



East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

# Review of Ely Quintessential Views

November 2017

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

1.1. The City of Ely is visible over significant distances due to its elevated location on the Ely Isle surrounded by Fen land, but also due to the distinctive silhouette of the Cathedral on the skyline which makes it readily identifiable from the surrounding landscape. The Cathedral dominates views and provides Ely's most distinctive landmark. From whichever direction the visitor approaches Ely, the silhouette of the Cathedral stands out on the skyline, with its single tower at the west end and the wide and comparatively squat octagonal lantern to the east.

1.2. As a popular place to live, with good road and high speed public transport links to Cambridge, London and other destinations, Ely faces pressure for future growth and development. Maintaining Ely's landscape setting and Cathedral views will be vitally important in conserving the city's unique character.

## Purpose of this Report

1.3. East Cambridgeshire District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. This report provides evidence to support the eight quintessential views of Ely Cathedral identified in policy Ely1 of the Ely chapter in the emerging Local Plan. These views are by no means the only important views of Ely Cathedral. There are many other views which may be identified and analysed through other plans or projects. For example, the Ely Conservation Area Appraisal (2009)<sup>1</sup> identifies key views and glimpses of the Cathedral from within the Conservation Area.

1.4. The eight quintessential views were first identified in the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, published in 2001<sup>2</sup>. This report revisits each of these views and considers whether they have significantly altered in the period since the Capacity Study was published. It establishes a methodology which identifies the key characteristics of each view, covering topography, landscape, green infrastructure, architectural features and considers those features of the landscape that detract from the view and those features that are sensitive to change.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Ely%20Final%20Copy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/ely-environmental-capacity-study>

## 2. National and Local Policy Context

### National Planning Policy

2.1. In 2012, the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF)<sup>3</sup> was introduced, which sets out the government's planning policies for England. The implementation of these policies is informed by national guidance, published via the *National Planning Practice Guidance* (NPPG)<sup>4</sup> online resource.

2.2. The following sections of the NPPF are particularly relevant to this evidence report:

#### ***The historic environment***

2.3. The NPPF recognises maintaining the historic environment as a critical aspect of delivering sustainable development. In fulfilling its environmental role, the NPPF indicates that the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing the historic environment (para. 7).

2.4. In its glossary (p52) the NPPF provides a broad description of the historic environment to include "*all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora*".

2.5. The NPPF (para 169) advises that local planning authorities should have up to date evidence about the historic environment in their area and use it to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment.

#### ***Landscape and townscape***

2.6. The NPPF (para. 109) indicates that the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural and local environment, including valued landscapes. The NPPF (para. 113) supports the use of criteria based policies to conserve landscape areas and protected wildlife and geodiversity sites. The NPPF principally manages townscapes through historic environment policies and promoting good design.

#### ***Delivering good design***

2.7. Ensuring new development delivers good design is an important factor in maintaining the historic environment and landscapes and townscapes. The NPPF (para. 56, 57) recognises good design as a key aspect of sustainable development which should contribute positively, making places better for people. The NPPF (para. 58) supports the inclusion of robust and comprehensive policies in Local Plans that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. The NPPF (para. 58) requires that policies be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. In addition, the NPPF (para. 158) indicates that planning policies should be informed by a proportionate evidence base. For the historic environment the NPPF (para. 170) recognises the importance of appropriate, landscape character assessments, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character.

2.8. It is therefore important for the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan that evidence about Ely's views and their significance is clearly documented.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

## **East Cambridgeshire Local Plan**

### ***Adopted Local Plan***

2.9. The current adopted Local Plan (2015) recognises the importance of Ely Cathedral. The supporting text to Policy ENV11 states “*Ely Cathedral is one of England’s great monuments, and is of national and international significance, as well as having resonance as a local landmark and symbol of the fens*”.

2.10. Policy ENV1: Landscape and Settlement Character requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will protect, conserve, and where possible enhance: “*key views into and out of settlements; this includes quintessential views of Ely Cathedral and the setting of the City as a historic ‘isle’ settlement close to the fen edge and the valley of the River Great Ouse*”.

2.11. The contribution of views of Ely Cathedral to the character of Ely and the surrounding area are recognised in the strategic objectives for the Ely chapter; which state: “*protect and enhance Ely’s ‘distinctiveness’, with all new development responding positively to the unique character of this historic city, and respecting the setting and views of Ely Cathedral (with regard to the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and subsequent updates)*”.

2.12. The adopted Local plan does not list, or show on a map, the key views of Ely Cathedral. Instead these are set out in the Ely Environmental Capacity Study.

### ***Emerging Local Plan***

2.13. East Cambridgeshire District Council is reviewing its adopted Local Plan. A new Local Plan is being prepared and, on adoption, will replace the 2015 Local Plan.

2.14. The Ely chapter in the Proposed Submission version of the new Local Plan (November 2017) identifies the consideration of Ely Cathedral as a key component of the spatial strategy for the city for the plan period. The strategy requires development proposals to: “*retain and enhance the special characteristics of Ely as a historic Cathedral City, especially its setting within the landscape, its key approaches and gateways, and the visual dominance of Ely Cathedral*”.

2.15. A diagram accompanies the policy to assist development proposals complying with the requirements of the policy, which illustrates the different landscape zones which contribute to Ely’s special character and form its unique setting in the landscape (Ely Isle, Transitional Isle and Fen Land); and the areas which generally offer “*Quintessential Views*” of Ely Cathedral. The policy states that these areas “*correspond with main routes, and offer the most impressive views of Ely Cathedral to the greatest number of people*”. The supporting text of the policy then goes on to describe the key views of the Cathedral which are enjoyed along the main routes of the Area of Quintessential Views.

2.16. This evidence report, alongside the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, provides the evidence to support both the diagram and description of Cathedral views within Policy Ely1.

### **Ely Environmental Capacity Study 2001 (the Study)**

2.17. The Ely Environmental Capital Study considered the visual appearance of Ely as a city, i.e. the relationship of the Cathedral with city development and landscape setting. The Study noted that many historic cathedral cities have suffered from significant development which has swamped the urban core, or structures which compete with the cathedral landmark. At Ely, however, much of the historic core remains intact, the Cathedral dominates other built form and the landscape, and the city has remained relatively small in size. The Study notes:

*“The modern plan of the city follows remarkably closely the broad layout of medieval times, the core of the city centred around the Cathedral and to the waterfront remains relatively unaltered. Ely is characterised by its distinctive pattern of narrow streets, timbered houses and monastic buildings clustered around the Cathedral. Due to its historic isolation, Ely has remained small and retained much of its rural character. The absence of tall buildings and relatively unchanged street pattern has enabled a historic approach to the Cathedral to be retained contributing greatly to the city’s identity and visitors sense of arrival.”*

2.18. However, the Study identified that more recent residential and commercial growth at the edges of the city has started to impact on approaches, views and character of the city. Whilst much of the development on the edge of the city occupies the island slopes, development has started to ‘creep’ off the island and onto the fen.

2.19. The Study included an assessment of ‘Quintessential Views’ of Ely Cathedral, which focused on the areas where the Cathedral, city and landscape setting are discernible and form an important relationship. Within these broad viewing areas, the most impressive views of the Cathedral can be enjoyed by the greatest number of people.

2.20. The Study identified that the views can be divided into two main categories; firstly key views from the surrounding landscape, and secondly views from the city outskirts and from within the city and are summarised in the tables below. Whilst there are many other views of the Cathedral these are regarded as less impressive, although they are important in their own right. Descriptions of these views from the Ely Environmental Capacity Study are set out in full in **Appendix 1**.

