



3

SETTING THE VISION



Upton, Northampton

The Vision for North Ely

North Ely will be an exemplar development showcasing best practice of a quality that would be recognised nationally and that stands comparison with the City's existing heritage.

The vision for North Ely has been derived from the various visioning, consultation and workshop events which have been held with the wider community and stakeholders during the development of the Ely Masterplan 2010, the North Ely Development Framework 2011 and the Joint Strategic Masterplan 2013.

The draft Local Plan contains the following vision for Ely as a whole:

“Ely will develop into a special 21st century cathedral city and Cambridgeshire Market Town, with a thriving city centre and great quality of life for its residents. A sustainable urban extension to the north of the city will provide new housing and small business opportunities as well as helping to support a range of existing and new community facilities – including a new leisure centre and multiplex cinema, new primary schools, a new transport interchange and employment hub at the station, and an extended Country Park. A new bypass will help to reduce congestion in the station area and aid economic growth. The city's strategic location will be attractive to employers wishing to establish or expand on newly serviced employment areas on the outskirts of the city, offering a range of job opportunities to local people.”

Specifically in relation to North Ely it states that:

“The site is the only remaining opportunity to accommodate large-scale growth on the edge of Ely and its development is central to both the district-wide strategy and the strategy for Ely within the Plan period. The aim is for the development to integrate with existing communities and create a sustainable and balanced community with high design and environmental standards, and providing a range of local services and facilities including employment areas, schools, and extensive green space. It is estimated that there is potential for approximately 3,000 dwellings”.

The following description provides a flavour of what a successful development in North Ely will look like:

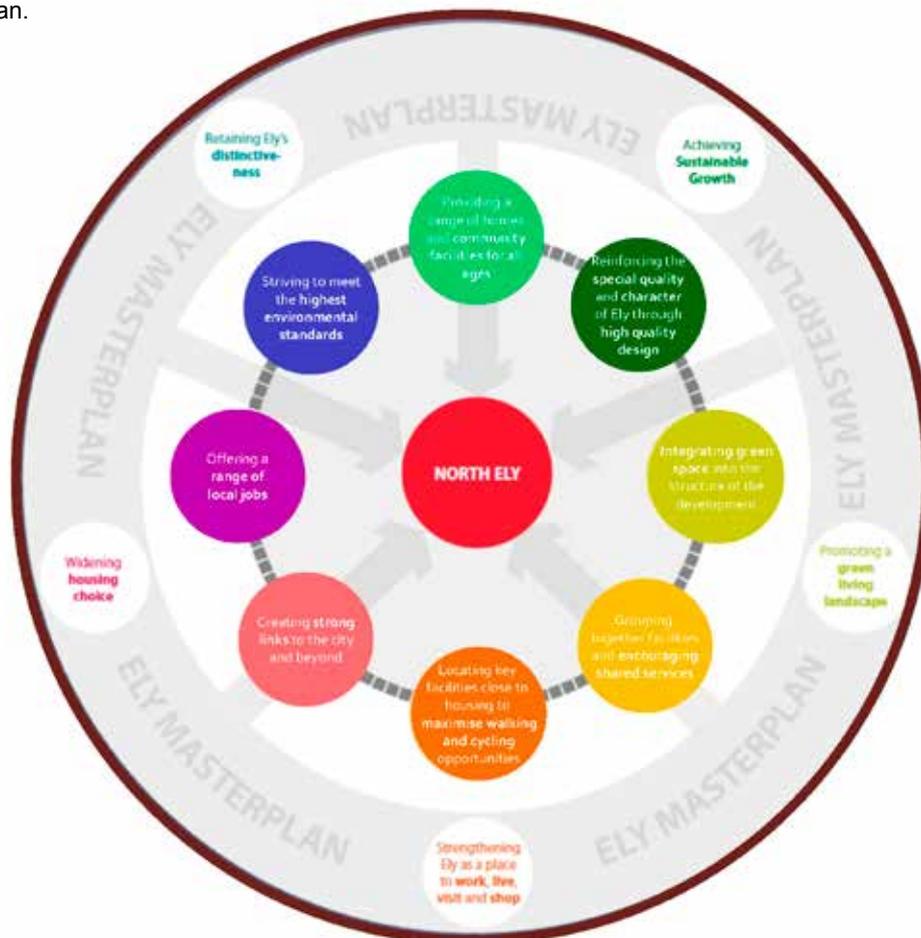
“The proposed northern extension will bond the old Ely with an innovative and enterprising new development which adds to the unique character of the city, and where quality of life is of the highest. This will require more than the provision of simply another 'housing estate'. The District Council is seeking imaginative and creative 'place making' to develop a distinctive new community which adds to the specialness of the existing City. Provision for economic activity, mix of uses and community development will be as important as the art of place making and architecture in achieving this.....

