

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee 5 November 2009
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ORCHARD PARK PROGRESS SINCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW

Purpose

1. To inform the committee on:
 - (a) Progress at Orchard Park since the last update in April 2009
 - (b) Progress against the Task and Finish group's recommendations of October 2008

Executive Summary

2. It is now nearly two years since the Task and Finish Group began its review of Orchard Park (then Arbury Park). Since that time much has changed and many different parties have scrutinised the development to learn lessons. In developing plans for the emerging growth sites, partners have taken forward the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. In particular the recommendations have helped in the planning for Trumpington Meadows and Clay Farm on Cambridge Southern Fringe.
3. Orchard Park has a thriving Community Council, a new community building and is gradually taking ownership of the various parcels of public open space with sports pitches and changing facilities due for completion in spring 2010. The primary school has an active PTA, well used community rooms and has just received a good OFSTED inspection. Partners have been meeting for over a year to tackle joint issues, particularly those associated with the economic slowdown. Building has recommenced and sales are increasing. Initiatives are being explored to develop some of the remaining land parcels and studies are ongoing with regard retail options in the area.
4. The Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group recommendations were taken forward into an action plan, which is attached at **Appendix 1**. Progress has been made and is detailed where appropriate. Where recommendations have been implemented this is shown, although the work does not stop there. The New Communities service plans to take all the recommendations along with others highlighted by the City Council, Horizons, County Council and through our own experiences into a compendium. This would serve as a checklist for all new developments, helping to implement the higher-level principles of the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter within actual delivery.

Background

5. The Scrutiny Committee appointed a Task and Finish Group to review Orchard Park (formally Arbury Park) in February 2008. Following months of interviews with

partners, stakeholders, officers and other interested parties; the group reported their findings to Scrutiny Committee in October 2008. Cabinet considered this report in November and reported back to the Scrutiny Committee in December with an action plan to address the Task and Finish Groups recommendations. An update on the action plan and other interventions at Orchard Park was presented to the Scrutiny Committee in April 2009, following which they requested a further update in six months time. A timeline is attached at **Appendix 2** to show key dates in more detail.

6. Parish boundaries meant that Impington parish became the governing body for Orchard Park during its early stages of development. From November 2008 an interim Community Council took over chaired by resident Jens Kirschner. They worked with Impington and the three local members to manage the development's affairs until 1st April 2009 when the Parish of Orchard Park was created. Election to the Community Council could not take place until the normal day of elections, which was 4th June. This gave rise to the issue of who should represent the new Parish during this time. Following guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the three local members for Histon and Impington agreed to act as representatives of Orchard Park Community Council from 1st April until 8th June or thereabouts (when the new Community Council would hold its first meeting). This was not an easy period for the local members and many lessons have been learnt for the future to ensure this situation does not arise again.
7. On 4th June 2009, nine community councillors were elected without contest to the Orchard Park Community Council. At their first meeting on 10th June Cllr Dr Bard presented the new Council with a gavel to celebrate their inauguration. A chair and vice chair were also elected at this meeting. In September the Community Council appointed a new clerk to administer the Council's affairs. Lessons have been learnt from the governance process at Orchard Park and steps are being taken to ensure a smoother transfer is achieved at the other new developments.
8. The arts have played a key role in the development of the community at Orchard Park. A public art plan funded through S106 contributions, house builders, sub developers, Cambridgeshire County Council, CABE, Arts and Business, TESCO, Grants for the Arts (Arts Council England), Awards for All (Lottery) and others has resulted in a range of arts projects including site-specific public art works and socially-engaged projects. These projects along with the activities and advice offered by the community development worker who is funded by the S106 and housing association at Orchard Park have increased the level of community participation from an early stage of the development. Many residents, who engaged early on, are still actively taking part today, including a number of Community Councillors.

