

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1st November 2006

AUTHOR/S:

Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

UPPER CAMBOURNE ALLOTMENTS & VILLAGE GREEN CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Purpose

1. To approve the Upper Cambourne Allotments Development Briefing Document ("the Brief") for Development Control purposes as part of the Cambourne Design Guide

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	By providing consistent and transparent planning guidance
	Village Life	By making provision for village facilities
	Sustainability	The location is close to Upper Cambourne centre. Car parking is shared with the village green. New forest trees and hedge planting is proposed.
	Partnership	Cooperation with the Cambourne Developer to deliver appropriate development. Cambourne Parish Council to administer the facility.

Background

3. The Briefing Plan has been prepared by the Cambourne Developers' master planners, Randall Thorp, and has been discussed and amended in accordance with Planning Officers' advice.
4. The site is flat land to the east of The Vine School and north of Great Common Farm. The gardens of residential properties Great Common Farm Cottages abut the east boundary of the southern portion of the proposed allotments, whereas the northern portion lies adjacent to an established copse parallel with The Broadway road to Bourn. Mature woodland surrounding the large telecommunications mast forms the northern boundary, and the newly created bridleway in structural landscaping runs along the northwest side. An established hedge runs north/south across the site, and links to the southern boundary field ditch and hedge which contains some large trees. Public Footpath 2 runs through the adjacent agricultural field along the south side of the hedge, and is not affected by the proposals.

Consultations

Parish Council – consideration should be given to the following:

- a) The trees around the allotments should be fruit trees.
- b) More secure fencing around the allotments would make it harder to scale.
- c) Water supply should mirror Crow Hill Allotments
- d) Access/turning of delivery vehicles delivering compost etc inside or outside the site.
- e) The access routes around the site should have mesh reinforcement.

- f) There should be a permanent building as in the design guide.
The Council awaits the detailed layout plan before commenting on the internal layout of the site.
5. **County Highways** – It is not clear if the access road shown notionally on the draft Briefing Plan is to be offered for adoption as highway maintainable at the public expense. The LHA would not be keen to adopt, as the road does not give access to any dwellings, but only serves a small informal car park and allotments. If the road were to be offered for adoption it would have to be constructed to an agreed highway standard and would require a turning head sufficient to accommodate any HGV which mistakenly sought access to Bourn Broadway.
 6. **County Rights of Way Officer** – welcomes the inclusion of the new bridleway on the plan. Signs should be placed on the right of way and the access road at the point where they intersect. The signs should draw attention to the users of both the access road and the bridleway to each other's existence. The users of the public bridleway would have priority over the users of the access road. Where the access road crosses the bridleway the surface of the bridleway should be improved and strengthened, and there should be granite sets placed either side to slow traffic. There is concern that the visibility splay where the access road crosses the bridleway is adequate for the use, given that it appears to be planted either side with trees.
 7. **SCDC Ecology Officer** - More provision should be made for biodiversity, giving consideration to the following:-
 - a) 1-2 metre wide wildflower grass margin adjacent to at least one boundary,
 - b) nest boxes in boundary trees or pole-mounted if trees are not big enough, including kestrel or barn owl box to eat the furry pests,
 - c) a communal compost area,
 - d) a small pond to encourage amphibians'
 - e) log piles to encourage invertebrates'
 - f) lacewing and ladybird boxes.
 8. The ESL recommendations should be taken forward ie:
 - a) The rubble piles should be hand searched for great crested newts before removal,
 - b) The hedges are both historical and complete, providing connectivity for animals and the potential for breeding birds and thus should be retained.
 - c) Field hedge H34 could be laid to improve its longevity and to reduce the management required once the allotments are complete.
 9. **SCDC Environmental Operations Manager** –Consideration should be given to provide a hard surface to the car park to facilitate ease of cleansing. Also any height barriers that may prevent cleansing vehicles from entering to either cleanse or service any litterbins.
 10. **SCDC Environmental Health Officer** – The allotments should be managed to prevent any bonfires or burning on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing Waste Management Legislation.
 11. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – The car park will, particularly outside school hours, have relatively low levels of natural surveillance, with only site UC07 having the potential to overlook the car park to any effective degree. Therefore the appropriateness of its location may be open to question.

12. Hedging should be kept low for surveillance – low-growing thorny shrubs help to prevent the creation of hiding places. The number of entrances to the car park should be kept to a minimum, and surface treatment should discourage inconsiderate driving. A single access to the bridleway could eliminate the non-vehicular access.
13. As the car park may well be used in conjunction with school, village green or other community events lighting should be by means of column-mounted white downlighters to BS 5489:1996 Code of Practice for Outdoor Lighting.
14. **English Nature** – no comment.
15. **British Horse Society** – If it is absolutely necessary to route the access road across the bridleway it would be helpful to have good signage to warn drivers to be on the lookout for horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists.
16. **Environment Agency** – no reply.
17. **Anglian Water** – no reply.

Representations

18. One letter of concern from a nearby occupant about the visual impact on the outlook from the garden at Great Common Farm Cottage. Weldmesh fencing would allow intrusion onto the privacy of the rear garden, therefore requesting a boarded fence around the adjacent boundaries of the cottages and farm buildings. Concerned that the “tree and shrub planting” in the Southeast corner would encourage vermin.
19. The right of access to The Broadway on the north side of the cottage should be retained and kept clear of tree and shrub planting.
20. One letter from the managing agent for adjacent land owner, Victoria University of Manchester, pointing out the right of access to Great Common Farm Cottage which must be retained. Also wishing to retain the views from the cottage, thus requesting that the height and proposed structure of the boundary be designed to respect their established rights. Suggest that the opportunity be taken to reroute Footpath 2 out of the farmyard and through the allotments and village green.

