

## **D8 LANDSCAPE**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- D8/a To create within the urban area a pleasant and attractive external environment to contribute to local character and provide legibility to meet the needs of those living, working and visiting the town;**
- D8/b To ensure a high degree of connectivity between green areas, within the town for wildlife and people;**
- D8/c To create a network of green spaces within the town which integrate well with the development, contribute to legibility, are pleasant and attractive;**
- D8/e To enable landscape areas to provide an environment suitable for the mitigation of any adverse impact on wildlife and to maximise benefits to wildlife in order to increase biodiversity;**
- D8/f To enable landscape areas to contribute to the informal recreation needs of those living, working and visiting the town;**
- D8/g To ensure that any alterations to topography within the town are appropriate to local landscape character;**
- D8/h To make the best use of the existing tree resource on site as a setting for the development;**
- D8/i To develop an appropriate management strategy to ensure high quality, robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance of the landscape areas.**

### **LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES**

#### **POLICY NS/14 Landscape Principles**

##### **Landscape Strategy**

- a) A Landscape Strategy for Northstowe must be submitted and approved prior to the granting of planning permission. It will be implemented as part of the conditions / planning obligations for the development of the new town. The strategy will:**
  - (i) Create a quality environment within the town for residents, workers and visitors;**
  - (ii) Ensure a high degree of connectivity between green areas within the town;**

- (iii) **Create a network of green spaces within the town which are pleasant and attractive and contribute to legibility;**
- (iv) **Enable the landscaped areas within the town to provide an environment suitable to mitigate against any adverse wildlife impacts and to maximise the benefits to wildlife thus increasing biodiversity;**
- (v) **Enable the landscaped areas to contribute to the recreational needs of the town;**
- (vi) **Make best use of the existing tree resource on the site, sensitively into open spaces and areas of built form;**
- (vii) **Ensure that any alterations to topography within the town are appropriate to local landscape character;**
- (viii) **Include appropriate management systems to ensure high quality, robust and effective maintenance of the landscape areas.**

#### **Treatment of Construction Spoil**

- b) **A Strategy for Construction Spoil will be required as part of a Design Guide and Masterplan which will need to be approved by the District Council prior to the granting of any planning permission. The Strategy will ensure that spoil is retained on-site in a manner appropriate to the local topography and landscape character.**

#### **Water as a defining feature in the landscape**

- c) **Water in the form of lakes and watercourses will be a defining characteristic of Northstowe.**

#### **Existing Landscape Features**

- d) **Existing landscape features on the Northstowe site will be retained in order to assist the creation of a mature landscape within the town at an early stage in its development.**

#### **Landscape Strategy**

D8.1 It will be important for the landscape within the built-up area of Northstowe to be determined at an early stage in the planning process in order to guide the development of the town and to allow structural planting and landscaping to be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The landscape strategy will assist in delivering a quality environment to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Connections between the landscaped open spaces will add to their overall value for both people and wildlife. There is a considerable existing tree and shrub cover on the site which can be incorporated into the overall design of the town. Effective maintenance and management is essential to the long term strategy.

- D8.2 In general, the structural landscaping areas and Green Corridors which are created should be characteristic of the locality in terms of drainage, topography and species and habitats and thus, by virtue of their semi-natural nature, be robust and require minimum maintenance.

#### Construction Spoil

- D8.3 There will be a significant amount of construction spoil generated by the development of buildings and roads. Only a limited amount can be used to form new ground features as these would be an alien feature in the otherwise flat or gently contoured landscape. Construction spoil should therefore be distributed over a wide area within the site such that new ground levels do not adversely affect water tables, visual amenity or the landscape character of the area. It would not be sustainable to transport construction spoil away from the site.

#### Water as a defining feature in the landscape

- D8.4 Water is a key element in the landscape of the fens and fen edges. It is also an important feature in Cambridge and in many Cambridgeshire market towns. The use of water as an urban feature in this new fen edge town therefore would be consistent with these characteristics and would enliven and enhance the built environment. In some cases these will form extensive areas in the form of lakes and ponds, but there is also the opportunity for the green corridors to include linear features reflecting the canals, dykes or lodes in the Cambridgeshire fenland tradition. To be effective water features these features will need to contain water permanently rather than only in certain seasonal conditions. There will be a variety of treatments for water features depending on their location. Within the urban fabric a more formal approach may be appropriate whilst in other areas such as on the edges of the town a more informal and naturalistic approach may be appropriate.

#### Existing Landscape Features

- D8.5 Within the built-up area there will be opportunities to incorporate existing tree belts, groups, individual trees and hedges and lakes and ponds where such features can make a significant contribution to the urban environment. The design of the town should therefore be guided by the need to incorporate this important resource. In the exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, every effort will be made to transplant existing trees to new locations within the development. This will apply particularly to the oak trees currently growing on the MoD site. This will allow a more mature landscape to emerge within the town at an early stage in the development.

