

Appendix F: Response received from Homes England

A late representation has been received from Homes England. As master developer for Northstowe Phases 2 and 3 it is their belief that a new administrative boundary should cover the entirety of the Northstowe development. They therefore suggest that the southern boundary should be consistent with the clear hedge and fence line that defines the former RAF Oakington boundary and extent of Northstowe development, stating that “as Homes England, we are committed to delivering valuable greenspace between Oakington and Northstowe that can be used by both communities and can be secured via planning condition/s106.” This preference has been mapped and can be referred to as Option A3 and given in Figure 1 of this Appendix.

Officers are of the view that, given the significance of Homes England as the master developer for Northstowe, this late representation should be accepted, and the option included in the range of options for further consultation.

Homes England has requested that the following response, received by Clare Gibbons by e-mail 28 February 2020, be treated as a formal submission and reads as follows:

There is clearly a potential relationship between the Governance Review and our own work on the future stewardship of Northstowe. It does not necessarily follow that any new administrative entity would be best placed to manage public space and communal areas.

As you know, we are seeking to deliver a high-quality town with a range of public assets (water park, green spaces, public realm etc). A key part of the vision for the town is to ensure that these assets are maintained in perpetuity, protecting the quality of the assets, and providing longevity for the community. We are fully aware of the importance of having appropriate management and maintenance arrangements in place, and as such have costed accordingly as part of the scheme.

To ensure an integrated town, we envisage the range of public assets and communal spaces to be managed and maintained collectively within Northstowe, ideally on a town-wide basis. We feel this is integral to the identity of the town, which is distinct from neighbouring communities. Fragmenting this process could lead to disjointed and complex management arrangements, and ultimately compromise user experience.

The masterplans of the forthcoming applications for Northstowe Phase 3 reflect the desire for an integrated, well-connected town. The emerging phase 3B masterplan for example has a range of high-quality pedestrian and cycle links into Phase 1, and connecting through to key infrastructure in the town centre. There are however limited direct connections from Phase 3B southwards towards Longstanton, demonstrating its functional relationship with the wider Northstowe town, as opposed to surrounding communities.

The stewardship toolkit we have commissioned includes an options appraisal of the main stewardship model options, including:

- Adoption – transfer of responsibility to relevant town/parish council;
- Bespoke - establish a bespoke new local organisation either as an Estate Management Company or a local Community Trust to own and/or manage facility or service;
- Outsource – outsource responsibility by utilising an existing specialist third party organisation(s); and
- Hybrid – combination of 2 or more of the above.

This appraisal will inform Homes England decision making on how the preferred body, once selected, should be structured, financed, governed and managed to deliver the optimum stewardship arrangement. We are nearing the final version of the toolkit with our consultants, and although are not at a decision point yet, will of course be happy to share this work with you on completion and consider options as appropriate.

In terms of the Governance review, you kindly showed me a range of options being considered. I note that none of these follow the precise boundaries of the Northstowe allocation, however I understand that various factors can influence preferred administrative boundaries. I am concerned about two specific aspects of what you shared. Firstly, that Northstowe phase 3b was excluded from the future administrative boundary of Northstowe in one option (for the reasons set out above). Secondly, all options appeared to exclude the green separation around Northstowe phase 3a from Northstowe and include it within Oakington Parish. This seems illogical given that the space is being delivered as part of Northstowe, albeit for the benefit of both the new and existing community. As mentioned above, it does not follow that the administrative entity would be responsible for management and maintenance of the space, but if this were so, Oakington Parish would potentially be responsible for maintaining Northstowe's SUDs.

I appreciate that the Review has to follow due procedure, and is only at the options stage, but would ask that you do include options in relation to the Northstowe/Oakington boundary which take account of the above and allow the important green space being delivered at the southern end of Northstowe to sit within the boundary of a new Northstowe administrative area.

Figure 1: Boundary proposed by Homes England, potentially Option A3

