

Rampton Parish Council

Northstowe consultation submission – consideration of Council responses

The comments and suggestions of Rampton Parish Council are noted below. Items with direct relevance to Rampton are in bold text.

a) Design and Access Statement

Concern was expressed about the inadequacy of 1.5 car spaces per residential unit, particularly where housing density will be highest. The use of the three green, blue and black bin will add further to front of property congestion (from 0 below). Parking and congestion on narrow residential streets is a problem at Cambourne and should not be repeated at Northstowe.

b) Environmental Statement.

There were no immediately contentious items and many of the items could be classed as desirable common sense. In common with other similar documents and statements it was suggested that all parties – planners, developers and builders agree to some items being auditable so the approved planning documents have a degree of mandatory compliance for ‘desirable common sense’ items, quite apart from compliance with building regulations etc.

c) Arboricultural reports

The reports were considered thorough with as many trees as practicable being retained, particularly those of value for biodiversity. Exclusion zones around trees during construction is useful. Compliance with the objectives may be aided with some audit targets.

d) Construction Environmental Management Plan

In the dust and inspection proposals there is no mention of the busway and cycle route requiring special consideration. The dust management plan should limit dust generation during commuting hours (or provide adequate dust suppression spraying). Other items mentioned were the lack of inclusion of amphibians and reptiles in section 6.4 which only specifically mentioned mammals and birds, and the apparent lack of **consultation with neighbouring villages when unexploded ordnance is being detonated on site.**

e) Economic Development Strategy

The Parish Council feel there should be **more consultation with local businesses** in adjoining communities to encourage proactive business synergies. If Northstowe is to be a “living laboratory” there should be some attempt to innovate especially by using local businesses. (E.g. Cyan Technology and Amino Communications in Swavesey for street light controls and in-built TV technology). **The “forum” process that is linked with Northstowe development should also involve local businesses.**

f) Energy Strategy

The issue of wind power (16 medium or 5 large turbines) must be resolved *before* the main development starts. **The sale of residential property in and around the Northstowe area will be confused if there is to be a wind farm on the ‘doorstep’.** To have one installed after construction would show a cynical disregard for the residents affected and would possibly be open to legal challenge.

The assertion in the Energy review that Heat Pumps are a ‘rejected’ option seems flawed given the overall ambitions for Northstowe. It is accepted that air sourced heat pumps can be noisy and increase possible neighbour conflicts, but ground sourced heat pumps (GSHP) must be considered as usable options for new build properties especially where the large amounts of low grade heat can produce significant savings; schools, offices, other public buildings and some commercial properties should incorporate GSHP.

The assumptions about the area of roof top solar PV assumes the same (26%) area usage on both residential and commercial property. As much of the commercial property could have flat roof area the percentage value should be higher.

g) Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.

The report provides details of recent flooding events and proposes a mitigation system based on controlled water storage and discharge. As the most recent flood events have shown the maintenance of drains and ditches is as essential as well designed capital works. **The final proposals presented should contain descriptions of an auditable drainage system maintenance programme both in and downstream from Northstowe.**

h) Framework Travel Plan / Transport Assessment.

The Parish Council wish to see an upgrade to commuter cycleway standards for the whole Cottenham/Rampton/Northstowe route, and propose to pursue this request formally.

The Busway crossing point into Northstowe at the end of Reynolds Drove should be flattened and be given a request bus stop similar to the one at Fenstanton Lakes.

The flattening of the crossing should also include the provision of access restrictors for anything other than cycles. 4x4 motor cycles are already crossing the tracks at this point.

Given the likely increase in electric cycles, and the wider use of electric mobility scooters for the elderly cycle rack stations should be equipped with suitable charging points.

The assumptions about travel options seem to imply a reduction in the number of cycle journeys

i) Geo Environmental Assessment and Remedial Strategy

No comments

j) Health Impact Assessment

The Parish Council fully support the early provision of a Community Development worker

k) Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Given the developers ambition for this development to be an exemplar we note there is no mention of security or policing. Good open views and the absence of concealed areas that encourage loitering and/or crime must be built into the design fabric. Similarly the recent request that the floor areas of houses be allowed to drop below the recommended guidelines suggest an element of 'building on the cheap'. All houses should be built with adequate security measures as standard (e.g. window locks and spandrel lock doors).

l) Sustainability Statement

As with item b) above, it is important that some (not all!) of the sustainability aspirations (and others) are made auditable, and marked as such in the final proposals. This should be a contractual requirement with appropriate penalties.

m) Town Centre Strategy (incl retail assessment)

The proposal are interesting, but rely heavily on the developments ability to attract suitable businesses. Hence the importance of e) above.

n) Utilities report

The Parish Council would like to see the main electricity supplies going into the development underground rather than on pylons/post.

o) Waste Strategy

See comments at a) above. Also the comments at k) above suggest that cost cutting may result in the higher density areas of the town having refuse bins as permanent pavement litter.