.....North Ely will be an exemplar development showcasing best practice of a quality that would be recognised nationally and that stands comparison with the City's existing heritage. There will be a phased and coordinated approach to development so that jobs, facilities and infrastructure are delivered alongside housing. North Ely will be framed by green infrastructure as a leading structuring element that helps to inform a strong sense of Ely. Features of the existing character and urban form of Ely will be reflected in the structure and design of the new development so that the new development successfully and organically integrates into the existing city structure. A range of character areas will be designed to create a sense of place and neighbourhood within the development, featuring variety, legibility and visual interest.....

.....The use of innovative and interesting building forms, including the use of forms of self/custom build, will be embraced to further enhance local distinctiveness and should be used to create interesting and varied housing types and provide a more organic interface with the countryside. Two new local centres will provide focal points for activity and social exchange within the community, and establish a strong identity for North Ely. An innovative approach to jobs and enterprise will be sought to ensure jobs delivery. North Ely will support the developing trend for home working, which has benefits in terms of sustainable lifestyles and reducing traffic congestion.”

Key vision elements

The diagram below sets out key elements from the visioning work for North Ely and indicates how these relate to the original development principles first set out in the Ely Masterplan.



To be 'exemplar' means to create a development model which people will want to copy or imitate elsewhere. The District Council defines exemplar development for North Ely as that which incorporates all aspects of best practice:

- developing a variety of attractive, spacious homes which incorporate the latest green technologies to make sustainable living easy and appealing,
 - safeguarding and enhancing the natural biodiversity of the site and reflecting the current development pattern of central Ely that brings a countryside feel into urban areas through ample provision of green space, sports facilities, and a country park,
 - providing locally based jobs to reduce the need for out commuting,
 - incorporating measures to positively promote walking, cycling and bus use over the use of cars, with good connections by these modes to key local destinations.
 - providing schools, a community centre, local shops, a business hub and other meeting spaces at the heart of the development to help foster the development of a genuine local community.
 - providing a benchmark in high quality development, delivering design excellence in all elements, with distinctive, innovative formats of modern homes with high living space standards, generous levels of amenity space, and family friendly streets and spaces.
 - reflecting the traditional development patterns and features of Ely with its people focussed design, layout and walkability, but with a contemporary interpretation.
- All development should be of exceptional good quality to make North Ely a destination of choice for prospective residents and businesses.

Key Development Components

From the public consultation and stakeholder participation work, a number of essential development components have been identified for the site, as follows:

- A mixed density development of up to 3,000 houses, which respects the rural setting of Ely.
- A continuation of the Ely Country Park to provide a rural green setting for the new development, together with green linkages within the development.
- A series of different local character areas that reflect and enhance the distinctiveness of Ely, its Cathedral and the Fens.
- A main connector route as a spine to the whole development, connecting Thistle Corner to the A10 and Cam Drive, and with grouping of local community and commercial facilities in hubs along the route.
- The key hub to be at the junction of the main connector route with Lynn Road
- Sufficient convenience shopping and other facilities to meet the everyday needs of North Ely residents.
- An urban design which prioritises walking and cycling, grouping together of facilities and shared services.
- New, well connected and interrelated public transport and cycle network provision to key Ely facilities e.g. City Centre, Railway Station, Lancaster Way.
- Opportunities for a diversity of job creation within the site and links to other key Ely employment sites.
- Formal sports facilities focused primarily at the nearby Downham Road Leisure Village.
- Maintenance of a distinctive character and separate identity for Chettisham.
- A delivery strategy that secures a viable and comprehensive, well integrated development scheme over a duration of up to 20 years, with a focus on the provision of supporting green infrastructure, robust delivery of development utilities, community and transport infrastructure.

Structuring Principles

The site appraisal, an understanding of the community's vision, and an appreciation of the key development components all inform the structuring principles which have been developed in this SPD and with which developers will be required to comply. These are set out below, and expanded in more detail in the next chapter.

