii) The unit and agricultural activity concerned has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one of them, is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so;
- (iv) Advice will be sought from the County Farms Manager concerning the agricultural justification for any new agricultural dwelling;
- (v) Planning permission will not be granted where dwellings associated with a holding, but not subject to restriction, have recently been separately sold off;
- (vi) The scale of the proposed dwelling and the accommodation needs of the agricultural workers.

All permissions granted with an agricultural occupancy condition will be accompanied by a statement on the need of the applicant to be aware of the special nature of the consent and the policies relating to any subsequent application to discharge the agricultural condition.

4.43 An agricultural occupancy condition will not be discharged:

- in the absence of a realistic assessment of the existing need for the use of the dwelling by someone solely, mainly or last working in agriculture or forestry in the locality, or for a widow, widower or resident dependent of such a person;
- unless proof is provided that the property has been adequately marketed for a period not less than 12 months;
- unless the price asked for the property adequately reflects the encumbrance (advice will be sought from the District Council's Valuer); and
- unless the dwelling has, since construction, become incorporated into an expanded village and now lies within a village framework, under which circumstances the relevant settlement policies will take precedence over Policy HG19.

Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions will be required to provide a realistic assessment of existing need for them, having regard to need in the area as a whole, not just the particular holding.

4.44 All of these factors are important when considering proposals for agricultural dwellings since it is essential that all applications are scrutinised thoroughly with the aim of detecting attempts to abuse the concession that the planning system makes for such dwellings. These follow the advice contained in PPG 7 "The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development" where the District Council is advised to consider the use of functional and financial tests to assess proposals for new agricultural dwellings.

Temporary Permission for Mobile Homes to support new agricultural units

POLICY HG18: If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming enterprise whether on a new or recently created agricultural unit, it should normally be provided by temporary accommodation such as a caravan. The following criteria must also be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Council:

- (i) Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;**
- (ii) Functional need;**
- (iii) Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;**
- (iv) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit or other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation.**

4.45 When considering planning applications for new enterprises in the countryside and the need for any associated accommodation, the District Council seeks advice concerning the commercial viability of the proposed enterprise. Where such advice indicates that the viability of the enterprise is uncertain, the District Council will firmly resist a permanent dwelling in the countryside. In such circumstances, temporary planning permission may be granted for a caravan associated with the enterprise to enable the applicant to prove that it can provide his/her main livelihood.

Sub-Division of Mobile Homes

POLICY HG19: Any planning permission for a mobile home will be subject to a condition that the mobile home shall not be sub-divided into more than one unit.

4.46 As a result of recent legal rulings it has been established that, unless appropriately conditioned, planning permission is not required to sub-divide a mobile home. Therefore, where planning permission is given for the siting of a mobile home, it is important to protect the amenity of its occupants as the construction of a mobile home does not allow for adequate privacy and sound insulation in the same way as a permanent dwelling. The District Council also has to take into account the impact of additional households on matters such as traffic generation, parking and private garden or amenity area, and, where it is in the countryside, the issue of another residential unit which would be contrary to the settlement policies of the Local Plan.

Dwellings associated with “Horsiculture”

POLICY HG20: Planning permission will not be granted for dwellings in the countryside for the on-site security of horses, stabling and ancillary uses unless the site lies outside the Green Belt and the District Council is satisfied that the applicant has proven an essential functional need for, and financial justification of that dwelling in that location having regard to other policy considerations concerning design and site layout.

4.47 With increasing leisure time and the changes in agriculture bringing forward pressures for farmers to diversify, the District Council has experienced increasing demand for horse-riding and the setting up of equestrian activities (often referred to as “horsiculture”). In this context, planning permission is usually required for the construction of new buildings or the conversion of existing buildings for stabling horses and for the change of use of land for exercise, training or jumping horses. Policy HG20 will also apply to development associated with studs in the District.

4.48 With these approvals, on occasion, there may be pressure to develop a dwelling on site for security purposes - this will be invariably outside village frameworks. The District Council will resist such proposals since they introduce new residential development in the countryside which can often be conspicuous in the generally flat landscape of South Cambridgeshire.

4.49 However, given the similarity in the issues which apply to both agricultural use and the keeping of horses, where an application for a dwelling related to the keeping of horses is submitted, the District Council will apply the same considerations as those for agricultural dwellings, as listed in paragraphs 4.41 to 4.44 concerning agricultural dwellings. These considerations follow the advice in PPG7 “The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development” concerning the need for applicants to fulfil the requirements of a functional and financial test. The need for a new dwelling on-site for security does not depend upon the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved. Where permission is granted for such a dwelling the District Council will include a condition on any consent to ensure that the dwelling is not sold off separately from the land to which it is directly related.

4.50 New dwellings for “horsiculture” will not be permitted in the Green Belt - they are an inappropriate use in terms of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 “Green Belts”.