### **Landscape Character**

2.21. Ely is an island city of the Fens. The Fens has a history as a changing landscape, where comparatively small fluctuations in sea level have been the cause of major changes in the wetness of the land and consequently its habitability.

2.22. The geology of the area gives rise to the distinctive topography, with Ely located on an island within the low-lying, level terrain of the fens. This produces a landscape of open panoramas and expansive skies.

2.23. The Capacity Study included an assessment of Ely’s landscape and immediate setting at a local scale. This assessment identified three Landscape Character Types as summarised in the **Table 1** below. The dramatic variation in topography between the different character types influences the nature of the views of the Cathedral. From the Fenland, long distance views of the Cathedral from sitting high on top of the Ely Isle provide orientation and a unique sense of place. From the Transitional Island, which includes other settlements that sit upon an isle, it is possible to gain panoramic views of Ely Cathedral and the surrounding city in its rural landscape setting. From the Ely Island, views of the Cathedral are often glimpsed within an urban context.

**Table 1.** Ely Landscape Character Types

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| <p><b>Ely Island</b> – This landscape is the identifiable island of Ely. It is defined principally by topography and also by views, or sequences of spaces, that are unique to Ely, distinguishing it from other fen islands or the wider ‘Isle of Ely’ which stretches up to Little Downham and across to Witchford. Ely Island ranges from 5m AOD to 26m AOD and is approximately 2.5km across and 5.5km long. The gradient of the island slopes are most pronounced to the east and west sides of the island where the land quickly drops into the flat fen and where built form has traditionally located on the steeper slopes.</p> |
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| <p><b>Transitional Island</b> – This area of landscape ranges from 5m AOD to 20m AOD and includes other island settlements that surround Ely and a gently undulating landscape that connects Ely Island to</p> |
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Little Downham, Witchford and Little Thetford. This landscape is predominantly in agricultural use with the exception of the small settlements and the industrial park to the east of Witchford. The undulating topography and vegetation help to create a feeling of enclosure and foreshorten views. Views to other islands and built landmarks tend to appear, disappear and reappear as one passes through this landscape.

**Fenland** – This landscape comprises the flat agricultural landscape surrounding the fen islands and extends far beyond the study area. Within the study area, the topography ranges from -5m AOD to +5m AOD and is generally sparsely vegetated. The soil is a characteristic rich dark brown reminiscent of earlier flooded fen and the development of peat. The flat topography of this landscape and its sparse vegetation results in a feeling of vast scale and exposure, with long distant views, particularly to the fen islands and built landmarks such as churches and Ely Cathedral. The rectilinear pattern of drainage ditches, many of which were laid out in the seventeenth century, is a strong landscape characteristic. Where vegetation occurs, generally in the form of windbreaks, it follows this drain network and reinforces the pattern.

### 3. Assessment of Ely Quintessential Views – Methodology

3.1. As per the approach that was followed for the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, the methodology for the review of quintessential views of Ely Cathedral is qualitative. Guidance has been drawn from Historic England's "*Seeing the History in the View*"<sup>5</sup>, which presents a consistent method for understanding and assessing historic significance within views, and "*The Assessment of the Oxford View Cones*"<sup>6</sup>, which presents a methodology that considers views more widely than their historic significance to also consider the impact of the wider landscape on the view. This is particularly important for Ely.

3.2. The main stages of the assessment are set out below:

#### Step 1. Establish the key views to be assessed

3.3. The key views that have been reviewed and assessed are the 8 quintessential views identified in the Ely Environmental Capacity Study 2001. These are:

- From Stretham along A10
- From Stuntney along A142
- South of Littleport and A10 approach
- Little Downham
- West Fen Road
- Witchford and A142
- Marina and Riverside
- Railway approach from the north

3.4. Within these larger areas are key views of the Cathedral from the city outskirts which have also been included in the review (see **Appendix 2** for descriptions).

3.5. The first step was to establish the location and extent of a Viewing Place within each of the 8 quintessential views. The Viewing Place might be a single point or a wider area, such as a park or area of open countryside, within which the view is visible from many points.

3.6. From within the Viewing Place, an Assessment Point was then chosen which was considered to be the optimum viewing point. It was from this point that the assessment for each quintessential view was undertaken. The photographs that accompany each view assessment have been taken from the Assessment Points.

#### Step 2 Identify the key features of the view

3.7. The next step was to identify and describe the key features of the landscape in the view and how these different features interact and impact on the character of the view. A combination of desk based research and site visits were used.

3.8. The following features were considered (see **Appendix 3** for full assessment criteria and format):

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<sup>5</sup> <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/seeing-history-view/seeing-history-in-view.pdf/>

<sup>6</sup> [file:///Users/smrobinson/Downloads/OXP\\_18234\\_View\\_Conos\\_FULLL.pdf](file:///Users/smrobinson/Downloads/OXP_18234_View_Conos_FULLL.pdf)

- Context of the view and influence of landscape character;
- Layout, expanse and framing of the view;
- Topography;
- Green infrastructure features, such as trees, rivers and woodland;
- Heritage assets, such as listed buildings and scheduled monuments;
- Areas of different architectural character, such as areas of buildings of different age, scale or materials that make different contributions to the character of the landscape;
- The influence of infrastructure, such as roads, railway lines and pylons;
- Detractors, i.e. features perceived as unattractive and how they impact on the view;
- Influence of the seasons on the character of the view;
- Sensitivity of the view to change.

### **Step 3 Analysis**

3.9. The final step, taken into account the information gathered at step 2, was to consider what key changes, if any, had taken place in the quintessential views between the publication of the Capacity Study in 2001 and the preparation of this evidence report (September/October 2017) and, where necessary and appropriate, update the descriptions for each quintessential view. As part of this step, the descriptions of the views from the city outskirts and gateways were also considered, as they form part of the quintessential view. The results are documented under 'recommendations' for each quintessential view set out in **Section 4** below.

## 4. Assessment of Ely Quintessential Views – Results

### 1. From Stretham along A10

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>   | From Stretham along A10   |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>   | This is the most impressive long distance view of the Cathedral from the surrounding landscape. From this viewpoint the Cathedral is seen rising high above a fringe of trees with limited views of the development of the town. The land to the southeast of the city including the golf course and land between Witchford Road and Cambridge Road is important in forming the treed and green setting of the Cathedral. Equally the rising ridge of land surrounding Bedwell Hey Farm is significant in forming a closer rural foreground in these views. |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>   | Viewpoint 6: Cambridge Road and A10 Bypass  |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>   | Public Right of Way, Wood Lane, Stretham  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>   | From the viewing place, the viewers are most likely to be residents of Stretham who use the Public Right of Way. Views along the A10 are enjoyed by motorists travelling into Ely.  |
| <b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting</b> – <i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i><br><br><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i> | The viewing place is a on the edge of Stretham village on a Public Right of Way along an arable field. It provides a tranquil location from which to view the Cathedral.<br><br>The undulating topography of the transitional isle landscape means that views of the Cathedral appear, disappear and reappear as the viewer travels through this quintessential view area.  |
| <b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View</b> – <i>is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</i><br><br><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i><br><br><i>Is it a short or long view?</i>   | From the viewing place, the view of the Cathedral is long, open and unrestricted.<br><br>The foreground is characterised by agricultural, arable fields.<br><br>The mid-ground includes the A10, telephone pylons, hedgerows, farm buildings and the treed fringe of Ely.<br><br>In the background is a large sky.  |
| <b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i>  | The topography rises up from the viewing place towards Ely ending with the Cathedral on top of the Ely Isle.  |
| <b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green</i>  | As with other Quintessential views, trees and other forms   |

