

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th December 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

Cambourne Masterplan: Proposed Amendment

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: N/A

Purpose

1. To approve an amendment to the Master Phasing plan, part of the overall Masterplan, which sets out a guide as to the number of dwellings to be constructed on each parcel.

Background

2. The Cambourne Consortium lost its appeal to add 1559 units to the village earlier this year, and is now aware of the SCDC proposal to add 700 units to the village as part of the LDF process, promoted due to the need to meet the new PPG3 density standards. As a result of this uncertainty, it will not commence building in Upper Cambourne until it is sure of the overall number of houses that will be allowed. In the meantime the southern end of Great Cambourne remains to be constructed, and reserved matters planning permissions have been granted of all but 2 parcels, and several are currently under construction. Most of the parcels are around the southern and eastern edge of Great Cambourne, where lower densities have been required to create an edge of village location.
3. The Consortium is now concerned that some of the lower density areas will not be financially viable to construct, given the current state of the housing market. However, they do need to keep building otherwise work will stop on site and the consequences for the village will be the inconvenience caused by the longer time taken to finish the village, and further delay in the provision of community facilities as trigger points simply would not be reached for a greater time. More worrying is that some of the sites are land-locking affordable housing sites, causing delays in the provision of affordable housing, which relies heavily on keeping to a build programme to maintain a funding stream.
4. The Consortium therefore proposes to move 64 of the units allocated for Upper Cambourne into the remaining undeveloped area of Great Cambourne, in order to increase densities slightly and make the development more viable. It must be made clear that these 64 units are out of the 3,300 approved for the whole of Cambourne and not related to the LDF. At the same time, the approved Phase Five South Briefing Plan would still apply, thereby maintaining relative densities and character areas across this part of the site. The Consortium acknowledges that this leaves Upper Cambourne in a difficult position in terms of viability because of a reduced density, but it asserts that Upper cambourne is already unviable as planned, so 64 units will make little difference. It is prepared to await the outcome of the LDF process before deciding what to do about Upper cambourne. It may be that the 700 additional units are indeed allocated as policy and would therefore deal with the problem. If they are not allocated then the Consortium will have to consider

reducing the developable site area to improve densities with the allocated numbers remaining.

5. The 64 units are proposed to be located in particular parcels that are as yet undeveloped, in some cases the second half of a parcel currently under construction. More detail about the proposal and its impact on the layout of the site will be shown at the meeting, including in plan form.

Considerations

6. Moving 64 units from Upper Cambourne to Great Cambourne will have some impact on existing residents, who have purchased on the basis of the anticipation of a certain level of passing traffic to the development beyond their properties. The Consortium has been asked to show that it is willing to provide something to the community in return. Clearly, as these units will be part of the already approved 3,300 houses, there can be no requirement for additional facilities. However, a commitment to bring forward a future facility would be a tangible, positive step.
7. If the LDF does allocate 700 additional houses to Cambourne, there would be an outline planning application for these, any approval of which would be subject to a Section 106 agreement for additional facilities to cope with the additional population. It is very likely that a permanent building for youth facilities would be a high priority for negotiation into such an agreement, and would be set to be provided at the earliest at a trigger point of 3,301 houses. I have negotiated with the Consortium a Memorandum of Understanding between it and the Council, that if the 64 units are approved to be moved over to Great Cambourne, the Consortium will, in return, agree to apply for and construct the youth building referred to above at an earlier date, namely within a year of the outline permission being granted rather than waiting for 3,300 homes to be completed under the original outline permission.
8. I have no objection in principle to the moving of the allocated units, and I am satisfied that the areas yet to be built can accommodate them without harming the intended character and density for this area of Cambourne. There is a deficit of youth provision in the village, with nothing (apart from play equipment) having been provided for youth under the original S106 Agreement, and the negotiations resulting from this proposal will bring forward a much needed facility in the event that the LDF proceeds as anticipated. If there are no additional houses allocated to the village under the LDF then the Memorandum of Understanding will not apply, but that is an acknowledged risk.
9. The Parish Council has been sent a copy of this report, and will consider it at its next meeting on 6th December. I will report its comments verbally.

Financial Implications

10. None.

Legal Implications

11. None.

Staffing Implications

12. None.

Sustainability Implications

13. None.

Recommendation

Subject to the completion of the Memorandum of Understanding and to positive comments from the Parish Council, to **APPROVE** the moving of 64 units from Upper Cambourne to Great cambourne as an amendment to the approved Masterplan.

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

Outline planning permission dated 20th April 1994, reference S1371/92/0
Cambourne Masterplan.

Phase Five South Briefing Plan

Proposed amended schedule of dwelling numbers from Cambourne Consortium.

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