

7. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

OBJECTIVES

- SF/a To encourage provision and retention of village services and facilities within villages consistent with the scale and function of existing centres.**
- SF/b To ensure that Cambridge continues as the main sub-regional comparison shopping centre for South Cambridgeshire and to protect the vitality of other established centres and villages within South Cambridgeshire.**
- SF/c To limit retail development in the countryside to goods produced in the immediate locality of any individual enterprise.**
- SF/d To encourage the provision of Public Art in new development.**
- SF/e To meet the formal and informal sport and recreation needs of the District, including provision of high quality indoor and outdoor facilities.**
- SF/f Where possible, to base any major new indoor sports facilities at school sites, to enable dual use of facilities.**
- SF/g To protect and enhance important areas of local and strategic open space for their recreation and amenity value, and create connectivity with existing public rights of way and the wider countryside.**
- SF/h To ensure the proper provision and maintenance of open space and sports facilities consistent with levels of planned residential development and identified open space standards.**

VILLAGE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

POLICY SF/1 Protection Of Village Services and Facilities

Planning permission will be refused for proposals which would result in the loss of a village service, including village pubs, shops, post offices, community meeting places, or health centres, where such loss would cause an unacceptable reduction in the level of community or service provision in the locality.

The following matters will be considered in determining the significance of the loss:

- 1. The established use of the premises and its existing and potential contribution to the social amenity of the local population;**
 - 2. The presence of other village service and facilities which provide an alternative within convenient access by Good Quality Public Transport, or by cycling or walking; and**
 - 3. The future economic viability of the use including, in appropriate cases, financial information and the results of any efforts to market the premises, for a minimum of 12 months at a realistic price.**
- 7.1 Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 Policy P3/4 requires local authorities to encourage the retention of village shopping facilities and key community facilities to support the vitality of rural communities. Village services and facilities perform a vital function in rural communities, particularly for the less mobile. Once a facility is lost, it may be lost forever, as alterations to the building make it difficult to restore to its previous use. When considering proposals which involve the loss of such facilities, the District Council will consider the impact of the loss on the local community, in terms of the availability and access to alternatives, and the social implications, including the impact on the viability of the village as a whole.

RETAILING

POLICY SF/2 Retail Hierarchy

A retail hierarchy of preferred centres will be taken into account in considering proposals for retail development.

The hierarchy of centres in South Cambridgeshire is as follows:

- 1. New town of Northstowe.**
- 2. Cambridge East.**
- 3. Rural Centres.**
- 4. Other villages (Minor Rural Centres, Group Villages and Infill Villages).**

Any proposals for new retail provision in these centres should be in scale with their position in the hierarchy. Cambridge is the relevant city centre in the local hierarchy while the ring of market towns just outside the district represent town centres.

The new town at Northstowe will also be considered a town centre in the hierarchy.

The Cambridge East will perform a function equivalent to that of a district centre.

Rural Centres fulfil the role of local centres but are not appropriate locations for shopping developments which serve urban areas and which are subject to the sequential test set out in Policy SF/2. Rural Centres are the appropriate location for shopping to serve their local catchment area only. The same principle applies to Minor Rural Centres, Group Villages and Infill Villages, which serve even smaller catchment areas than Rural Centres and cater for very localised shopping needs.

- 7.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 advises that development plans should establish a range of centres from City Centres, through town centres to district centres, local centres and village centres. Structure Plan Policy P3/2 requires that shopping proposals should be of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre and its catchment area.

POLICY SF/3 Applications for New Retail Development

Other than retail developments in villages under Policy SF/5, planning permission for retail development will not be granted unless the applicant has successfully demonstrated that:

- 1. A sequential approach has been adopted to site selection and the availability of suitable alternative sites;**
- 2. In the case of proposals in defined centres, the development would be of a scale in accordance with that centre's position in the hierarchy, or, in the case of proposals outside defined centres, the impact of a development would not have an adverse effect on the vitality and viability of other town centres, district centres and local centres identified in development plans, and on the rural economy, including village shops;**
- 3. It would be conveniently accessible by a wide range of modes of transport other than the car, including Good Quality Public Transport from a wide catchment area, and effective measures would be taken to enhance such accessibility, including that for pedestrians and cyclists.**

In addition, in the case of proposals to develop sites in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations (or to extend existing stores in such locations) developers will be required to demonstrate a positive need for the additional floor area *before* any of the above tests are applied.

- 7.3 There is no further need for major sub-regional shopping provision in the Cambridge Sub-Region in the period to 2016, other than approximately 30,000 m² of shopping development within the central area of Cambridge City

which has been granted planning permission. Major sub-regional shopping provision is considered to be any proposal of more than 1,400 m² convenience floor area or in excess of 10,000 m² comparison shopping floor area, or which together with other nearby development or proposals will exceed these thresholds.