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| <p><i>features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>of greenery make a significant contribution to the character of the views of Ely and Cathedral.</p> <p>From this viewing place, buildings within Ely city are almost completely screened from view by a dense fringe of trees. This contributes to the dominant stature of the Cathedral as it is not in competition with any other buildings.</p> <p>Other notable historic building visible beyond the tops of the trees is the spire of St Mary's Church.</p> <p>The land to the southeast of the city including the golf course and land between Witchford Road and Cambridge Road is important in forming the treed and green setting of the Cathedral.</p> <p>The dark green foliage of the trees provide a strong contrast to the light Barnack stone of the Cathedral.</p> |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets) - how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</b></p>  | <p>The Cathedral is the dominant building in the view. The Cathedral's primary material, Barnack stone, makes it stand out in the landscape, especially in strong sunlight.</p> <p>Other notable landmark buildings on the skyline include the Grade I listed St Mary's Church and Ely Water Tower.</p>   |
| <p><b>Infrastructure - how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</b></p> | <p>The main infrastructure feature is the A10 which crosses the middle ground of the view. As this feature crosses in front of the Cathedral, it does not lead the eye of the viewer away from views of the Cathedral.</p>  |
| <p><b>Detracting Features - how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</b></p>   | <p>The main detractor in the view is the traffic on the A10 and telephone pylons, which crosses the middle ground of the view.</p>  |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons – how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</b></p>  | <p>Given the prominence of trees in this view, changes in the season influence how the viewer experiences this quintessential view of Ely Cathedral and the city.</p> <p>During the autumn, changes in the colour of leaves adds to the visual appearance of the view. In winter, with the loss of leaves from trees, more of the historic core of Ely is visible.</p>  |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>  | <p>This quintessential viewing area follows the (former) A10, a radial route into the town centre. This route is rural in character and therefore is in sharp contrast to the built development of the city. If development takes place either side of this road, on approaching Ely, that is not sensitive to this rural character, this could impact on the historic character of the approach and undermine the</p>  |

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|  | gateway and sense of arrival. |
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**Recommendations**

4.1. Whilst the view of the Cathedral from ECS viewpoint 6 across the golf course has changed since 2001, with the trees marking the boundary of the golf course growing dense and almost completely blocking views of the Cathedra, on the whole, this quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the general description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Photographs**

**View from Public Right of Way, Wood Lane, Stretham**  
St Mary's Church

Ely Water Tower



**ECS Viewpoint 6: Cambridge Road and A10 Bypass**

Ely Cathedral



Above view zoomed in



## 2. From Stuntney along A142

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  | From Stuntney along A142   |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | This is one of the most impressive views of Ely Cathedral where the scale of the monument and its location on a distinctive island surrounded by the town is most apparent. The proximity, angle and the fenland foreground, which gives it geographical context, contribute to the distinctiveness of this view. The surrounding town development does not detract from the view, as there are no buildings that compete with the scale of the Cathedral in terms of height or mass and the built area is well treed. |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | <b>Viewpoint 8: Marina and Riverside Walk</b><br>The views from this area of the city are distinctive due to the proximity and dominance of the Cathedral, the angle of the view and the visual and physical connection between the Cathedral and the River from this point, a connection that can only be made in a few limited locations. The significant vegetation within Cathedral Park reduces the impact of the surrounding development and provides an attractive and green setting to the Cathedral.          |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  | Parish Church of the Holy Cross, Stuntney  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  | Local residents of Stuntney and motorists travelling along the A142 into Ely. This is a busy road and therefore this quintessential view is seen by a large number of people on a daily basis.   |
| <b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br><i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i><br><br><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i> | Stuntney is a small village located south east of Ely. Before the course of the River Great Ouse was altered in the 12 <sup>th</sup> century it came right up to the edge of the fen island on which the village stood. ‘Stuntney Causeway’ connected the village to Ely.<br><br>The Holy Cross church dates from 1876. Due to the construction of the A142 bypass in 1986, the village is relatively tranquil and free of traffic.  |
| <b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View – is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</b><br><br><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i><br><br><i>Is it a short or long view?</i>   | The view from Stuntney is framed by the vegetation running down the Stuntney Causeway.<br><br>The foreground consists of Stuntney Causeway and vegetation.<br><br>The mid-ground is formed by agricultural land, crossed by the A142, the banks of the River Great Ouse, scattered trees and the built up area of Ely, including the Cathedral, which is softened and screened by trees.   |

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|   | <p>The background consists of sky.</p>  |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>Stuntney village sits on a small fen island, providing an elevated vantage point across the flat fen landscape. The scale of the Cathedral, its elevated position, and the mid ground dropping rapidly in height, ensures other buildings do not compete with the Cathedral. With Ely only approximately 1.5 miles away, this viewing point provides a relatively close view where architectural details of the Cathedral are clearly visible.</p>   |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>From this direction, the city and Cathedral are seen in a rural setting of arable fields, where the view would have at one time been one of a great expanse of water between Stuntney village and Ely.</p> <p>Greenery from trees, hedgerows and other vegetation is a prominent feature in this view.</p> <p>In the foreground, vegetation along Stuntney Causeway helps to screen the A142 from view.</p> <p>Along the River Great Ouse, vegetation provides an attractive mid-ground, screening from view buildings on the edge of Ely. Beyond the river, street and garden trees screen the city centre buildings. As a result, very few buildings are visible, and the Cathedral rises above the tree canopy in isolation from other buildings. Other notable historic buildings visible beyond the tops of the trees are the spire of St Mary’s Church and the Kings School.</p> <p>The dark green foliage of the trees provide a strong contrast to the light Barnack stone of the Cathedral.</p> |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The Cathedral is the dominant building in the view. The Cathedral’s primary material, Barnack stone, makes it stand out in the landscape, especially in strong sunlight.</p> <p>Other notable historic buildings visible in the view include the Grade I listed St Mary’s Church and Grade I listed Kings School.</p> <p>Modern, small scale buildings are visible around the edges of the city, but trees provide a strong screen or soften the outline of buildings.</p>   |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>The iron railway girder bridge passes across the mid-ground of the view.</p> <p>The A142 however, has the greatest influence on the view. It is a key area of movement with traffic going into and out of Ely. From the viewing place in Stuntney, it</p>  |

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|   | <p>leads the eye of the viewer away from the Cathedral. However, travelling along the A142 from beyond Stuntney, the road draws the eye of the motorists down towards Ely and the Cathedral.</p>   |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p> | <p>The main detractor in the view is the traffic on the A142, which can become significantly congested at peak times. Road signs are a less significant detractor.</p>   |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>                | <p>Given the prominence of trees in this view, changes in the season influence how the viewer experiences this quintessential view of Ely Cathedral and the city.</p> <p>During the autumn, changes in the colour of leaves alters the character of the view. In winter, with the loss of leaves from trees, more of the historic core of Ely is visible.</p> <p>Flood meadow adjacent to the Great River Ouse is flooded for parts of the year, which changes the character of the mid-ground landscape.</p>  |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>   | <p>Any development within the mid-ground of the view is likely to have a significant adverse impact due to the low lying, open nature of the Fen landscape.</p> <p>This quintessential viewing area follows the A142, a radial route into the town centre. This route is rural in character and therefore is in sharp contrast to the built development of the city. If development takes place either side of this road, on approaching Ely, that is not sensitive to this rural character, this could impact on the historic character of the approach and undermine the gateway and sense of arrival.</p> |