Orchard Park – One year on

9. The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles of the level of quality to be expected in new developments in the Cambridge Sub region. SCDC along with other partners and organisations signed up to the charter to ensure a joint approach, goals and understanding was taken to delivering growth in the region. Using the charters four principles of community, connectivity, climate and character all held together by collaboration provides a good structure on which to update members of progress at Orchard Park.

Community

10. After lengthy delays and contracted negotiations the community centre was transferred to the Community Council on 28th August 2009. It is now home to the

Community Council clerk and community development worker and hosts the Community Council meetings along with other events and activities. Funding from Cambridgeshire Horizons has enabled an alarm to be fitted and other fixtures and fittings purchased. SCDC officers are now assisting in procuring a contractor to raise the height of the ceiling in the smaller community room to enable more varied activities to take place there. Installation of CCTV is also being considered.

11. With five official Council meetings held to date the Community Council are settling in to the running of their parish. Subgroups including a planning committee and a facilities committee are now operating with their own terms of reference and taking on responsibility for their areas of work. A Community newsletter is to be published shortly to help the Community Council communicate with residents on Orchard Park and provide residents with a forum to include other news. A website is also being produced to make the Council and the development more prominent.
12. SCDC is continuing to support the Community Council with a programme of training to help develop their community leadership skills. Officers have also led on events including Cambridgeshire celebrates age in October and a volunteer's fair in November. A close relationship exists with the resident community development worker (CDW) who has helped the community to set up a number of groups, organise events and activities and help bring together lots of residents on the development. Groups include Little Apples, Able to be Independent and a residents group working on neighbourhood watch, litter picking and events. The CDW is also working closely with the Community Council to produce a newsletter, raise awareness of decision-making and improve the appearance of undeveloped land with planting events.
13. A book detailing Orchard Park's journey "Home Grown: Art and the cultivation of a neighbourhood" was recently published. A copy will be delivered free to each household. This book was one of a number of commissions made by the Orchard Park Public Art Project Management Group (OPPAPMG) consisting of Gallagher Estates, the Community Council and SCDC. OPPAPMG also commissioned a neighbourhood artist who has worked closely with residents from an early stage in the development on a number of programmes including street signs, gift frames to new residents, mosaic workshops, the banana arts unit and urban beach, and the recent Crop Marks residency with seven artists (sponsored by Premier Inn).
14. The neighbourhood artist's work comes to a close in December 2009 and she is working on a continuation strategy with Park Arts Group (PAG). PAG are a group of resident volunteers who plan to manage an annual programme of community-related arts events in partnership with the Community Council and the CDW. More details can be found on <http://www.parkartsgroup.org.uk/> and <http://www.sameanddifferent.net/>. At a recent Community Council meeting, Councillors thanked the neighbourhood artist Kirsten Lavers for her help in making Orchard Park the community it is today. Kirsten presented the Community Council with framed pictures taken throughout her time on Orchard Park to hang in the Community Centre.
15. A survey in addition to the recent Place Survey was conducted over the summer with Orchard Park and Cambourne residents. The intention was to compare the views of residents living in new communities with those living in the more established south cambs villages. A separate report detailing the results and findings is being presented to the New Communities portfolio holder (PFH) on 5th November. In summary it shows that residents in the new communities do not feel they "belong" to their neighbourhoods yet, are not as satisfied with their area as a place to live and think sports and retail facilities would improve their neighbourhoods. Not surprising results

but ones, which are analysed further along with an action, plan in the PFH report.