- 7.4 In view of the provisions of Structure Plan Policy P9/10, it is unlikely that proposals for major sub-regional shopping provision will receive planning permission in South Cambridgeshire. Exceptionally, in Northstowe, there will be a need for convenience and comparison floor area provision of a scale in excess of these thresholds, which ensures that the settlement is sustainable. However, the District Council does not intend that Northstowe should perform a sub-regional shopping role. Further guidance on proposals for convenience and comparison retail in Northstowe is contained in the Northstowe Area Action Plan.
- 7.5 There will also be a need for shopping provision in the urban extensions to Cambridge. Further guidance on proposals for convenience and comparison retail in the urban extensions is contained in the relevant Area Action Plans.
- 7.6 Policy SF/3 provides guidance on the way in which the District Council will consider applications for new retail development or for the extension of existing retail development. As stated, the policy does not apply to proposals for new shops and extensions to existing shops in villages. These will be considered under Policy SF/5.

POLICY SF/4 Retail Development on Land Allocated for Other Uses

Retail development will only be permitted on land allocated for housing, employment or other uses, where it can be demonstrated that the effect of such a loss would not limit the range and quality of sites available for that particular use or the quantity of land required to meet Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 requirements for housing and employment.

The policy will not be operated to prevent the provision of appropriate retail facilities to complement the other elements of mixed development schemes, subject to the provisions of Policies SF/2 and SF/3.

- 7.7 It is necessary to resist retail development on land allocated for other forms of development in the LDF where this would result in there being a shortage in the range and quality of sites available for that particular use, or the quantity of land required to meet Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 requirements.

POLICY SF/5 Retailing In Villages

Proposals for new shops, redevelopment or extension of existing shops, or the change of use of buildings to shops within a village

framework will only be permitted where the size and attraction of shopping development is of a scale appropriate to the size of village.

- 7.8 Village shops play a vital role in achieving sustainability in villages, reducing the need for residents to travel to meet everyday needs. In smaller villages they also play an important community function, supporting those who have difficulty travelling further afield, and forming a hub to village life. The District Council will, wherever possible, support provision of new shops and facilities of an appropriate scale to the village.

RETAILING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

POLICY SF/6 Retailing In The Countryside

Planning permission for the sale of goods in the countryside will not be granted except for:

- 1. Sales from farms and nurseries of produce and / or craft goods, where the majority of goods are produced on the farm or in the locality; or**
- 2. Exceptionally, the sale of convenience goods, ancillary to other uses, where proposals, either individually or cumulatively, do not have a significant adverse impact on the viability of surrounding village shops, or the vitality of rural centres or other village centres.**

Where permission is granted, conditions may be imposed on the types of goods that may be sold.

- 7.9 Sporadic development for retail uses in the countryside could result in unsustainable patterns of development, and could harm the vitality and viability of village centres.

PUBLIC ART

POLICY SF/7 Public Art and New Development

In determining planning applications the District Council will encourage a contribution for the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art, craft and design works.

The public art policy will apply to:

- Residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings; and**

- **Other developments where the floor area to be built is 1000 m² gross or more, including office, manufacturing, warehousing and retail developments.**

On smaller developments, developers will be encouraged to include Public Art within their scheme as a means of enhancing the quality of their development.

Commuted maintenance sums for up to 10 years will be required, to include the cost of decommissioning where appropriate.

- 7.10 The provision of quality visual arts and crafts as part of new developments can bring social, cultural, environmental, educational and economic benefits, both to the new development and the community at large. It can assist in adding local distinctiveness and creating a sense of place. As well as landmark works such as a sculpture, it may be an integrated or functional element of a development (e.g. lighting, landscape, floor designs and signage).
- 7.11 The District Council has adopted a Public Art policy, that provides guidance for developers (and contracted builders) implementing large-scale developments, including residential and commercial. It encourages developers to allocate a proportion of the budget (ideally between 1% and 5% of the total cost of the development) for the implementation of a carefully considered public art scheme. Precise plans and budgets will need to be agreed in association with the District Council's officers prior to planning approval. The involvement of a lead artist(s) at an early stage in the planning and design of developments is actively encouraged, particularly in major new developments. Public art will be sought through negotiation, but it is not a mandatory requirement.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

POLICY SF/8 Telecommunications

In determining whether approval of siting and appearance is required, or considering applications for planning permission for telecommunication installations, the District Council will need to be satisfied that:

- **Antenna have, so far as is practicable, been sited so as to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building on which they are installed;**
- **The siting and external appearance of apparatus have been designed to minimise the impact of such apparatus on amenity, while respecting operational efficiency;**

- **In the case of radio masts, the applicant has shown evidence that it has explored the possibility of erecting antennas on an existing building, mast, or other structures, and where a new mast is required, demonstrated that they have considered the opportunities to share it with other operators.**

Proposals for the location of telecommunication installations will not be permitted where they have an unacceptable visual impact on the urban or rural landscape, unless the applicant can demonstrate that no alternative more appropriate site is available.