### **Recommendation**

4.3. This quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan

**Photographs**

**View from the Parish Church of the Holy Cross, Stuntney**

St Mary's Church

Kings School and Bishop's Palace



River Great Ouse

**ECS Viewpoint 8 from riverside walk across Jubilee Gardens to the Cathedral**



### 3. South of Littleport and A10 approach

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  | South of Littleport and A10 approach   |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | From this direction the Cathedral is seen at some distance. It appears to be over the brow of the hill with only its towers remaining visible. The extension of the city northwards has resulted in recent housing development appearing in the middle distance on the skyline, although there is still a significant amount of agricultural land on the Ely Island which forms the foreground. The Cathedral is less significant in these views because of the topography of Ely Island and the distance of the view.   |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | <p><b>ECS Viewpoint 1: From Lynn Road</b><br/>From this old straight approach route into the city there are significant views to the Cathedral. Whilst the road is urban in character these views remain dominant for a considerable length of time and give distinctiveness to the route.</p> <p><b>ECS Viewpoint 13: Newnham Street</b><br/>Views from this street are characterised by the vista of the east round tower of the Cathedral which is seen framed by the street buildings either side. The attractive small scale and historic passage and buildings along Market Street form an attractive foreground to this view, their historic character bolstering the sense of history.</p> |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  | Brickmakers Way, south of Littleport   |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  | Motorists and walkers travelling along Brickmakers Way   |
| <p><b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br/><i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i></p> <p><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i></p> | The location of the viewing place, within the Transitional Isle landscape, impacts on the views of Ely Cathedral from this direction, as the undulating topography and vegetation of this landscape character area restricts views of the Cathedral to the two towers, which rise above the brow the hill in the distance.   |
| <p><b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View – is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</b></p> <p><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>  | <p>Views of Ely from this location are long distant. The view is relatively open.</p> <p>The foreground comprises of a green setting of grass and vegetation.</p> <p>The mid-ground is primarily agricultural land with a scattering of associated buildings. There is dense tree cover in the centre of the mid-ground which provides greenery. Towards the background is the urban edge of Ely, which is softened by tree canopy, and includes Ely Cathedral and Ely</p>   |

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|   | <p>Water Tower</p> <p>The background comprises of a big skyscape.</p>   |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The undulating topography of the Transitional Isle landscape restricts views of the Cathedral to the two towers, which rise above the brow the hill in the distance.</p>   |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>Dense woodland and trees in the mid-ground and on the outskirts of Ely, along with the topography, contributes to a more restricted view of the Cathedral compared to quintessential views south of the city. However, they add a green quality to the view and their dark green colour in sharp contrast to the surrounding arable fields, draws the eye of the viewer into the centre of the view and to the Cathedral beyond the woodland.</p>  |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>A scattering of agricultural buildings contribute to the rural character of the mid-ground.</p> <p>Ely Cathedral is in the centre of the skyline, and whilst providing a focal feature, is not as dominant in the view as from other locations, due to the distance of the view and the undulating topography.</p> <p>Ely water tower is a clearly visible landmark on the skyline to the east of the Cathedral.</p> <p>A high rise commercial building on Chettisham Business Park is prominent on the skyline to the west of the Cathedral.</p> <p>Due to the distance, and screening of by vegetation, the low rise buildings of Ely’s northern residential areas are not visible from this location.</p> |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>There are no infrastructure features that run across the landscape within this view.</p>   |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   | <p>The bulky massing of the high rise commercial building on Chettisham Business Park is a dominating landmark that competes with the Cathedral.</p> <p>As the viewer moves through the corridor of this quintessential view into the outskirts of Ely, there are detracting urban elements, such as street lighting, signage and traffic along Lynn Road.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p> | <p>The views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view, compared to views towards Ely from the south.</p> <p>Trees help to screen built development in the outskirts. In autumn, loss of leaves exposes more of built development in the view.</p>  |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>  | <p>Because of the distance of the view, low level development on the northern edge of Ely is unlikely to significantly detract from the view. Loss of tree cover to the urban edge that would make the city outskirts more prominent in the view, and reducing the dominance of the Cathedral as the focal point, could adversely impact on the view.</p> <p>Tall development in the mid-ground that draws the eye of the viewer away from the Cathedral would result in harm to the view.</p> <p>On the skyline, the Cathedral appears to be over the brow of the hill with only its towers remaining visible. Development within the city that reduces the visibility of these towers or draws the viewer’s attention away from the Cathedral could result in harm to the view.</p> <p>This quintessential viewing area follows the A10, a radial route into the town centre. This route is rural in character and therefore is in sharp contrast to the built development of the city. If development takes place either side of this road, on approaching Ely, that is not sensitive to this rural character, this could impact on the historic character of the approach and undermine the gateway and sense of arrival.</p> |

**Recommendation**

4.4. This quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Photographs**

**View south of Littleport towards Ely**

Ely Water Tower

Ely Cathedral



**Above view zoomed in**



**ECS Viewpoint 1: From Lynn Road**



**ECS Viewpoint 13: Newnham Street**



#### 4. Little Downham

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  | Little Downham  |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | <p>These views are distinctive in that the Cathedral is seen as the highest point of the settlement. Whilst the settlement surrounds the Cathedral, the views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view. Allocated development and that currently under construction on this side of the city is generally in keeping with the character of development already seen to the east of the Island. Establishing vegetation within the urban form will be important in breaking up the mass of development. The areas of higher land to the southeast and north of the town frame views and contain development, and as such their upper slopes are sensitive as is the skyline. The foreground is comprised of typical fen farmland.</p> |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | <p><b>ECS Viewpoint 5: Gateway to Ely from Downham Road</b><br/>Views from this road are seen in the context of housing development to the west and the college/schools to the east. The foreground in the view is comprised of vegetation and the openness of the school playing fields, which form an open and green foreground to the Cathedral.</p> <p>ECS Viewpoint 7: View from Downham Road</p> <p>ECS Viewpoint 9: View from A10 bypass</p>   |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  | Downham Road/Jackson & Sons Farm Track  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  | <p>The main viewers are motorists who travel along the B1411 Downham Road to Ely. They would take in glimpsed views of Ely Cathedral. There is a public byway north of the viewing place that runs between the B1411 and the A10. This offers glimpse views for walkers as it is bounded by hedgerows for most of the route.</p>  |
| <b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br><i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i><br><br><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i> | <p>The viewing place is located within the Transitional Isle. The landscape between the viewing place and Ely is in agricultural use, predominantly consisting of large and open arable fields. This provides a rural setting to Ely and views are over a rural landscape.</p>  |
| <b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View – is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</b>   | The foreground is formed by a large, open arable field.   |

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| <p><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>   | <p>The mid-ground is characterised by arable fields and the townscape of the north of Ely, consisting of residential properties interspersed with street and garden trees, including Ely Cathedral.</p> <p>The sky forms the backdrop to the view.</p> <p>The large open fields in the foreground and mid-ground creates opportunity for long distance and panoramic views of Ely and Ely Cathedral.</p>                    |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The viewing place is on land in the Transitional Isle that is 15 to 20m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) as identified on the landscape context and topography map in the Ely Environmental Capacity Study.</p>  |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>Trees and hedgerows are sparse in the foreground to the view however in the mid-ground they feature more prominently. Whilst they do not completely screen built development on the northern outskirts of Ely, they do help to soften it.</p>  |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The Cathedral remains the dominant landmark building on the skyline but it is not as prominent as in some of the other quintessential views around the city, as it is not as elevated in the view.</p> <p>St Mary’s Church can just be made out on the skyline.</p> <p>Residential buildings within the outskirts of the city are more prominent within this view than others and are not as well screened by trees.</p> |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>There are no infrastructure features that run across the landscape.</p>  |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   | <p>From the viewing place, there are no features that detract from the view. As the viewer moves through the corridor of this quintessential view into the outskirts of Ely, there are detracting urban elements, such as street lighting, signage and traffic along Downham Road.</p>  |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view, compared to views towards Ely from the south.</p>   |

