

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan policies

February 2024

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Environment

Policy E1: Maintaining Separation

Development proposals should respect the undeveloped gap between Ickleford and Hitchin.

Policy E2: Protecting the Landscape

Development proposals should protect and, where practicable, enhance the historic and natural landscape and local character of the Parish, including the delicate chalk rivers and their valleys, field ponds, mature trees, and hedgerows. Such features should be protected and, where appropriate, incorporated into landscape design schemes.

Insofar as planning permission is required, the planting of hedgerows and trees, and the enhancement of the existing vegetation and the chalk stream ecosystem will be supported.

Policy E3: Rural Character

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respect the rural character of the village and its surroundings by ensuring that:

- *they respond positively to the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants in the vicinity and on the site.*
- *the scale and character of new buildings are in keeping with the rural setting,*
- *the variable sense of space between and around existing buildings is retained where appropriate, particularly in the green heart of the village and where views of the countryside beyond the village are available. The design of new buildings should ensure that adequate space is provided around them to compliment the rural character of the village,*
- *boundary treatment and landscaping schemes are carefully designed so as to maintain the rural character of the area,*
- *Views of particular importance as defined on the Policies Map should be protected and not be obstructed by new development (Annex 3).*

Policy E4: Biodiversity

Development should protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and habitats, and provide at least 10% net gain in biodiversity.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- *provide proportionate species-related measures;*
- *incorporate appropriate native species into landscaping schemes; and*
- *establish links with existing wildlife corridors and deliver sustainable drainage solutions.*

Historic Environment

Policy HE1: Protecting and Enhancing Local Heritage Assets

The Plan identifies the following local heritage assets:

- *Icknield Way Path/Trail (Annex 5)*
- *The Village Hall (Annex 6)*
- *The commemorative bus shelter on Upper Green, and its inscription (Annex 6)*

Development proposals directly or indirectly affecting the identified assets will be determined applying a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Sustainable Development

Policy SD1: Development within the Settlement Boundary

New development, including housing, small scale employment uses and community facilities will be supported on infill or redevelopment sites inside the settlement boundary where there is no unacceptable impact on existing residential, employment and community uses.

Policy SD2: New Housing Development

On developments of 3 – 10 dwellings and sites not required to provide affordable housing, the size and mix of dwellings should respond positively to the most up-to-date information available on local housing need.

Development proposals which include smaller homes (1-3 bedrooms) will be particularly supported.

Policy SD3: High Quality Design

Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they are in accordance with the guidelines and design principles set out in the Ickleford Design Codes.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should:

- ***Relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces;***
- ***Be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting;***
- ***Use materials appropriate to the development's context;***
- ***Be of a design with a locally inspired or distinctive character;***
- ***New dwellings should not be more than 2 storeys in height unless the context is appropriate;***
- ***Be well integrated with the community and facilities by reinforcing pedestrian connections and taking opportunities to provide new ones;***
- ***Integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street;***
- ***Incorporate Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) as the preferred method of surface water drainage for all development;***
- ***Provide facilities for secure cycle storage.***

Policy SD4: Provision of Energy Efficient Buildings

The design and standard of any new building should meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions. This includes:

- ***Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain,***
- ***The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials,***
- ***Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.***
- ***Any new development should incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels.***

Proposals for the retrofitting of existing buildings including heritage properties, should reduce energy demand where practicable and, where appropriate, generate renewable energy whilst safeguarding their historic characteristics.

Alterations to existing buildings should be designed in a way which reduces energy consumption and comply with sustainable design and construction standards.

Policy SD5: Water Management

Development proposals should respond positively to best practice on water efficiency, including using water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting, grey water recycling, and providing water storage features.

As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, development proposals should demonstrate that the estimated consumption of wholesome water per dwelling is calculated in accordance with the methodology in the water efficiency calculator and should not exceed 110 litres/person/day.

Community

Policy C1: Community Facilities

The provision of new community facilities will be supported.

Insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for the improvement, extension or partial replacement or redevelopment of buildings, structures and land use for community purposes will be supported where their design respects the character of the village and will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of residential properties in the immediate locality.

The Plan identifies the following key community facilities:

- ***The Village Hall***
- ***Ickleford Stores***
- ***The Sport and Recreation Club***
- ***The Old George Public House and carpark***
- ***The Plume of Feathers Public House and car park***
- ***The Cricketers Public House and carpark***
- ***Bus shelters***

Proposals for the conversion, demolition or change of use of the identified key community facilities to non-community uses will only be supported if it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- ***the facility's continued use is no longer viable, and evidence has been provided that the property has been actively marketed, commensurate with its use at an open market value for a period of at least 12 months; or***
- ***an alternative or new facility is provided that is equivalent in use and scale to the facility which would be lost and that it is in an appropriate location.***

Policy C2: Recreation and Green Spaces

The Plan identifies a series of important open spaces and recreational facilities:

- ***Upper Green (The Village Green) (Annex 10)***
- ***Ickleford Recreation Ground and play area***
- ***Alleyfield Burial Ground***
- ***Little Park green space, behind St Katherines Close***
- ***Ryder Way and Little Park Allotments***
- ***The commons (see Annex 9)***

Development proposals which would reduce the quality or quantity of the identified facilities will only be supported where the existing facilities are re-provided to an equivalent or improved quality or quantity in an appropriate location.

Development proposals for the improvement of existing recreation areas and open spaces and the provision of additional facilities will be supported.

Policy C3: Primary School and Site at Bedford Road

The provision of primary education facilities, either through the expansion of the existing primary school or the construction of a new school, should be designed to facilitate the joint use of spaces and equipment by the school and by the wider community.

Any proposed development of a new school on the Bedford Road housing allocation (as set out in Policy IC3 of the Local Plan) should meet the following criteria:

- *the building is located and designed as an integral part of the housing allocation;*
- *the design of the building reflects its location on the northern edge of the village;*
- *the building is well-connected to the wider village and the houses on the allocated site by pedestrian and cycle links; and*
- *it provides appropriate levels of car parking for teachers and other staff.*

Development proposals for a school should be informed by a detailed masterplan for the site showing its relationship to the development of the Bedford Road Housing allocation.

Policy C4: Supporting Local Employment and Agriculture

Proposals for the development of new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, including farm based operations, will be supported, providing that:

- *it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact from increased traffic, lighting, noise or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;*
- *it would have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village, its rural hinterland and landscape; and*
- *where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development.*

Proposals for extensions or the part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home working will be supported where they provide appropriate car-parking and do not unacceptably impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Movement, Traffic and Transport

Policy MTT1: Provision for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Horseriders

Wherever practicable, development proposals should upgrade, enhance existing pedestrian routes, and connect into them. The development of new links within the village, to neighbouring villages and to the wider countryside will be supported.

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should include measures that keep traffic speeds low and improve the provision of footways and access for pedestrians and cyclists and horse riders. Any such new roads, junctions, footways, and traffic management measures should be designed to complement the rural character of the village and respond positively to local heritage.

Policy MTT2: Car Parking

Development proposals should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking. Development proposals which would result in the loss of off-road parking spaces will only be supported where alternative provision is made which maintains the number of accessible parking spaces within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Proposals for new development that provide additional off-road car parking spaces will be supported.