- 7.12 Effective telecommunications are of great benefit to both the economy and the community, and the technology is developing rapidly. It is closely related to information technology, where broadband access is becoming increasingly important to businesses, as well as enabling home working which can contribute to reducing the need to travel.
- 7.13 Many new telecommunications installations are covered by the General Permitted Development Order. Where new equipment and structures require planning permission, it is recognised that technical considerations impose constraints on siting, and consideration will be given to the operational requirements of the particular network. Where possible, sharing will be sought in order to reduce unnecessary proliferation of masts.

UNDERGROUND PIPES, WIRES, FIBRES AND CABLES

POLICY SF/9 Underground Pipes, Wires, Fibres And Cables

Utility companies will be strongly urged to place all pipes, fibres, wires and cables underground where this would not damage identified areas of ecological or archaeological importance or have other unacceptable environmental impacts (e.g. on the landscape or agricultural land quality). In such circumstances, careful line routing would usually be the most appropriate way to minimise the visual impacts of overhead wires and cables.

In view of the substantial practical, technical and cost disadvantages involved, the under-grounding of high voltage power lines (275kV and above) will only be sought in exceptional circumstances. Underground services can be damaging to the water environment and advice should be sought from the Environment Agency on any mitigation measures.

- 7.14 New overhead lines require consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Local planning authorities must be consulted on proposals within their district. In order to minimise the effect on the countryside, the District Council will encourage utility companies to site new electricity lines and sub stations carefully. There are substantial differences between under-grounding high and low voltage

electricity lines, technically, practically and in terms of cost. High voltage electricity lines are expensive and complex to install, underground and maintain, and can cause environmental damage such as soil contamination and / or the sterilisation of land. In view of the substantial practical, technical and cost disadvantages involved, the under-grounding of high voltage power lines (275 kV and above) can only be sought in exceptional circumstances. At the distribution voltage level (132kV and below) where the power carried is much less, the technical complexity and cost of under-grounding is reduced significantly as the voltages decrease.

LORD'S BRIDGE RADIO TELESCOPE

POLICY SF/10 Lord's Bridge Radio Telescope

Within the 'Lord's Bridge Restricted Area' (defined on the Proposals Map), planning permission will only be granted for development that would not result in any risk of interference to the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge.

Within the 'Lords Bridge Consultation Area' (defined on the Proposals Map), development proposals that could adversely affect the operation of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge will be subject to consultation with the University of Cambridge, and account will be taken of the risk of interference to the equipment being used at the Observatory. Planning permission will be refused where interference would be caused that could not be overcome by conditions or by the use of planning obligations.

- 7.15 The international importance of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory at Lord's Bridge must be safeguarded. The Observatory contains unique radio and optical telescopes operated by the Universities of Cambridge and Manchester / Jodrell Bank. The telescopes measure signals that are very weak, and hence highly susceptible to many forms of interference, specifically electrical interference, light pollution and mechanical vibration from domestic, industrial plant and other sources such as vehicles and aircraft. Accordingly, 'Restricted' and 'Consultation Areas' are defined on the Proposals Map; within the latter, arrangements are made to consult the University of Cambridge about the technical consequences for the Observatory of proposed development. Harm caused to the Observatory will be overcome with the use of conditions or planning obligations to regulate the installation and use of equipment likely to interfere with the operation of the Observatory.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING RECREATION AREAS

POLICY SF/11 Protection of Existing Recreation Areas

Planning Permission will not be granted for proposals resulting in the loss of land or buildings providing for recreational use except where:

- 1. They can be best retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;**
- 2. They would be replaced by an equivalent or better quantity and quality and in a suitable location;**
- 3. The proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss;**
- 4. An excess of provision is clearly demonstrated, in all functions it can perform, taking into account potential future demand and in consultation with local people and users.**

7.16 Recreational facilities, including outdoor playspace, informal open space, and built recreation facilities, are of great significance to local communities. This is not only for the recreational amenity they offer, but also the impact open space has on the quality of the built and natural environment. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 paragraph 10 states that, "Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or the buildings and land to be surplus to requirements."