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|                              | Trees help to screen built development in the outskirts. In autumn, loss of leaves exposes more of built development in the view.   |
| <b>Sensitivity to Change</b> | The upper slopes of the city are sensitive to change, as is the skyline, due to the topography of the landscape in this location, which is of a similar height to that of the Ely Isle on which the Cathedral sits. It is important that any future development north of the city is well landscaped to include vegetation that will break up the mass of buildings to ensure the Cathedral remains the prominent feature in relation to its setting. |

### **Recommendations**

4.5. ECS Viewpoint 5 has seen significant change since the publication of the Ely Environmental Capacity Study with the construction of a number of houses on the north western edge of the city. In 2001, both the Cathedral and St Mary’s Church could be seen in the photo of viewpoint 5. Today, there are glimpsed views of the Cathedral’s west tower through modern housing developments. Additionally, views further along Downham Road at Viewpoint 7 have also changed since 2001. The view of the Cathedral from St Andrews Way across the school playing fields can no longer be seen due to growth of vegetation. However, glimpsed views of the Cathedral are possible from Merlin Drive.

4.6. It is therefore recommended that a more appropriate description of ECS viewpoint 5 is as follows:

“Views from this road are seen in the context of housing development to the west *and east* and the college/schools to the east. The foreground in the view is comprised of ~~vegetation~~ *West Fen Road and hedgerows. The mid-ground consists of residential dwellings, which allow for glimpsed views of the towers of* ~~and the openness of the school playing fields, which form an open and green foreground to the Cathedral”.~~

4.7. Overall, it is considered that the general description of this quintessential view remains valid and appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Photographs**

**Views south of Little Downham from Downham Road towards Ely**

Ely Cathedral      St Mary's Church



**Above view from Downham Road zoomed in**



**ECS Viewpoint 5: Gateway to Ely from Downham Road.** Glimpsed views of the Cathedral due to residential development since 2001.



**ECS Viewpoint 7: View from Downham Road.** Ely Cathedral can no longer be seen from this viewpoint due to dense vegetation.



**Glimpsed view of the west tower of the Cathedral from Merlin Drive**



## 5. West Fen Road

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  | West Fen Road  |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | These views are distinctive in that the Cathedral is seen as the highest point of the town. Whilst the town surrounds the Cathedral, the views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view. Allocated development and that currently under construction on this side of the city is generally in keeping with the character of development already seen to the east of the Island. Establishing vegetation within the urban form will be important in breaking up the mass of development. The areas of higher land to the southeast and north of the town frame views and contain development, and as such their upper slopes are sensitive as is the skyline. The foreground is comprised of typical fen farmland. |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | ECS Viewpoint 2: Gateway View from West Fen Road<br><br>ECS Viewpoint 12 from West Fen Road  |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  | Passing place along West Fen Road between Ely and Coveney  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  | West Fen Road is a minor road that runs from the eastern of Coveney to the centre of Ely.<br><br>The main viewers of this view are residents from Coveney driving into Ely.  |
| <b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br><i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i><br><br><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i> | This view can be appreciated along the full length of West Fen Road.<br><br>The road runs through a typical fen landscape; flat and agricultural land, characterised by drainage ditches and sparse vegetation, which follows the drain network. This results in a feeling of vast scale and exposure and enables long distance and open and unrestricted views of the Cathedral and surrounding town. These views are almost of the whole Cathedral, as they are from the lowest to the highest point on the landscape.   |
| <b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View – is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</b><br><br><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i>   | This is a long distance, wide and open view with little framing.<br><br>The foreground consists of West Fen Road and a ditch.<br><br>The mid-ground consists of large, rectilinear arable fields   |

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| <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>   | <p>and hedgerow and the built up area of Ely, including Ely Cathedral and St Mary's Church.</p> <p>The background is an expansive area of sky.</p>   |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The topography of the viewing place is flat, typical of the Fen landscape. The Cathedral sits prominently on the higher ground of the Ely Isle. The strength of the Cathedral as the main focus in the view, is as a result of the Cathedral sitting on this higher ground and therefore not competing with other buildings for the viewer's attention.</p>   |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>Trees help to screen the elevated buildings of the town so that the tallest buildings, i.e. the Cathedral and to a lesser extent St Mary's Church, are seen almost in isolation from other buildings.</p> <p>Hedgerows in the foreground and mid-ground running along the drain network contribute to the rural, fenland landscape character.</p>   |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The dominant building in the view is Ely Cathedral. Due to the elevated position of the Cathedral relative to the low lying land of West Fen Road, the Cathedral can almost be seen in its entirety. From this location are the most impressive views of the Cathedral's West Tower</p> <p>This is one of the few locations around the city where the more than the very tip of St Mary's Church spire can be seen in a view.</p> <p>The rooftops of residential buildings in the suburbs can be glimpsed through the trees and provide an indication of the edge of the city but do not draw the eye away from the dominant Cathedral.</p> |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>West Fen Road draws the viewer's eye towards Ely and Ely Cathedral.</p>   |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   | <p>The view from this location is largely unspoilt and there are no features that detract from the view.</p>   |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>Views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view.</p> <p>Trees again form a major component of this view, and their</p>  |

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|                              | changing colours through the seasons will alter the character of the view. In autumn, loss of leaves open up views of the Cathedral that are only glimpses at other times of the year. Arable fields are also a major factor in the foreground and mid-ground, and these will alter in appearance with the seasons and cropping rotations.   |
| <b>Sensitivity to Change</b> | Change in the suburbs – The presence of buildings in the suburbs of Ely are predominantly hidden by trees which allows the Cathedral beyond to act as a focus in the view. Development on the edges of Ely that competes with the prominence of the Cathedral and, to a lesser extent, St Mary’s Church as the dominant features on the skyline, could result in harm to such views. |

**Recommendation**

4.8. This quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan

**Photographs**

**Long views to Ely from West Fen Road**

Ely Cathedral

St Mary's Church



**Above view zoomed in**



**ECS Viewpoint 2: Gateway View from West Fen Road.** Only glimpses of the Cathedral due to the dense tree foliage  
Ely Cathedral



**ECS Viewpoint 12 from West Fen Road.** Clearer views of the Cathedral moving down West Fen Road towards the centre of Ely