### Management Strategy

- D8.6 The landscaping of Northstowe will not be effective if it is not managed to the highest standards. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary for all landscaped areas to be maintained by the same organisation. This will need to take into account the varying requirements of the different functions which open space has to perform. It will only be successful if the local communities using this open space recognise its needs and are fully involved in its development and maintenance as key stakeholders. There will therefore be the need to develop appropriate management strategies to ensure high quality, robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance arrangements are in place ahead of any planning permission being granted. This is dealt with in the Phasing and Implementation policies.

## **LANDSCAPE TREATMENT ON THE EDGES OF NORTHSTOWE**

### **POLICY NS/15 Landscape Treatment of the edges of Northstowe**

#### **The Eastern Water Park**

- a) **A landscaped linear water park with appropriate planting and footpaths will be provided on the outer edge of Northstowe to the east along the St Ives railway which will require an area in the order of 100m in depth. The water park will provide an attractive amenity for the town and also a landscape buffer to the open countryside. It will also provide opportunities to create wildlife habitats and thus increase biodiversity. There will be a series of balancing lakes which will contain water under all conditions and may be joined together at times of greater rainfall.**

#### **Airfield road between Longstanton and Oakington**

- b) **The tree belt along the airfield road between Longstanton and Oakington will be retained and enhanced with additional planting to provide a strategic landscape boundary to the new town. An overall belt 50m in depth will be protected for this purpose, which will also provide a buffer to existing properties on Longstanton Road, Oakington which lie outside the village framework.**

#### **Sporadic linear development on the B1050 Station Road, Longstanton**

- c) **A landscaping zone of 40m of woodland planting will be provided to the east of the B1050 Station Road, Longstanton to protect the amenity of properties along that stretch of the road between Longstanton village and the former St Ives railway from development of the new town.**

- D8.7 The landscaping of the edges of Northstowe will be addressed through a variety of measures to integrate the town into its surroundings and also to protect the amenity of existing residents surrounding the site and the new community of Northstowe. The landscape treatment of the areas of Green Separation between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington to maintain the character of those villages will also provide an attractive setting to the town. On the northern outer edge of the town, the proposed Water Park following the line of the former St Ives railway will also provide the opportunity to create an attractive landscape treatment along that edge of the town.
- D8.8 There are also two other boundaries to the town which also require a suitable edge treatment on the airport road between Longstanton and Oakington and on the B1050 Station Road Longstanton. Both those area also include areas of housing outside the village frameworks of Longstanton and Oakington, which are physically detached from the villages. Specific landscape treatments are proposed to provide appropriate edges to the town and protect the amenity of those existing properties.

#### The Eastern Water Park

- D8.9 Most of the site for Northstowe drains to the north-east and there is a need to attenuate surface water as part of the drainage strategy. This offers the opportunity to create a water park along the boundary of Northstowe where it meets the Guided Bus route along the former St Ives railway. This will have a number of functions, as well as drainage, as a landscape resource, for informal recreation and for improvements in biodiversity. Although the width of the water park will vary, it will need to be in the order of 100m to create an appropriate landscape character, capable of fulfilling its functions for recreation and biodiversity, as well as drainage. There will be a series of balancing lakes which will contain water under all conditions to enhance their landscape and biodiversity value and which may be joined together at times of greater rainfall. The extent and depth of water will vary according to rainfall and the time of year.

#### Airfield road between Longstanton and Oakington

- D8.10 Along the airfield road between Oakington and Longstanton St Michael's an existing tree belt screens the southern part of the Airfield and forms a major feature in the landscape. However, the opportunity needs to be taken to enhance this feature to make a more positive contribution to the landscape, given the changes which will occur as a result of the development of Northstowe.

### Sporadic linear development on the B1050 Station Road, Longstanton

D8.11 There is sporadic linear development on the B1050 north of Longstanton both north and south of the railway line. This is separate from and outside the village framework. South of the disused railway line, the majority of properties lie on the west side of this busy through route to the fens. The amenity of these properties can best be protected by a narrow woodland belt on the edge of Northstowe.

## **LANDSCAPING WITHIN NORTHSTOWE**

### **POLICY NS/16 Landscaping within Northstowe**

#### **Green Corridors**

- a) **A series of Green Corridors will be created into and through the urban area, which may be based on:**
  - (i) **Drainage infrastructure,**
  - (ii) **Existing landscape features,**
  - (iii) **New landscape character areas.**
- b) **Water will be a central feature in many of these Green Corridors.**
- c) **They will have landscaping and biodiversity value and also perform a recreational function for both informal recreation and children's play. Public access will include provision for walking, cycling and horse riding.**
- d) **Road and bus crossings through the Green Corridors will be designed to limit any safety implications for people and be low key in character to limit adverse affects on the landscape. Safe and appropriate crossing facilities for wildlife will also be provided, such as tunnels under roads and ditches alongside roads where appropriate**