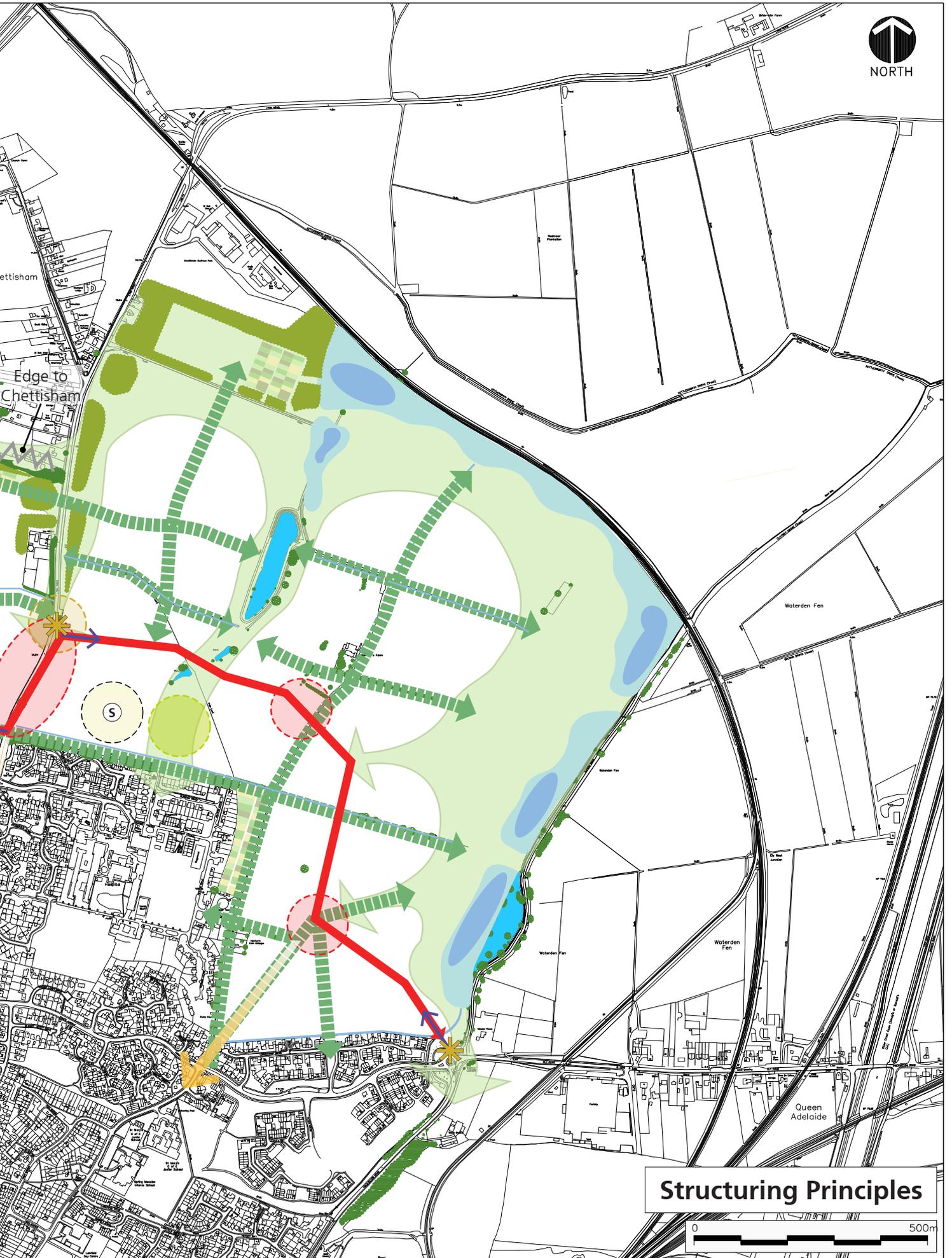
- **Developing an Integrated Urban & Rural Character** - Sets out proposals for the green infrastructure, (the most strongly supported of the development principles by the general public) and how this should provide for the visual integration of urban development into the landscape. The green infrastructure should be the leading structural element underpinning the new development. It should also be used to create a sense of place that is 'of Ely' and 'of the Fens'.
- **Building a Balanced Community** - Indicates the primary urban structure and land uses. Focuses on engendering good community interaction, recognising the modern economic and social 'drivers' for vibrant and thriving settlements and accommodating elements in the new development which support both local character and contemporary living. Discusses the requirement for the development to demonstrate high environmental standards with sustainability of energy and resource use.
- **Making the Connections** – Outlines the requirements for the transport network, including both internal and external linkages. This principle puts an emphasis on achieving a shift to more sustainable transport modes, but also to incorporate rural car ownership and movement sympathetically and in accordance with best practice.
- **Detailing the Place** - Provides a more detailed description of the North Ely neighbourhood areas and character typologies sought, together with the high quality design detail. It focuses on identifying and incorporating the elements of townscape, landscape, massing, form, archaeological heritage and uses that best represent the identity and character of traditional Fen settlements but with delivery of the best examples of contemporary design for sustainable and aspirational living.

- █ Neighbourhood spine (Highflyer Avenue)
- ➔ Opportunity for main access points into the site
- █ Opportunity for surface water drainage to link into existing network
- █ Opportunity for water attenuation at the lowest points of the site
- █ Surface water attenuation
- Opportunity to locate sports pitches in accessible location and close to main east/west greenway
- Opportunity to create focal point / local centre
- Ⓢ Opportunity to locate school in accessible location to contribute to the centre
- ➔ Opportunity to make green links following existing features (ridges, drains, hedgerows)
- ✱ Opportunity to create gateway into Ely
- Opportunity to locate land uses appropriate for gateway
- █ Opportunity to create country park
- █ Opportunity to create community orchard and allotments
- ➔ Long views to Cathedral
- ▬ Noise offset to A10



New A10 junction located on flatter land

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Structuring Principles