**View from West Fen Road**



## 6. Witchford and A142

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>   | Witchford and A142  |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>   | From this direction the Cathedral is a significant landmark from considerable distance. However, it is not until close to Witchford Village that it is seen within a discernible landscape context. From here the towers of the Cathedral are dominant and impressive. The ridge line or 'Transitional Island' landscape to the west of Ely forms the foreground to the view.   |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>   | None  |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>   | Byway 76/39 where it meets the A142   |
| <b>The Viewers</b>   | <p>This view is seen by commuters on a daily basis and visitors as they arrive into Ely from the A142. For vehicle passengers, the view of the Cathedral is brief between Witchford and Ely due to thick vegetation and the topography of the Transitional Isle landscape.</p> <p>Local residents are also viewers. The footpath and cyclepath running along the A142 is used by pedestrians and cyclists travelling to Ely from Witchford and vice versa.</p> <p>Byway 76/39 runs from the A142 to St John's Road in Ely. At the A142 end of this route, walkers can enjoy glimpses of Ely Cathedral towering above trees.</p> |
| <p><b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br/> <i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i></p> <p><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i></p> | <p>This viewing place is next to a busy and noisy road. For the viewer on foot or bicycle, this makes the viewing experience noisy and unpleasant.</p> <p>The viewing place is located within the Transitional Isle landscape character area. The undulating topography of the landscape influences nature and frequency of the views</p>   |
| <p><b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View –</b> <i>is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</i></p> <p><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>  | <p>From a distance, the view is open, however as the viewer travels along the A142 past Witchford, the view is framed by trees along the ridge line.</p> <p>The foreground is a soft, rural and green landscape of arable fields.</p> <p>The middle ground consists of a green, densely vegetated row of trees and hedgerow.</p> <p>The background is sky, due to the topography.</p> <p>The topography helps to create a foreshortened view of the Cathedral from the viewing place.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The topography rises up from west to east from the viewing place, restricting views of the Cathedral from the viewing place.</p>  |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>The Cathedral emerges on the skyline from a dense row of trees and hedgerow in the middle ground. These green features draw the eye up to the Cathedral.</p> <p>The undulating, arable fields in the foreground provide a green, rural setting to the view of the Cathedral that is typical of the transitional isle landscape character.</p>   |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>No other buildings are seen in the view, giving Ely Cathedral an important role as the end point of the vista.</p>  |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>There are no infrastructure features that run across the landscape within this view.</p>  |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   | <p>The main detractor from the view is the poor quality environment of the viewing place, created by the noise and vehicle fumes of passing traffic on the A142.</p>   |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The view of the Cathedral is well screened by thick, green vegetation. This character of the view could change through the seasons, as leaves change colour or as leaves are lost, which may open up the view to more of the Cathedral than the top of the west tower.</p>  |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>   | <p>Any major development along the ridge line of the Transitional Isle could have an adverse impact on the view and detract from views of the Cathedral.</p> <p>This quintessential viewing area follows the A142, a radial route into the town centre. This route is rural in character and therefore is in sharp contrast to the built development of the city. If development takes place either side of this road, on approaching Ely that is not sensitive to this rural character, this could impact on the historic character of the approach and undermine the gateway and sense of arrival.</p> |

### **Recommendation**

4.9. This quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Photographs**

**View from Byway 76/39 where it meets the A142**

Ely Cathedral



**Above view zoomed in**



## 7. Marina and Riverside

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| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  | Marina and Riverside   |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | The views from this area of the city are distinctive due to the proximity and dominance of the Cathedral, the angle of view and the visual and physical connection between the Cathedral and the River from this point, a connection that can only be made in a few limited locations. The significant vegetation within Cathedral Park reduces the impact of the surrounding development and provides an attractive and green setting to the Cathedral.   |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  | <b>Views from the Railway Station</b><br>From the elevated station entrance at Ely there is a dramatic view up Station Road and Fore Hill to the Cathedral. The proximity of the Cathedral, the old buildings along station Road, and the steepness of the slope of the island, accentuate the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral from this view. The modern road network, signage and Tesco car park form a detracting foreground, but not to the extent that they diminish the visual dominance of the Cathedral and historic buildings. |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  | Ely Railway Station  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  | The main viewers are people arriving into Ely by rail for work or leisure on a daily basis.  |
| <b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting –</b><br><i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i><br><br><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i> | This is a townscape view of the Cathedral within an urban context which comprises of a foreground of road and car parks. The viewing location is busy and congested and therefore an uninviting environment. The viewer on foot or bicycle is likely to move through the viewing location quickly rather than stopping to take in the view of the Cathedral.<br><br>The elevated position of the Cathedral on the highest point of the Ely Isle accentuates the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral.  |
| <b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View – is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</b><br><br><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i><br><br><i>Is it a short or long view?</i>   | The view of the Cathedral in this location is short and narrow and is framed by the trees between the road to the station and Tesco car park.<br><br>The foreground comprises of the road leading up to the railway station and the station car park.<br><br>The mid-ground comprises of Tesco car park and associated landscaping, a car show room and Ely Cathedral.<br><br>The background is formed by the sky.   |

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| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The viewing place is elevated, steadily rising up from the A142 Bridge Road. As the Ely Environmental Capacity Study points out, the topography contributes to a dramatic view up to the Cathedral and the steepness of the slope of the Ely island, accentuates the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral from this view.</p>  |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>Unlike the trees in some of the other quintessential views that have a positive impact on the view, the trees in the mid-ground have a blocking effect on views of the Cathedral from the station entrance, restricting views to the top of the towers.</p>  |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The dominant built structure in the view is the Cathedral. Other buildings in the mid-ground are largely screened from view by vegetation. The architectural details of the Cathedral can be clearly seen from this location.</p>  |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p> | <p>There are no infrastructure features that run across the landscape within this view.</p>   |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   | <p>The main detracting features are in the foreground and include parked cars, signage and a car park meter. They are not out of place for their urban location, but are unattractive in contrast to the Cathedral and the trees that frame it.</p> <p>Pylons in the mid-ground are also a detracting feature, but not out of place for the urban context.</p>  |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>  | <p>The view of the Cathedral is framed by trees. The character and extent of the view could change through the seasons, as leaves change colour or as leaves are lost, which may open up the view to more of the Cathedral than the top of the towers.</p>  |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>   | <p>There is potential for enhancement of the viewing place. The need to improve this main gateway to the city has been recognised in the emerging East Cambridgeshire Local plan (Policy Ely4: Site ELY.M4 Station Gateway), with opportunities to regenerate this area possible on completion of the Ely Southern Bypass.</p> <p>The view of Ely Cathedral from this location are partly screened by trees and other vegetation. This requires management to ensure that the ability to appreciate the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral on arrival at one of the major gateways into Ely is not harmed or lost altogether.</p> |

## **Recommendation**

4.10. This quintessential view has changed very little since the Ely Environmental Capacity Study and the description of this view remains appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