Country houses

POLICY HG21: The District Council will not permit new country houses in the countryside unrelated to agriculture unless the District Council is satisfied that the proposal demonstrates exceptional quality with regard to the following criteria:

- (1) the country house is of outstanding architectural form, design and scale which significantly enhances the immediate and wider visual and historic character of the area;**
- (2) the country house is established in extensive landscaped grounds which positively contributes to the countryside setting of the development and takes account of the existing landscape characteristics of the area and**
- (3) the country house would be distinct from existing villages and not be an extension of the existing village framework.**

The District Council will also have regard to the cumulative effect of such development proposals.

4.51 There are examples in South Cambridgeshire of exceptional country houses which have positively enhanced the countryside leaving an architectural legacy of contemporary development for future generations to enjoy. Such examples would include Childerley Hall and Conington Hall. The District Council will resist proposals for isolated country houses in the countryside in accordance with policy SP12/1 of the Structure Plan 1995. However, in very exceptional circumstances, development may be permitted where the country house, being used as a dwelling, is clearly of the highest quality and outstanding in terms of landscape and architectural quality and would significantly contribute to the immediate setting and wider landscape. Such country houses will not be permitted in the Green Belt. In assessing the proposal the District Council will seek the advice of the Architectural Advisory Panel.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

POLICY HG22: The District Council will look favourably upon residential schemes which include measures to conserve energy, subject to other policies and proposals in the Local Plan.

4.52 As part of the economic and social objectives of this Plan, it is vital to encourage methods of practice in development terms which improve and sustain our quality of life. In the context of housing this includes a positive move towards the more efficient use of energy and minimising emissions which contribute to global warming. In this respect, a substantial contribution to reducing energy consumption could be made by careful design of dwellings and larger residential areas. Such measures could include additional insulation, orientation of windows and designs to improve the degree of shelter from wind.

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

POLICY HG23: Outside the Green Belt, proposals for caravans for gypsies and travelling show people on a site consisting of a single or more pitches, will only be considered when the need for a site is shown to be essential to enable the applicants to continue to exercise a travelling lifestyle for the purpose of making and seeking their livelihood. Occupation would be restricted to gypsies or travelling show people (as the case may be) and may be limited to a temporary period and/or for the benefit of named occupiers(s). Where the need is proven, to the Council's satisfaction, the following criteria will have to be met:

- (1) The site is reasonably located for schools, shops and other local services.**
- (2) The site would have minimal impact on the amenities of existing local residents and adjoining land uses; concentration of sites will be avoided.**
- (3) The site would not, either on its own, or cumulatively, have a significant adverse effect on the rural character and appearance, or the amenities of the surrounding area.**
- (4) The site can be satisfactorily assimilated into its surroundings by existing or proposed landscaping; an approved landscaping scheme will be required.**
- (5) The use of the site would not give rise to unacceptable parking, highway access or service provision problems.**
- (6) The site would not adversely affect any buildings of historic or archaeological importance, or sites of wildlife or nature conservation value.**
- (7) Where planning permission is allowed, built forms of development will not be permitted except for utility outhouses. Small stables will be considered on their merits depending upon need and the nature of the site.**
- (8) The site has adequate infrastructural connections to local services including water supply.**
- (9) The use would not detract from convenient, safe and enjoyable use of a public right of way.**

4.53 Gypsies are defined as "persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen, or of persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such". This definition of gypsies has been clarified by the Courts to mean persons who wander or travel for the purpose of making and seeking their livelihood, and do not include persons who move from place to place without any connection between their movement and their means of livelihood. The Council will need to be satisfied that these criteria are met.

4.54 The Council has in the past enabled all but a very few gypsies to live on private or council-run sites. There are spaces for 200 caravans on private sites within the District and 78 on Council sites.

4.55 The statutory duty of Local Authorities to provide caravan sites for gypsies residing in, or resorting to an area is no longer enshrined in law. Structure Plan 1995 Policy SP4/6 requires adequate provision to be made for gypsies who reside in, or resort to the County through the Local Plan. The Council's policy is broadly to assist gypsies in the process of owning, developing and managing their own sites as long as there is an identified need, and the proposal does not breach countryside protection policies. The main aim has to be to make appropriate provision while protecting amenity. Gypsy sites within the Green Belt are not an appropriate form of development.

4.56 Where a breach of planning control occurs which causes nuisance, and or harm to the countryside, or other planning interests of importance, the Council will take appropriate enforcement action having regard to the circumstances of each case, both the planning circumstances and the personal circumstances and needs of the persons concerned.

4.57 In cases where planning permission is granted for a gypsy site, the Council will wish to apply standards to that site, just as it does to new caravan sites. Gypsy sites should be controlled so that highway safety is not threatened due to inadequate access or turning room. The impact upon the open countryside should be limited. The number of structures on the site will therefore be limited, and the site should be landscaped, or screened to minimise that impact.

4.58 Where special need is shown for a site to be occupied by a gypsy family which would not ordinarily be permitted, any planning permission will be likely to restrict occupation, and use to either that family or gypsy occupiers generally. Once that use is no longer required the Council may not permit further use as a caravan site for another gypsy family, or for gypsy use generally (as the case may be), or as a caravan site at all.