Connectivity

16. The Citi4 bus service began servicing Orchard Park in January 2008. There have been issues with the route, which uses some of the more narrow parts of the development and also with the location of bus stops. The Community Council, school and residents have been consulted on new locations for bus stops and changes to the route by the county council. Once these have been agreed with Gallagher's changes to the route will be implemented before Christmas and the bus shelters can begin to be built. It has been noted that passenger numbers are low and stagecoach will not run the service indefinitely if this remains the case. The Community Council has plans to publicise the bus to increase its usage.
17. The Cambridge Guided Bus runs parallel with King's Hedges Road to the front of the development at Orchard Park. Construction on this phase is ongoing and due to be complete by Christmas with residents able to use the service early in 2010. Along with the good road network, cycle and footway links, Orchard Park is very well connected to Cambridge and the surrounding area. That is not to say that improvements are not needed, especially with cycling routes from Histon and Impington.
18. There continues to be an issue with parking policies and the reality of parking in a high-density development. Parking has been provided but not all residents use the designated places and street parking is prevalent. This has caused problems with the bus route and a few accidents on tight bends within the development. Until the roads are adopted there is little enforcement that can be done, however SCDC is working with partners to look at other options, which include the introduction of a car club scheme and follow up work to the personalised travel-planning project.

Climate

19. A number of small-scale environmental projects have been initiated at Orchard Park. The school has solar panels and a wind turbine, which are connected to a display board in the school showing their outputs. They provide learning opportunities for the children and were intended to help reduce energy bills, however to date this has not been the case and the County Council are reviewing their use. Air quality monitoring equipment is also located at the school to measure the outputs from the A14. It has not been in place long enough to make assumptions since levels differ throughout the year, however the air quality action plan is available on the Council's website and shows how SCDC is tackling air quality in the area.
20. BPHA's affordable housing units on parcel F were installed with ground source heat pumps and solar panels are fitted on those at parcel B2. Usage and effectiveness is being monitored by BPHA but no results were available at the time of preparing this report. The community centre "green roof" was partly funded through the S106 innovation fund and is an additional sustainable element, which adds a new dimension to the development.
21. The land at the far East of Orchard Park (K1) shown by black stripes on **Appendix 3** is owned by Cambridge City Council. This land along with L2 opposite it, are currently being reviewed by consultant Stephen Hill of Future Planners for potential self-commissioned homes. Stephen was commissioned by SCDC and has been working with landowners, City and SCDC officers, the Community Council and interested partners/architects to review the viability of such homes in Cambridge. A workshop to

showcase some ideas is planned for 4th November after which Stephen will soft market the proposals and report back to SCDC in December with his findings. It is hoped this research can be taken forward for the other growth sites in Cambridgeshire to increase the number of sustainable innovative homes.

Character

22. As at 3rd September there were 517 homes occupied on the development (264 market and 253 affordable). All the affordable housing agreed under the outline planning consent had been built and a new site of 32 shared ownership homes was under construction on land opposite the community centre. The map at Appendix 3 shows the detail of what is built and what is planned along with land ownership details. **Appendix 4** highlights built and ongoing development to date.
23. Planning permission was granted for the local centre (blue striped land surrounding POS2 on Appendix 3) in August 2009 and a planning application has been received for the commercial area (green striped land adjacent the A14). This application is due to go to Planning Committee in December 2009.
24. The first area of public open space (POS5), which comprises a children's play area, was transferred to the community council in October 2009. Other play/seating areas including POS3, POS4, POS6 and POS 7 are currently under 12 months maintenance from the developer and planned to transfer summer 2010. POS1 which includes the changing facilities, tennis courts, sports pitches and play area are currently under construction and due to be complete in March 2010. The only outstanding area of public open space is POS2, which is planned along with the local centre.
25. As part of the housing shortfall allocation, Orchard Park has been allocated 220 extra homes on three parcels of land. These are identified on the map at Appendix 3 by the red striped land on the corner (Gallagher owned) and two orange hatched areas of land adjacent the A14 to the east end of the site (L2 and commercial, Unex owned). Discussions continue with the landowners but no planning applications have been received to date.
26. A retail study is currently taking place, reviewing the whole North West quadrant of Cambridge to assess the viability and need of retail in this area. When concluded it will give clarity to landowners at Orchard Park and North West Cambridge in relation to options for their land.

