

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 6th December 2006
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

CAMBOURNE PHASE 6 UPPER CAMBOURNE DEVELOPMENT BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Purpose

1. To seek delegated powers to approve or refuse the Cambourne Phase 6 Upper Cambourne Development Briefing Document (“the Brief”) for Development Control purposes as part of the Cambourne Design Guide.

Background

2. The draft Brief has been prepared by the Cambourne Developers’ masterplanners, Randall Thorp, and has been discussed and amended following Planning Officers’ advice. It is intended to guide the continuity of development into Upper Cambourne in accordance with the Outline planning permission for 3,300 dwellings. However, in view of the advanced status of the Local Development Framework (LDF), it also needs to be compatible with progress towards the future growth of Cambourne making efficient use of land. It will be accompanied by a Housing Schedule which gives the potential dwelling numbers for parcels in this Phase, and sets them in alternative scenarios for future housing. These could vary depending on the eventual requirement for affordable housing emerging from the examination of the Development Control Policies of the LDF.
3. The Brief covers the first three private house builder sites, UC 01, 02 and 03, a developer-led affordable housing parcel UC 04, and housing association sites UC 05 and 06. The land comprises 10.05 hectares of land to the north and south of Lancaster Way (the new spine road to The Vine primary school). It is separated from Great Cambourne by the sports fields, the cricket pitch under construction and the land south of Eastgate comprising Jeavons Wood, the eventual golf course and Great Common Wood. The main existing features are the east/west hedgerow adjacent to the “concrete road”, and the hedgerow which leads northwards from it.

Local Development Framework

4. **Core Strategy** – sets the scene within the context of the Community Strategy aims of active, safe and healthy communities, building successful new communities, good access to services, quality homes for all, and a high quality environment. The Core Strategy asserts the Cornerstone of Sustainability and states Strategic Objectives including (g) To ensure development addresses sustainability issues, including climate change mitigation and adaptation issues, maximising recycling and reuse of resources, and reduce waste and pollution, and (i) To ensure that any new development results in appropriate provision for the protection and enhancement of native biodiversity. Opportunities for increased access to the countryside and enjoyment of biodiversity should be viewed as integral requirements of new development.
5. Cambourne is identified in **Policy ST/4 Rural Centres** as a rural centre; since these “comprise the most sustainable villages in South Cambridgeshire there is no strategic constraint on the amount of development of land for housing that can come forward

within the village frameworks, provided that the proposals are in accordance with the policies in the Plan.”

6. The Core Strategy also has appended Targets in Table 2: Core and Local Output Indicators include at pages 45 and 46 the Council’s objectives for Housing Mix. Whilst these will not be adopted before the Inspector’s ruling on the LDF Development Control Policies, they are a good indication of the local needs which must be addressed.
5. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (Local Plan):**
Cambourne 1 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan
Cambourne 2 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Design Guide
6. **SE2** – Rural Growth Settlements – Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
7. **SE7** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide.
8. **HG10** – housing mix to include a range of types and sizes, including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.
9. **TP1** – Promotion of sustainable transport choices, restriction of car parking to the maximum levels in appendix 7/1.
10. **EN5** – retention of natural features, new planting appropriate to the character of development, its landscape setting and the biodiversity of the locality.
11. The approved **Cambourne Master Plan** identifies this area for housing. The **Cambourne Design Guide** describes the character of Upper Cambourne as the quietest and most secluded of the villages being “self-contained at the end of the village road with no further connection except for buses ”The Design Guide emphasis is on the rural character, both in materials used and the structural tree framework and spacious layout.
12. The **Cambourne Highway Design Guide** picks up the above theme, and describes the spine road having a wide corridor up to the Green, the section up to the Green to be very green, with trees planted as a “remnant avenue”, and the paths and buildings set back from the carriageway, generous front gardens with medium/tall enclosures mainly hedges. Features to capitalise on are the entrance to the village and the proposed pond at the south end of the village green.
13. **South Cambridgeshire Design Guide Draft supplementary planning document 2005** – at section 2.4 emphasises sustainability by resource efficiency, inclusiveness, biodiversity, and local facilities. Further advice on resource efficiency is given at section 3.5 Housing Design. Part 3 deals with larger development sites and picks out some of the elements of urban design which help to create distinctive and usable places; particularly helpful in Phase 6 will be the use of “landmarks” and waymarkers” which would emphasise, for example, the arrival of the spine road at the village green, and a few of the more important corner buildings at junctions.