**Photographs**

**Views from the Railway Station**



**Above view zoomed in**



## Ely Marina



## 8. Railway approach from the north

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>   | Railway approach from the north  |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>                                   | <p>Whilst there are a number of distant views of the Cathedral as one approaches the city from the north by rail, it is not until past Roswell Pits that a dramatic view opens up. The Cathedral is seen rising out of Ely Island, while the foreground is wetland, marsh or the playing fields. The vegetation along the railway line, as part of Roswell Pits and along the playing fields contributes to an overall green fringe to the Cathedral view. There are only filtered views to existing development of the town. The views from the playing fields are similar to those from the train although from here there are more views to existing development. The low angle and proximity of this view accentuates the scale and dominance of the Cathedral.</p>  |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b> | <p><b>ECS Viewpoint 3: B1382 and Queen Adelaide Way</b><br/>Views to the Cathedral from Queen Adelaide Way are restricted to an area past the works at Queen Adelaide and before the road passes behind the Middle Fen Bank/ From here there are clear views of the Cathedral on Ely Island with only limited views to built development of the surrounding town. What makes these views distinctive is the presence of the River Great Ouse in the foreground, which forms a distinctive part of the location and setting of the town.</p> <p><b>ECS Viewpoint 4: Railway Approach from the North and Playing Fields</b><br/>Whilst there are a number of distant views of the Cathedral as one approaches the city from the north by rail, it is not until past Roswell Pits that a dramatic view opens up. The Cathedral is seen rising out of Ely Island, while the foreground is wetland, marsh or the playing fields. The vegetation along the railway line, as part of Roswell Pits and along the playing fields, contributes to an overall green fringe to the Cathedral view. There are only filtered views to existing development of the town. The views from the playing fields are similar to those from the train although from here there are more views to existing development. The low angle and proximity of this view accentuates the scale and dominance of the Cathedral.</p> <p>Viewpoint 10 from St Martin's Walk</p> <p>Viewpoint 11 from The Vineyards</p> |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>   | The viewing place is Ely Country Park Play and Picnic Area. This is a tranquil location, with a modern children's play area, picnic benches and a network of footpaths connecting the area to the wider Country Park, popular with dog walkers.  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>   | The main viewers are residents and visitors to the Country Park;   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | families visiting the play and picnic area; and walkers/dog walkers stopping for a picnic or passing through via the network of Public Rights of Way. The play and picnic area appears to be popular and well used.   |
| <p><b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting</b> – <i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i></p> <p><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i></p> | The viewing place is unusual in that it is from a country park within the boundary of a city and it is in walking distance from the city centre. The clear view of the Cathedral through the trees and the facilities on offer within the viewing place, for example picnic benches, may encourage the viewer to spend some time admiring the view. The park foreground allows viewers to move around and enjoy different viewing positions, although these are limited by dense vegetation.  |
| <p><b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View</b> – <i>is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</i></p> <p><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>   | <p>From this viewing place this is a narrow, linear view of the Cathedral which is framed by trees on both sides which draw the viewer's eyes to the Cathedral.</p> <p>The closely mown amenity grass of the play area and footpath from the car park form the foreground of the view.</p> <p>In the mid-ground is modern commercial and business development off Creswell Lane; Sainsbury's is visible to the right of the Cathedral, and the Royal Mail building in the centre in front of the Cathedral. Behind these buildings, are residential properties interspersed with trees.</p> <p>The sky and the Cathedral form the background to the view. With no other buildings in the background, the Cathedral has a dominant position as the end point of the vista.</p> |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  | From the Country Park, this is an elevated, medium distance view. The topography falls away from the viewer towards the city centre before rising again towards the Cathedral.  |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   | <p>Green infrastructure makes a significant contribution to the character of the view from this location.</p> <p>The green foreground of the play and picnic area is aesthetically pleasing.</p> <p>The trees on the edge of the play area frame the view, screening some of the built development in the mid-ground, and lead the eye towards the Cathedral. It is important that these are managed to ensure that views of the Cathedral are conserved.</p> <p>The trees in the town centre in the mid-ground provide greenery and a softening of the built development.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets) - how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</b></p>  | <p>The Cathedral has a dominant position in the centre of the view. Buildings in the mid-ground, between the viewing place and the focus of the view, are a mixture of residential and commercial.</p> <p>The residential buildings are interspersed by trees and are sufficiently low scale to avoid impacting on the view of the Cathedral.</p> <p>The Sainsbury's building is a recent addition to the view and stands out in contrast to the softer colours of the residential buildings and trees behind it, although it is partially hidden by trees framing the view in the foreground.</p>   |
| <p><b>Infrastructure - how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</b></p> | <p>There is no infrastructure such as roads, railway lines or pylons in the view.</p>  |
| <p><b>Detracting Features - how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</b></p>   | <p>The modern commercial buildings in the mid-ground have sharp building lines in contrast with the softness of the trees and this detracts the viewer's eye away from the view of the Cathedral.</p> <p>The street lamp in the foreground of the view has a minor negative impact on detracting the viewer's eye away from the view of the Cathedral.</p>   |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons – how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</b></p>  | <p>The framing of the view is strongly influenced by the vegetation on the edge of the viewing place, and this will change in colour and density as the seasons change. This could reveal more of the modern commercial buildings that detract from the view of the Cathedral.</p>   |
| <p><b>Sensitivity to Change</b></p>  | <p>The viewing window of this particular view of the Cathedral is comparatively narrow compared to some of the long distance, wide open views of the Cathedral to the north and west of the city.</p> <p>The view would be affected if vegetation in the foreground around the edges of the country park was to become significantly overgrown.</p> <p>The view could also be adversely affected if new development broke above the canopy of the trees in the mid-ground, competing with the Cathedral, or if further commercial development was to take place that was not sympathetic in scale or to the narrow window of the view.</p> |

**Recommendation**

4.11. In terms of the view from the chosen viewing place, since the publication of the Ely Environmental Capacity Study, this view has seen additional commercial development in the mid-

ground (Sainsbury's supermarket). However, this has not significantly altered the clear and dominant views of the Cathedral due to the elevation of the viewing place and the Cathedral itself.

4.12. Moving north east out of the city, from Roswell Pits, new residential development is being constructed and the rooftops are currently clearly visible but are of the same scale as the existing residential development to the north and are softened by surrounding tree canopies. Therefore this new development does not detract from the view of the Cathedral. Temporary infrastructure associated with the construction of the new houses (a crane) currently detracts from views of the Cathedral. It is considered that the description of this view remains valid and appropriate to support Policy Ely1 in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

### **Photographs**

#### **Viewpoint 3: B1382 and Queen Adelaide Way**



**ECS Viewpoint 4: Railway Approach from the North and Playing Fields**



**Above view zoomed in**



**View from Kiln Lane across Roswell Pits**



**Above view zoomed in**



**View from Queen Adelaide Way**



**ECS Viewpoint 10 from St Martin's Walk**



**ECS Viewpoint 11 from The Vineyards**



## **6. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. Glossary**

#### **Assessment Point**

An Assessment Point is considered to be the optimum viewing point and is the reference point for the assessment of a view.

#### **Background**

The area beyond the main focus of the view. The part of the view that forms the backdrop.

#### **Dominant**

The most influential or important.

#### **Foreground**

The part of the view that is closest to the viewer. The immediate context of the view.

#### **Framing**

Features in the foreground that direct and influence the view.

#### **Landmarks**

Buildings and structures, that are visually or culturally prominent in a View.

#### **Linear View**

A view in which key landmarks are seen through narrow gaps between buildings or landscaping.

#### **Mid-ground**

The area between the foreground and background.

#### **Panoramic View**

An extensive, wide and unobstructed view.

#### **Prominent**

Particularly noticeable.

#### **Setting (Heritage Asset)**

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral” (NPPF Glossary)

#### **Skyscape**

The extent and character of the visible sky.

#### **View**

“A sight or prospect, typically of attractive natural scenery, that can be taken in by the eye from a particular place” (Oxford Dictionaries online).

#### **Viewing Place**

A public area or point from which a view can be experienced.

## **Appendix 2. Description of Quintessential Views (Ely Environmental Capacity Study, 2001)**

The quintessential views of Ely Cathedral were summarised in the Study as follows:

### **Key views from the surrounding landscape**

#### **From Stretham along A10**

This is the most impressive long distance view of the Cathedral from the surrounding landscape. From this viewpoint the Cathedral is seen rising high above a fringe of trees with limited views of the development of the town. The land to the southeast of the city including the golf course and land between Witchford Road and Cambridge Road is important in forming the treed and green setting of the Cathedral. Equally the rising ridge of land surrounding Bedwell Hey Farm is significant in forming a closer rural foreground in these views.

#### **From Stuntney along A142**

This is one of the most impressive views of Ely Cathedral where the scale of the monument and its location on a distinctive island surrounded by the town is most apparent. The proximity, angle and the fenland foreground, which gives it geographical context, contribute to the distinctiveness of this view. The surrounding town development does not detract from the view, as there are no buildings that compete with the scale of the Cathedral in terms of height or mass and the built area is well treed.