Action Plan

27. The action plan at Appendix 1 shows the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group in November 2008. It then shows the progress that has been made against these recommendations to date. So far 32 of the recommendations have been implemented with just 12 requiring further attention.
28. The Scrutiny recommendations and other lessons learnt will all be taken forward by the New Communities Service to be included in a "New Communities Compendium" developed with partners to ensure a collaborative approach is taken to delivering new communities within the principles of the quality charter. This will ensure that even those recommendations that have been implemented (as shown on the action plan at Appendix 1) will not be forgotten, they will be implemented within the future growth sites planned for the Cambridge area.

Implications

29. The Council's financial situation will have implications for the action plan and how officers take forward recommendations at future growth sites. The New Communities service will continue to work with new communities prioritising resources to the most fundamental issues.

30. Financial	It is hoped the cost of producing a "New Communities Compendium" can be met from existing resources and/or funding from other partners. Prioritisation of actions will be key given the current economic climate.
Legal	Legal resources to help negotiate and develop S106 packages are key to delivering a number of the recommendations and on going best practice.
Staffing	Considerable resources have been put into taking forward the recommendations from the Task and Finish group across authorities. Partnership working is key to achieving the desired outcomes within the resources available.
Risk Management	The action plan serves as a reminder to other developments of the risks involved in designing and building new communities. We will continue to monitor these through the risk assessments developed for each growth site and the corporate risk registers for the Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons.
Equal Opportunities	The council is committed to providing a fair and equitable service to all its residents and learning the lessons from developments such as Orchard Park helps to achieve this aim.

Consultations

31. Considerable consultation has taken place in the development of this report. A questionnaire was sent to the following partners/stakeholders:
- a. Orchard Park Community Council
 - b. Gallagher's
 - c. Impington Parish Council
 - d. Local Members
 - e. City Council
 - f. County Council
 - g. Persimmon homes
 - h. Martin Grant homes
 - i. Taylor Wimpy
 - j. BPHA
 - k. Places for People
 - l. Unex
 - m. Cambridgeshire Horizons
 - n. Homes and Communities Agency
32. The questionnaire sought to gather views on what had worked well/not so well at Orchard Park; what improvements could be made; what lessons needed to be learnt and any other comments. A summary of responses can be seen at **Appendix 5**.

Effect on Strategic Aims

33. Being a listening Council, providing first class services to all
Developing a compendium showing how new communities will be delivered into the future will instil confidence that lessons are being learnt and best practice is being taken forward to ensure these communities are the best they can be.
Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place
Working with partners including the PCT and Police in delivering the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group will ensure new developments are safe and healthy places to live.
Making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
The compendium will ensure the needs of any new community are met and will support other services to deliver growth and serve a growing population. It will promote the cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of communities across the district.
Assisting provision for local jobs
The Economic strategy will identify how local jobs can be incorporated into new communities and the types of businesses that will be attracted to these developments.
Providing a voice for rural life
It is important that communities feel engaged. The Community Engagement Strategy, which has been developed in part, out of the Task and Finish Groups recommendations, will ensure residents are well informed and able to communicate effectively with the council.

Options

34. The Committee is asked to:
- Note the progress at Orchard Park,
 - Agree that the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group have been or have robust plans to be implemented, and
 - Note the production of a “New Communities Compendium” containing all the lessons learnt and recommendations from cross-district reviews to assist SCDC and partners in delivering the growth agenda.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Response to Arbury Park Task and Finish Group Report – 4th December 2008
- Arbury Park Action Plan – 4th December 2008
- Arbury Park (Orchard Park) Lessons Learnt – Report to South Cambridgeshire In Your Patch Meeting – 10th December 2008
- Review of Arbury Park Development – Report to Environment Scrutiny Committee, Cambridge City Council – 13th January 2009.
- Review of the Orchard Park development and lessons to be learnt for future major developments - Report to Environment Scrutiny Committee, Cambridge City Council – 23rd June 2009.

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