

LODDON

1. Settlement characteristics

Loddon is some 16km (4 miles) south east of Norwich and 10km (6 miles) north east of Beccles. The River Chet separates the parishes and built-up areas of Loddon and Chedgrave, which are often considered as a single settlement. However, whilst recognising the inter-relationship of the two areas, they are nevertheless dealt with separately for the purposes of a Development Limit (see Chedgrave Inset Map 15).

Loddon is set in the attractive valley landscape of the River Chet. The valley to the east comprises grazing marsh typical of the Broads, whilst to the west the valley is more enclosed with abundant wooded areas, which are of particular importance in the landscape. A small tributary valley runs southwards out of the settlement and is largely open in character.

Bridge Street/High Street forms the core of the historical centre of Loddon. The area is characterised by closely built-up streets, which also allow occasional glimpses of the countryside through gaps between buildings and across forecourts and yards. Particularly important are the open spaces of Church Plain, which forms the natural focus of the town, Farthing Green and The Staithe, all of which contrast with the narrow streets.

The Conservation Area designated in 1975 and extended in 1994 encompasses the historical centre of the town and extends as far south as Davy Place and part of Beccles Road, eastwards to Mill Road, and as far north to include parts of Norwich Road and Langley Road (in Chedgrave).

The town has experienced significant post-war estate scale development, mainly between Kittens Lane, the A146 bypass and High Bungay Road. A ribbon of development has also been established to the east along Mill Road and Norton Road. Significant recent industrial development has taken place on the edge of the built-up area off Beccles Road. The overall scale of recent development has significantly altered the historic form of the settlement.

Outside the built-up area the settlement pattern within the parish comprises widely dispersed individual dwellings and farmsteads. The north eastern part of the parish also lies within the Broads Authority Executive Area.

The settlement possesses a wide range of facilities including a purpose built community and sports hall, library, medical facilities and a 'small business' centre. The majority of facilities are concentrated in the Central Business Area as defined on Inset Map 34B. The town functions as a focal point for the adjacent rural parishes and has the benefit of mains sewerage.

The A146 bypasses the town and offers good direct access to Norwich, Beccles and Lowestoft. Bungay Road (C395) provides a relatively direct link to Ellingham and the A143 to the south with the remainder of the internal road network comprising a mixture of 'C' class and unclassified roads. The settlement is well served by public transport, but has no evening services.

Policies and proposals (see Inset Maps 34A and 34B)

2. Development Limit

A Development Limit has been drawn to encompass the existing built-up area and existing commitments, and to prevent further development intruding into the surrounding countryside, and in particular the Chet Valley.

The following are also important open areas which contribute significantly to the form and character of the settlement and have therefore been excluded from the Development Limit:

1. Church Plain
2. Farthing Green
3. The grounds of All Saints Church and adjacent playground.

With the exception of existing commitments, further residential development will be limited to infilling within the Development Limit in line with policy HOU 5. Outside the Development Limit, proposals for any new development will be assessed against policy ENV 8 and other more specific Local Plan policies where appropriate.

3. Housing

The Plan does not allocate any further new housing sites in Loddon. Further house building land is allocated however in the adjacent settlement of Chedgrave.

4. Employment

The Rural Area Local Plan (RALP) allocated 13.7 hectares of land for employment purposes to the east of Low Bungay Road. Some 8.5 hectares of this land received a planning permission for roads and sewers for industrial development, which expired in 1995. The allocation remains undeveloped (albeit the same 8.5 hectares area has been the subject in late 2000 of a further planning application for similar development).

A significant part of the ex-RALP allocation is located within the flood plain of the stream forming much of its eastern boundary. In order to retain the flood storage capacity of the area and the ecological value of the flood plain's grassland, the Plan re-allocates an area of 6.5 hectares, which is outside the flood plain and not subject to potential development constraints.

The Council considers that the ecological value of the area of flood plain adjacent to the allocation may be impacted upon by the development of the allocation. The developer will be required to contribute towards the management of that area to maintain its ecological value and to reduce the effects of the development. Development of the site would also cut off the existing points of access from High Bungay Road and Low Bungay Road to the area of rough grazing in the flood plain. As separate field access would not be feasible from the A146 and could be subject to agreements with third parties owning land off Beccles Road, the developer will be required to provide for vehicular access from it to the flood plain, to serve the individual land holdings whose access would otherwise be severed by the development proposed.

The allocation may not have a road access off Low Bungay Road. Revised Government road access standards have also meant that the allocation can no longer be adequately served by a road junction on High Bungay Road that would comply with modern standards and safety audit procedures. The County Council has suggested therefore that the allocation should be served by a direct access to the A146, which should incorporate a diversion of High Bungay Road away from its existing junction with the A146. The new arrangements would be at the developer's expense.

Policy LOD 1: Employment allocation, east of Low Bungay Road, Loddon

6.5 hectares of land east of Low Bungay Road is allocated for employment purposes. The developer will be required to:

- i) Contribute towards the future management of the floodplain between the allocation and the stream to the east to maintain its ecological and amenity value**
- ii) Provide for vehicular access to the floodplain between the allocation and the stream to serve the individual land holdings whose access would otherwise be severed by the development proposed.**
- iii) Provide for and finance a new direct site access road junction with the A146 Loddon bypass to also serve and include the diversion of High Bungay Road away from its existing junction with the A146.**

A development brief will be prepared which will outline the requirements of the development of the allocated site. This will include details on land use, design, access and circulation, landscaping, service provision, constraints and phasing.