7.17 The District Council has undertaken an Audit and Assessment of Need for Outdoor Playspace and Informal Open Space, to examine existing and future needs of local communities. This should be referred to in seeking to determine whether there is an excess of provision in an area. There may however, be special circumstances where the development of existing recreation land can be justified through enhancement of the site as a whole, or appropriate alternative provision found elsewhere to recompense the loss.

OUTDOOR PLAYSPACE AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

POLICY SF/12 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments

Schemes including one or more new dwellings will be required to contribute towards Outdoor Playing Space (including children's play and formal sports facilities) and Informal Open Space to meet the additional need generated by the development.

Only family dwellings of two or more bedrooms will be required to contribute to the provision of Children's Playspace. Sheltered dwellings and residential homes will only be required to provide Informal Open Space.

Where appropriate, this will involve provision of all or some types of space within the development site, however, an appropriate contribution will be required for “off-site” provision of the types of space not provided on-site. This may be for new provision and / or improvements to existing facilities. In developments of less than 10 homes, it is expected that only Informal Open Space will be provided on-site. Where an individual phase comprises 10 or fewer dwellings, but will form part of a larger scheme exceeding that total, a proportional contribution to future on-site provision will be required.

Commuted maintenance sums for 10 years will be required for all on-site and off-site provision in accordance with the Recreation and Community Supplementary Planning Document.

Where on-site provision is required, the Council may seek the option of a commuted capital sum to construct the facility. In these circumstances, a serviced site (as appropriate for the facility concerned) will be transferred to the Council free of charge by the developer.

- 7.18 New developments create additional need for recreation and outdoor playspace. Planning Policy Guidance note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation states that, ‘Local Authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity or quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs.’ This becomes particularly important given the requirement for higher densities in new housing developments, resulting in potentially smaller gardens.
- 7.19 On-site provision of open space is generally preferable to off-site provision. It can be an integral part of the development, in a location well related to the proposed new dwellings. The figure of 10 dwellings or above for on site provision of playspace is set because it is a reasonable size of development needed to achieve a useful play space on-site, capable of being reasonably maintained by a Parish Council or other body.
- 7.20 Where appropriate, contributions secured from new housing developments will be used not only towards providing additional land for playspace, but also enhancing existing facilities, to the benefit of the new occupants. Financial sums secured will be utilised where it is impractical to provide playspace on-site (where the land area would be too small or in an inappropriate location), to be pooled and contribute towards additional land provision, or the enhancement of existing facilities (off-site provision).
- 7.21 New facilities and improvements will be required to meet the Council’s standards both in terms of quantity and quality, which will be further detailed in the Recreation and Community supplementary planning document.

OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

POLICY SF/13 Open Space Standards

The minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space is 2.8 hectares per 1000 people, comprising:

Outdoor Sport¹ – 1.6 hectares per 1000 people

Children's Playspace² – 0.8 hectares per 1000 people

Informal Open Space³ – 0.4 hectares per 1000 people

FOOTNOTES:

¹Outdoor Sport – Facilities such as grass pitches for a range of sports, bowling greens, tennis courts, athletics tracks and multi use games areas.

²Children's Playspace – Designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play. Also includes informal playing space within housing areas.

³Informal Open Space – Used by people for informal unstructured recreation such as walking, relaxing, or a focal point, ranging from formal planted areas and meeting places to wilder, more natural spaces, including green linkages.

- 7.22 In the past South Cambridgeshire has used the National Playing Fields Association 'Six Acre Standard' when considering the open space requirements of new developments. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) now requires local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of communities for recreation and open space in order to set open space standards locally. The District Council has undertaken an audit assessment of need in order to guide local standards for provision and requirements from new developments. It investigates quantity and quality of provision, and how it is meeting local need, and utilises these assessments to create a local standard of provision. This has been subject to public consultation. It indicates that many South Cambridgeshire villages have insufficient outdoor play space, both in terms of quantity and quality.

STRATEGIC OPEN SPACE

- 7.23 Strategic open space provides more than a local function. Spaces are generally larger, more varied, and provide a different type visitor experience to village open spaces. Examples include country parks, and historic parks and gardens.

- 7.24 The growth taking place in the area necessitates additional provision in order to meet the needs of new developments, but there is also a need to deal with existing shortfalls for the current population, both in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. Standards of provision are to be developed for the sub-region, with further detail provided in a supplementary planning document.

THE RIVER CAM

POLICY SF/14 The River Cam

The District Council will not permit extensions to the curtilage of existing marinas or boatyards on the River Cam between Cambridge and the Great Ouse, and on the Great Ouse itself, except by allowing additional moorings through the provision of cuts.

- 7.25 The waterways in South Cambridgeshire are a major recreation and tourism resource, and careful management is required to preserve the special qualities that attract users. Due to the sensitive environment, and the need to protect their setting, the policy strictly limits further development.