

## South Cambridgeshire District Council / Cambridgeshire County Council

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**REPORT TO:** Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee 25 February 2015

**AUTHOR:** Planning and New Communities Director , South Cambridgeshire District Council

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**Parishes:** Longstanton, Oakington and Westwick

**Proposal:** Progress update on negotiations on the planning proposals and related matters on the outline application for Northstowe phase 2

**Site address:** Land south of the B1050, between the guided busway and Longstanton, and the northern edge of Oakington

**Applicant:** Homes and Communities Agency c/o Arup

**Recommendation:** Presented to NJDCC for information on officers' progress towards a recommendation on the outline planning application to NJDCC on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Presenting Officer:** Lois Bowser, Northstowe Team Leader

### Northstowe Phase 2: Progress Update

#### Executive Summary

- 1 This report summarise progress made in negotiations with HCA on suggested amendments to the outline planning application submitted in August 2014 for the planning and development of the central part of the proposed new town of Northstowe on the former Oakington Barracks site. The amendments are required in response to consideration of extensive consultation with the local residents, parish councils, statutory and other consultees, commentary from members and review by technical experts and officers. The interim position we have reached on planning matters is outlined in this report and presented without prejudice to the subsequent recommendation to NJDCC in March. This note covers certain key issue areas only. It also provides an outline of the Community Engagement work, a separate item on this agenda, and an overview of the section 106 process.

#### Town Park and Town Square

- 2 There is a clear policy requirement in the NAAP and supported in the Development Framework Document (DFD) that proposals for the town as a whole are expected to include a town park. This point was emphasised in pre-application discussion with the HCA; the submitted proposals indicated a modestly sized town square and no town park. The two spaces are critical to the provision of open space for recreation and civic amenity, as well as health and wellbeing. The town square would be hard landscaped and, for example, be suitable for a market, performance, gatherings for civic functions and act as a formal space and setting for the principal retail outlets and the proposed civic hub. It would complement the local centre open space by the

B1050 proposed by Gallagher.

- 3 The town park that officers have requested would be an area that might include more formal landscaping, play areas, softer green landscaping and be an area for picnics and passive recreation. There is a small park proposed in Phase 1. Officers are in active discussion with the HCA to secure this community requirement which is a typical feature of most towns in the UK. The discussions are positive, and the area is still under discussion.

#### **Sports and recreation areas**

- 4 The area allocated in the planning application for formal sports and recreation is below the policy standard and Sport England has raised concerns over this. Officers have been in discussion on how the new secondary school and community sports areas can be shared to mutual advantage and whether, using more artificial surfaces, a lesser area can be acceptable. The current discussions with the school and Sport England are hoping to reach a compromise. Securing a community access agreement and early revenue funding to support the community sport element will be essential. The HCA has appointed sports consultants who are preparing a sport strategy that will address these issues and with whom officers are in dialogue.

#### **Dedicated Busway**

- 5 There is a 700m stretch of the dedicated busway which runs through the site that it is proposed will be shared with private car on a temporary basis during phase 1. The concern is that it will be difficult to reclaim it from the motorist when the final road layouts are completed and the busway will be for bus-only use. Various solutions relating to the design of the busway and how buses can be given priority are underway.

#### **Greenways and Heritage Areas**

- 6 We are supporting residents' concerns about retaining the rural nature of Long Lane and the protection of the conservation area, including discussing appropriate pedestrian and cycling access. We are negotiating positively on the increased width of the major greenway through the site leading the town square to give more open space and improved prominence of this route.

#### **Officers Mess Feasibility Study**

- 7 The proposal to utilise the former officers' mess as the second primary school is welcomed in principle but has capital cost envelope and revenue implications. The HCA commissioned a feasibility study whose findings are under discussion with county officers and are looking promising.

#### **Site levels**

- 8 There is a discrepancy in the calculation of the contours and site profiling between officers' understanding and the HCA. We are currently resolving this but until then remain concerned at the steepness of some of the slopes in their water park recreation areas.

#### **Car parking**

- 9 The level of car parking proposed is an average of 1.5 in accordance with our adopted policy requirement. The submitted Local Plan includes higher provision, which is in line with current practice and experience elsewhere. This request has implications for land use, but HCA are considering their response.