Policy LOD 2: Development brief for employment allocation, east of Low Bungay Road, Loddon

A development brief will be prepared for the site allocated in policy LOD 1 in order to indicate the District Council's preferred form of development.

A site of approximately 1 hectare at the junction of Beccles Road and the A146 Bypass was allocated in the RALP for a motel/restaurant. Although the site has had planning permissions for light industry, a motel, restaurant and dwelling, these have not been implemented. Bearing in mind its relation to the remainder of the employment area, it is considered that the development of this site for employment purposes would be appropriate, should the proposals for a motel/restaurant prove to be unviable. Due to the prominent nature of the site, any proposals should pay particular regard to sensitive design and landscaping.

Policy LOD 3: Motel/restaurant at the junction of Beccles Road and the A146 Loddon bypass

Planning permission will be granted for the development of a motel/restaurant on a 1.0 ha site at the junction of Beccles Road and the A146 bypass. If no such proposal is forthcoming first, permission will be granted for employment development. In either case, a high standard of design and landscaping will be required to minimise the visual impact of development at this prominent site.

5. Commercial activities

The importance of Loddon/Chedgrave as a local service centre for its rural hinterland and increasingly for water-borne visitors is reflected by the high percentage of people employed in the service sector. This service function is therefore important in the local economy and if it is to be maintained the settlement must continue to offer a wide range of services and adapt to shoppers' changing needs. The District Council therefore will seek to maintain and enhance the viability of the town as a shopping and service centre.

The majority of existing commercial premises are concentrated in the established centre of the village along Bridge Street and High Street. It is anticipated that most new commercial activities will be concentrated in this area where they would benefit from a central location with public car parking nearby. The District Council will provide for the appropriate development by defining a Central Business Area in which a wide range of retailing uses will be encouraged, within the context of policies SHO 4 and SHO 7.

~~Policy LOD 4: Central Business Area, Loddon~~

~~The Central Business Area comprises Bridge Street, High Street and part of Market Place as defined on the Proposals Map (see Inset Map 34B). Provision will be made for development within this area in accordance with policies SHO 4 and SHO 7.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **LOD 4** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process. Applicants should now instead refer to Local Plan policy SHO 4 (Town centres).

There may also be scope for the establishment of local shops at a “cornershop” scale elsewhere within the built up area, to serve the immediate locality. The District Council will give favourable consideration to any proposals to provide “cornershop” units on suitable sites elsewhere within the built up area in accordance with policy SHO 8.

6. Traffic circulation

Surveys carried out by the Parish Council in the 1990s established local concerns about a variety of traffic related problems within the town. As a result the Parish, County and District Councils set up a working party (including local residents) to draw up a scheme of traffic management and calming measures. A combination of 20mph speed limits, speed humps and waiting restrictions has been implemented (but for technical reasons the following policy remains in the Plan).

Policy LOD 5: ~~Traffic management and calming measures in Loddon~~

~~The District Council will press the County Council to implement a scheme of traffic management and calming measures in the town.~~

(NB: Scheme since implemented)

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **LOD 5** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the ‘saved policy’ process, because the scheme has been completed.

7. Car parking

The District Council together with the Broads Authority is keen to improve public access to the riverside and to further improve the environment around The Staithe. The District Council will investigate the possibility of providing a landscaped car park extension to the south of the existing car park at The Staithe. This would provide additional parking space both for visitors to the riverside as well as those visiting the town centre.

Policy LOD 6: Extension of existing car park at The Staithe, Loddon

The District Council will investigate the possibility of extending the existing car park at The Staithe.

8. Recreation and leisure

The recreation and leisure requirements of Loddon and Chedgrave have been taken together because of the inter-relationship that exists between the two parishes.

There is an estimated shortfall of approximately 1.6 hectares of leisure land to meet the existing requirements of the population of Loddon/Chedgrave (at the base date of the Plan). However, this calculation does not include the existing playing fields associated with Loddon Middle School and Hobart School which amount to some 6.5 hectares and

which are already available to local residents on a limited basis. Rather than provide totally new leisure land for use by the residents there may be scope for more intensive use of these school facilities to maintain an adequate supply of leisure land in accordance with policy LEI 9.

Policy LOD 7: ~~Dual use of facilities at schools in Loddon~~

~~The District Council will seek to encourage the dual use of facilities, particularly existing playing fields, at Loddon Middle School and Hobart School.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **LOD 7** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process. Applicants should now instead refer to Local Plan policy LEI 9 (Joint provision and dual use of recreational facilities).

The existing small swimming pool at the Hobart School is open to the public at limited times, but is old and requires replacement. Loddon Parish and South Norfolk Councils will investigate the feasibility of providing a new leisure pool for Loddon.

Policy LOD 8: Provision of new leisure pool in Loddon

The District Council will investigate the feasibility of providing a new leisure pool in Loddon.

9. Tourism

Tourism has become an important aspect of the local economy largely as a result of Loddon and Chedgrave developing as an important centre for water-borne visitors. The District Council will continue to encourage the development of Loddon and Chedgrave as a tourist centre and will consider favourably tourist related development subject to normal planning considerations in accordance with policies TOU 2 and TOU 3.

The Broads Authority also recognises the importance of Loddon and Chedgrave for water-based visitors and has provided for a Broads Information facility in a shop opposite The Staithe, with the District Council's support.

10. The built environment

The Loddon Parish Council has identified a number of potential town centre enhancements which may be eligible for grant aid for the District Council. The District Council supports the principle of environmental enhancements in Loddon and has provided financial support for street lighting improvements and a repaving scheme.