Policy

Local Development Framework

21. **Policy SP/4 Cambourne Approved Masterplan and Design Guide** in the Local Development Framework Submission Draft January 2006 (LDF) states “**Development at Cambourne will accord with the approved Masterplan and Design Guide (and approved revisions thereof).**” The supporting text summarises the guiding principles of the Masterplan and Design Guide to conserve village character, community, rural character, ecology and energy”.
22. **Policy SP/3 Cambourne** states “**Development in the remainder of Cambourne will be at residential densities such that the overall net density of Cambourne as a whole is approximately 30 dwellings per hectare. Revision of the**

approved Masterplan and Design Guide will be required to reflect higher densities. A second Section 106 agreement will be required prior to the granting of planning permission to secure additional facilities and developer contributions required as a result of the development. Development will remain within the village framework.”

The allotments site lies outside the village framework defined in the Proposals Map Development Plan Document, to which **Policy DP/7 Development Frameworks** relates. The policy allows for development related to (among other things) horticulture and outdoor recreation which need to be located in the countryside.

23. **Policy NE/6 Biodiversity** aims to achieve the objective of protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
24. **Policy NE/15 Lighting proposals** aims to ensure the minimum lighting compatible with public safety and security, and reduce the impact of light on highway users and residential and rural amenity.
25. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** (Local Plan).
 - EN5** – retention of natural features, new planting appropriate to the character of development, its landscape setting and the biodiversity of the locality.
 - EN12** – retention of features and habitat types of nature conservation value.
 - Cambourne 1** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan
 - Cambourne 2** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Design Guide
 - SE2** – Rural Growth Settlements
 - SE7** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide.
 - TP1** – Promotion of sustainable transport choices.
26. The **Cambourne Master Plan Report 1995** identifies this area for allotments; the **Cambourne Design Guide** describes the aim for the allotments as “planned to operate successfully and easily, generate social activities, be attractive and contribute to the diversity of the settlement.” Car parking at 1 space per 5 plots, robust fencing and visibility from public areas are specified. “A communal building is necessary. As a minimum this will provide storage for communal equipment, a kitchen and toilets. Additional space for a shop is desirable, to provide a facility for ‘gardening’ members as well as plot holders, thereby widening the potential membership. A water standpipe close to each plot is also essential.” The Cambourne **Section 106 agreement** under “Other Parish Provision” requires provision of the land, to be suitably free-draining, properly graded and seeded, and serviced with mains water.

Considerations

27. The Briefing Plan shows the context of the site, close to the School and Village Green and adjacent to an adoptable highway. The Village Green car park is shown having “water bound rolled stone surface for approximately 20 spaces”, although there would be space if needed in the allocated area for approximately twice that amount. Cycle racks are to be “provided by others”; adequate space for this would remain in the irregular shaped areas of the parking land. Although two points of vehicular access are shown, this does not appear to be a necessity for the parking layout. Non-vehicular access to the bridleway is shown at the south side, but might usefully also be provided adjacent to the allotments entrance.

28. The allotments entrance area has adequate space for dedicated car parking, cycle racks, areas for deliveries, composting and storage as well as a site building and toilet facilities. The connection of water, electricity and foul drainage within the site, as well as the provision of the facilities building are stated as being “by others”. However, the Briefing Plan will guide any developer of the site with regard to what should be developed on it, rather than specifying the delivery mechanism. The Notes to the plan state “Temporary toilet facilities to be provided prior to completion of permanent allotment building”; preferable wording would be “on handover and pending completion”.
29. Hedge H34 runs to the east of the area shown for parking and facilities; the Notes state “This hedge to be retained and managed by laying in the approved style for Cambourne. Hand dig to be used to create gaps for allotment access track”. This track loops in a double circuit to serve all parts of the site, so that there would be two points of breach of the hedgerow. Land drains are retained, diverted or created to flow to the surrounding existing ditch system. New planting is proposed along the north side of the Village Green car park, and a small area of recent planting which would be removed to create the allotments entrance will be replaced by planting in the car park area. The allotments are to be fenced with 1.8 metre high green Weldmesh, plus rabbit fencing. On the northeast and east sides where no hedge exists new hedge planting is proposed. New shrub and tree planting to continue the line of the roadside copse by The Broadway will need to make allowance for the vehicular right of access to Great Common Farm Cottages. A further area of new planting adjacent to Great Common Farm barn will secure the allotment boundary from the public footpath and any intrusion where surveillance is minimal.
30. The Briefing Document proposes allotments in accordance with the Cambourne Masterplan, and accords with all of the Design Guide requirements apart from the issue of individual facilities on plots, for which a size limit and standard design are suggested. This can be dealt with at planning application stage. The suggested provisions and measures meet the Council’s adopted policies in the Local Plan and Local Development Framework insofar as a village facility would be provided which would be well located for the purpose, allows good access by a variety of transport, can develop community activity and be operated in a safe and secure way. Plentiful opportunities will be afforded to enhance the environment and biodiversity, and proposals for these measures should be incorporated in the planning application. The issues of facilities delivery and developer provision may be re-addressed in a new planning application for Upper Cambourne to comply with the Local Development Framework.
30. The Briefing Plan provides useful guidance, which accords with other adopted policy, to ensure that the eventual planning application for this area will meet the needs of Cambourne with regard to allotment users and those affected by their use of the land, and proper provision of parking for potential users of the Village Green.

Recommendation

31. **APPROVE** the Upper Cambourne Allotments and Village Green Car Park Briefing Plan as part of the Cambourne Design Guide.

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

Local Development Framework Site Specific and Development Control Policies of the Development Plan Document Submission Draft January 2006

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

Cambourne Master Plan

Cambourne Design Guide

Outline planning permission S/1371/92/O Section 106 agreement.

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