#### **South of Littleport and A10 approach**

From this direction the Cathedral is seen at some distance. It appears to be over the brow of the hill with only its towers remaining visible. The extension of the city northwards has resulted in recent housing development appearing in the middle distance on the skyline, although there is still a significant amount of agricultural land on the Ely Island which forms the foreground. The Cathedral is less significant in these views because of the topography of Ely Island and the distance of the view.

#### **Little Downham**

These views are distinctive in that the Cathedral is seen as the highest point of the town. Whilst the town surrounds the Cathedral, the views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view. Allocated development and that currently under construction on this side of the city is generally in keeping with the character of development already seen to the east of the Island. Establishing vegetation within the urban form will be important in breaking up the mass of development. The areas of higher land to the southeast and north of the town frame views and contain development, and as such their upper slopes are sensitive as is the skyline. The foreground is comprised of typical fen farmland.

#### **West Fen Road**

These views are distinctive in that the Cathedral is seen as the highest point of the town. Whilst the town surrounds the Cathedral, the views to the Cathedral from this direction are often seen against the sun, so that the Cathedral is seen in silhouette and the surrounding town is in shadow and therefore less distinctive or dominant in the view. Allocated development and that currently under construction on this side of the city is generally in keeping with the character of development already seen to the east of the Island. Establishing vegetation within the urban form will be important in breaking up the mass of development. The areas of higher land to the southeast and north of the town frame views and contain development, and as such their upper slopes are sensitive as is the skyline. The foreground is comprised of typical fen farmland.

**Witchford and A142**

From this direction the Cathedral is a significant landmark from considerable distance. However, it is not until close to Witchford Village that it is seen within a discernible landscape context. From here the towers of the Cathedral are dominant and impressive. The ridge line or 'Transitional Island' landscape to the west of Ely forms the foreground to the view.

**Marina and Riverside**

The views from this area of the city are distinctive due to the proximity and dominance of the Cathedral, the angle of view and the visual and physical connection between the Cathedral and the River from this point, a connection that can only be made in a few limited locations. The significant vegetation within Cathedral Park reduces the impact of the surrounding development and provides an attractive and green setting to the Cathedral.

**Railway approach from the north**

Whilst there are a number of distant views of the Cathedral as one approaches the city from the north by rail, it is not until past Roswell Pits that a dramatic view opens up. The Cathedral is seen rising out of Ely Island, while the foreground is wetland, marsh or the playing fields. The vegetation along the railway line, as part of Roswell Pits and along the playing fields contributes to an overall green fringe to the Cathedral view. There are only filtered views to existing development of the town. The views from the playing fields are similar to those from the train although from here there are more views to existing development. The low angle and proximity of this view accentuates the scale and dominance of the Cathedral.

## **Key views from the city outskirts**

### **The South**

#### **Viewpoint 6: Cambridge Road and A10 Bypass**

From this area views to the Cathedral are seen across open agricultural fields and the vegetation of the golf course creates a wooded fringe from which the Cathedral rises. The spire of St Mary's Church is also visible but other city development is screened from view. This view typically illustrates the rural character of the edge of Ely, which still exists even when viewing the Cathedral from 'Ely Island' itself.

### **The South and East**

#### **Viewpoint 8: Marina and Riverside Walk**

The views from this area of the city are distinctive due to the proximity and dominance of the Cathedral, the angle of the view and the visual and physical connection between the Cathedral and the River from this point, a connection that can only be made in a few limited locations. The significant vegetation within Cathedral Park reduces the impact of the surrounding development and provides an attractive and green setting to the Cathedral.

#### **Viewpoint 4: Railway Approach from the North and Playing Fields**

Whilst there are a number of distant views of the Cathedral as one approaches the city from the north by rail, it is not until past Roswell Pits that a dramatic view opens up. The Cathedral is seen rising out of Ely Island, while the foreground is wetland, marsh or the playing fields. The vegetation along the railway line, as part of Roswell Pits and along the playing fields, contributes to an overall green fringe to the Cathedral view. There are only filtered views to existing development of the town. The views from the playing fields are similar to those from the train although from here there are more views to existing development. The low angle and proximity of this view accentuates the scale and dominance of the Cathedral.

#### **Views from the Railway Station**

From the elevated station entrance at Ely there is a dramatic view up Station Road and Fore Hill to the Cathedral. The proximity of the Cathedral, the old buildings along station Road, and the steepness of the slope of the island, accentuate the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral from this view. The modern road network, signage and Tesco car park form a detracting foreground, but not to the extent that they diminish the visual dominance of the Cathedral and historic buildings.

#### **Viewpoint 3: B1382 and Queen Adelaide Way**

Views to the Cathedral from Queen Adelaide Way are restricted to an area past the works at Queen Adelaide and before the road passes behind the Middle Fen Bank. From here there are clear views of the Cathedral on Ely Island with only limited views to built development of the surrounding town. What makes these views distinctive is the presence of the River Great Ouse in the foreground, which forms a distinctive part of the location and setting of the town.

### **The North**

#### **Viewpoint 1: From Lynn Road**

From this old straight approach route into the city there are significant views to the Cathedral. Whilst the road is urban in character these views remain dominant for a considerable length of time and give distinctiveness to the route.

#### **Viewpoint 13: Newnham Street**

Views from this street are characterised by the vista of the east round tower of the Cathedral which is seen framed by the street buildings either side. The attractive small scale and historic passage and buildings along Market Street form an attractive foreground to this view, their historic character bolstering the sense of history.

## **The West**

### **Viewpoint 5: Downham Road**

Views from this road are seen in the context of housing development to the west and the college/schools to the east. The foreground in the view is comprised of vegetation and the openness of the school playing fields, which form an open and green foreground to the Cathedral.

### **Viewpoint 14: Downham Road at the Junction with Egremont Street**

From here the view of the Cathedral is in close proximity. It is seen towering above existing housing with a foreground of vegetation which is part of adjacent property gardens. This view is dramatic as it follows the climb up onto the Island and is a short glimpse before the streetscape blocks further views.

### Appendix 3. View Assessment Criteria

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of Quintessential View</b>  |  |
| <b>Description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  |  |
| <b>City Outskirts and Gateway Views: description in Ely Capacity Study</b>  |  |
| <b>Viewing Place</b>  |  |
| <b>The Viewers</b>  |  |
| <p><b>Context of the View and Landscape Setting</b> – <i>how does the location of the viewing place affect the experience of viewing Ely Cathedral as a whole?</i></p> <p><i>What impact does the landscape setting have on the view? (i.e. the Fen Land, Transitional Island and Ely Island)</i></p> |  |
| <p><b>Layout, Expanse and Framing of the View</b> – <i>is the view framed by trees and buildings or is it open?</i></p> <p><i>What are the characteristics of the foreground mid-ground and background?</i></p> <p><i>Is it a short or long view?</i></p>   |  |
| <p><b>Topography</b> - <i>how does the elevation of the viewing place or other elements in the landscape affect character of the view?</i></p>  |  |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure</b> – <i>how do green features such as trees and woodland contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>   |  |
| <p><b>Architectural Character (including heritage assets)</b> - <i>how do buildings contribute to the character of the view?</i></p>  |  |
| <p><b>Infrastructure</b> - <i>how do features that run across the landscape, contribute to its structure or lead the eye around the view, contribute to its historic and aesthetic value?</i></p>   |  |
| <p><b>Detracting Features</b> - <i>how do features perceived as out of place or unattractive detract from the view?</i></p>   |  |
| <p><b>Influence of the Seasons</b> – <i>how do seasonal changes influence the character of the view?</i></p>  |  |
| <b>Sensitivity to Change</b>  |  |