#### **Rampton Drift**

- e) **Sensitive integration of Rampton Drift into Northstowe will be achieved through a variety of appropriate landscape treatments which will include additional planting to supplement the existing nearby mature trees.**

#### **The Landscaping of the Built Environment**

- f) **The built environment will be landscaped with high quality design, materials and planting; this will be addressed in the Design Guide required by the District Council which will need to**

**be approved by the District Council prior to the granting of any planning permission.**

### **The Town Park**

- g) Pursuant to Policy NS/x (Recreation) the Town Park will need to bring forward a high quality landscape which will enhance the setting of the Town Centre.**

### **The Landscaping of Open Spaces**

- h) Open spaces which have a recreational or utility function will be landscaped to the highest quality and be sympathetic to the distinctive character of Northstowe and local landscape character.**

### **Green Corridors**

- D8.12 A number of Green Corridors will penetrate into and through the urban area, drawing upon the character of Cambridge, and based on drainage infrastructure, existing landscape features and the opportunities to create new landscaped character areas. As well as having a visual amenity, these will offer varied recreational opportunities and will also act as wildlife corridors. For all these functions it is important that they connect to other key internal open spaces within the town and to the larger 'green' areas on the periphery and the surrounding countryside. Water will be a central feature of these green corridors thus enhancing this aspect of the character of the new town.
- D8.13 These Green Corridors will offer landscape and biodiversity value as well as recreational use and are likely to range in width from approximately 15m to achieve cycleways, footpaths, verges, planting and water/drainage features to around 100m of informal open space, recreation and children's play areas. There may be potential for the wider areas of the corridors to accommodate some formal sports provision without detracting from their overall landscape and biodiversity role.
- D8.14 The Green Corridors will be accessed from areas of built development by footpaths and cycleways and connect to each other, to the Green Separation with neighbouring villages and with the surrounding countryside in order to maximise their value in creating a complete network. They will also link to other neighbourhood community facilities, and in particular the primary schools, offering recreational amenity for children and parents between home and school. In addition they can offer sustainable access links to areas of formal sports pitches and facilities.
- D8.15 In order that the Green Corridors can safely fulfil their landscape, recreational and biodiversity functions for both people and wildlife, the number of road

crossings of these will be limited. Any crossings must be well designed and complement the local landscape character.

#### Rampton Drift

- D8.16 Rampton Drift is an area that will effectively lie within Northstowe and will therefore be surrounded by urban uses. It will need a specific treatment which allows it to be sensitively integrated into the town whilst ensuring that an adequate buffer is provided in order to maintain its residential amenity.

#### The Landscaping of the Built Environment

- D8.17 Within the urban area high quality streetscapes should be created through the use of attractive, durable materials which reflect the character of the locality and include sufficient practical space to incorporate green landscape elements, such as avenues and formal ornamental planting primarily in the public areas to create a varied and legible environment.

#### The Town Park

- D8.18 Although primarily a recreational resource, the Town Park will be a crucial element in the design and setting of the Town Centre. The Town Centre will be the focus of the highest densities of development and therefore this open space will be one of the most defining features of Northstowe and it will have an important amenity value for those living or working in or visiting the Town Centre.

#### The Landscaping of Open Spaces

- D8.19 Open spaces such as playing fields, play areas, burial grounds and allotments will need to be designed and landscaped to a high standard and link to and integrate with other landscaped and amenity areas so that they contribute to the overall quality of the setting for the urban fabric of Northstowe.

### **LINKING NORTHSTOWE TO ITS SURROUNDINGS**

#### **POLICY NS/17 Linking Northstowe To Its Surroundings**

##### Access Roads

- a) **New roads linking the town to the existing network will require landscaping which is consistent with local landscape character and which mitigates against any adverse impact on the**



**landscape. This will need more substantial planted areas in blocks beyond the highway boundary and in association with balancing ponds as well as planting trees and hedgerows along the highway boundary.**

#### **Connecting to the Wider Landscape**

- b) The landscaped areas and Green Corridors within Northstowe will be designed to connect to each other and to the green areas on the periphery of the town including the country parks and the wider countryside beyond to create a comprehensive green and landscaped network.**

#### **Access Roads**

- D8.20 It will be important to minimise any adverse landscape and visual impacts of the highway infrastructure and associated drainage areas including balancing lakes by means of appropriate tree and shrub planting and unobtrusive earth shaping. The new roads linking Northstowe to the existing network should be appropriately landscaped consistent with the existing landscape character so that the roads and their landscaping do not appear as alien features.

#### **Connecting to the Wider Landscape**

- D8.21 The value of the landscaped areas within the town will be enhanced by being linked together to form a network with the landscapes created on the periphery of the town, in the country parks and through to the wider countryside. Such landscaping should respect local landscape character.