#### **Affordable housing**

- 10 The proposal is for 20% based on HCA's own viability assessment. The policy is 40%

subject to viability. Negotiations are on-going as part of the viability work.

### **Ecological Mitigation**

- 11 There is a need to identify a site nearby for farmland bird mitigation. The RSPB seek to secure improvements to the Fen Drayton lakes to ease visitor pressure around the European Special Protection Areas at the River Ouse. The RSPB have prepared a vision of the nature park and are preparing a cost breakdown of the essential visitor facilities that are lacking and would be accessed by Northstowe residents, for further consideration.

### **Rampton Road and Rampton Drift**

- 12 The public right of way has to cross the CGB, over the raised guided rail. It was designed with limited safety measures, and the concern is that these should be enhanced such as warning lights to indicate a bus is coming or a footbridge. Options are being considered.
- 13 Another issue is access to Rampton Drift throughout the development. This will be considered through
- 14 Residents raised the issue that the parameter plan showed three storeys adjoining Rampton Drift and that this was too imposing. This has been amended to two stories. There remains some concern that the housing on the other side of Rampton Road is also too high at three storeys.

### **Dry Drayton attenuation ponds**

- 15 The HCA has been asked to consider bringing this into phase 2.

### **Waste collection**

- 16 There is discussion on the inclusion of an exemplar scheme to site bins underground for some housing units.

### **Cycle provision**

- 17 There is ongoing and detailed discussion with the cycling lobby and HCA to secure excellent cycle provision including in the town centre and cycle crossings over the primary roads.

### **Drainage**

- 18 Whilst there are no major concerns and indeed the SUDs scheme in general is welcomed. Our drainage consultant has raised some technical issues that we are currently resolving.

### **Sustainability**

- 19 Our sustainability consultants' assessment is in preparation.

### **Strategies and planning conditions**

- 20 In order to secure a satisfactory consent we are requiring the preparation of a range of strategies as conditions or in the section 106 agree to give confidence of a coordinated outcome. The town centre and sport strategies are of particular importance.

- 21 Officers are preparing a draft set of conditions that they will be in a position to share with members at the committee meeting.

### **Phased delivery of community infrastructure**

- 22 Officers are compiling a schedule to indicate which development or facility is likely to

be needed and required to be made available and when. The timing will be in relation to occupation, population numbers or calendar year. It will help to tell the story of how Northstowe will gradually bring forward the typical facilities seen in a town.

### **Section 106**

- 23 Members will recall that the headings or items for funding were presented to the County's Economy and Environment Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> February to the District Council Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> February. Officers are currently in negotiation with the HCA on the sums that represent a viable approach. This will include the percentage of affordable housing, split between social rent and shared ownership. The Councils have appointed a viability planning consultant to assist with the section 106 negotiations and have re-commissioned GVA to work on the financial modelling scenarios.

### **Community Engagement**

- 24 The Northstowe Community Engagement Officer took up employment in early January 2015 on a two year part time contract funded through the section 106 Agreement with Gallagher.
- 25 It is the intention to set up a steering group comprising the councils, promoters, schools providers, NHS and other relevant organisations such as BPHA to ensure that community engagement activity is targeted and co-ordinated between the different agencies. There could be NJDCC representation if members wish.
- 26 One of the functions of the post will be to consider how best to engage with local residents and other stakeholders. Currently we have the following groups for engagement :
- Parish Forum/parish council meetings – the Forum meets quarterly with the next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March. Officers are available to attend the monthly meetings on the invitation of the clerks. Parish council meetings and aim to meet monthly
  - Community Forum - first meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January and subsequent meetings will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> April (probable focus on transport and 15<sup>th</sup> July (probable focus on drainage)
  - Saturday Morning drop-ins with variable attendance, averaging around 20, bi-monthly

The Community Engagement Officer will work closely with the Parish Council and will become a familiar face in Longstanton and the local area

### **Recommendation**

- 27 Officers recommend that the Committee **notes** the information on progress provided this report.

### **Background Papers:**

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- NAAP 2007
- Development Framework Document 2012
- Phase 1 outline planning consent April 2014  
Planning submission for phase 2 s/2011/OL

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