Considerations

14. The number of houses intended for this phase, at 425, is close to the Housing Schedule approved in April 2000 (453), but the land area is reduced, so the density characteristics of this Phase would be higher than the original design intentions of the Masterplan at that time. This is in response to government guidance on urban design and density which has changed since the original Masterplan was approved, and for this Phase, it concentrates the higher number of dwellings around the spine roads which could become public transport routes. The Brief describes the changes to the Master Plan which resulted from the A428 works, and the school location (the updated version was approved by Planning Committee on 7th November). It sets out the context of the existing road and established hedgerows. The opportunity is now taken to create a central greenway alongside the east-west hedge. Sensitive wildlife areas within Great Common Wood are to be protected. The rearrangement of land parcels resulting from those changes has also facilitated the allocation of all affordable housing sites with direct access to a spine road, thus avoiding the “landlocking” of sites awaiting private housing developments.
15. The movement network is set out, to facilitate the most direct spine road link via Back Lane towards the village green and the primary school, and a further spine road serving the northern portion of Phase 6, linking back southwards as greenway to the village green. This would cross the east-west greenway at a point where the existing hedge is already breached or dead. The secondary and non-vehicular route network is set out so that individual parcels can be linked together, and a comprehensive cycle and footpath network links back to the settlement centre. It would be preferable if the link between parcels north and south of the greenway is non-vehicular, to prevent conflict with cars and disruption of the wildlife corridor. Amendment of the Brief is sought.
16. The Brief shows diagrammatically that this Phase would have the highest “density character” within Upper Cambourne, being the area adjacent to the converging spine roads. Within Phase 6 small areas adjacent to the woodland edges and the greenway are indicated as medium density; it is difficult to envisage how the character differentiation is to be expressed over areas containing few house plots. The requirement is, however, illustrated by the identification of important views and vistas from housing to open spaces, such that emphasis placed on these gaps in the built fabric would create a less dense feel to such places.
17. Within the parcels, junctions on the road network have been identified as “nodes”, at which open spaces would create points of interest. The rationale given for these spaces is “to add interest to the street scene, to highlight nodes and to create natural meeting places. In addition to these uses the open spaces may also contain areas suitable for LAPs”. Such an approach must be used with caution to avoid play spaces dominated by traffic and parking. The Brief refers to the requirements of the approved Play Strategy. Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are required for each parcel. There will also be Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) at the cricket field and on the Village Green, and a Space for Imaginative Play (SIP) where existing east/west and north/south hedgerows meet (although it is not clear whether land is set aside for this within this Brief area).
18. The Brief does not make any reference to the policies of the emerging LDF and district-wide design guidance. The importance of energy and water efficiency cannot be overemphasised, and must be included in this guidance for developers, to direct their submission of reserved matters applications at the outset.

Consultations

19.
 - a. Cambourne Parish Council – supports the briefing plan in general, but would ask for the following to be considered:
 - that the plans are checked to ensure accuracy of site features.
 - that in relation to section 4.0 Open Spaces, the extent of hard surfacing be reviewed as softer treatment would be more appropriate to differentiate between highway, parking and community area.
 - b. Highways Agency – it would appear that the application will not have a detrimental effect on the A428 at this location; therefore the Agency would not wish to comment further on the document.
 - c. Cambridgeshire County Council Road Adoption section for Highway authority –
 - page 15: A secondary vehicular route connecting the Northern and Southern Spine Roads through Plots UC01 and UC02 is proposed. This is shown as crossing the East/West Greenway, without showing the resulting gap in the existing hedge. The importance of this hedge and the adjacent non-vehicular route is stressed elsewhere in the document, but both of these will be detrimentally affected by the significant vehicular through-route.
 - Page 17: A number of hard urban spaces are located on the UC01 and UC02 through-route, as detailed above. Page 23 suggests that these should be designed to be pedestrian friendly, and might even be “Homezones”. It is debatable whether such pedestrian areas should be located on a potentially heavily trafficked route.
 - Page 21: It is indicated that the boundaries of Plots UC01 and UC02 border the East/West Greenway. The UC01/UC02 through-route would be constructed by the Plot developers within their title, however one of them would have to construct the section of road crossing the Greenway, which is the property of others. This situation has occurred in Great Cambourne and is currently the subject of legal negotiations, which, it is hoped, will eventually be concluded. It would be better to avoid these legal complications, if possible.
 - d. County Archaeology – reply awaited.
 - e. County Footpaths – Comment on public footpaths outside this Phase. The advice will be used to inform the future masterplanning and briefing processes.
 - f. SCDC Environmental Health – the noise implications of the roads and Bourn Airfield should be taken into account at application stage.
 - g. SCDC Environmental Operations Manager – requests looking at the vehicular access to properties. The Council policy for refuse collection requires that each property have storage facilities and collection points, and that a vehicle should be able to drive within 30 metres of each collection point; this is not achieved in previous Cambourne phases due to terraces without roads and first floor links that are too low for collection vehicles. In addition the County Highways road layout standard is not sufficient for collection vehicles when it comes to turning heads. Please ensure that legs of turning heads are each 11 metres long and not 6 metres as County approve.
 - h. SCDC Ecologist – reply awaited.
 - i. SCDC Landscape and Urban Design – advised during drafting process.
 - j. Environment Agency – no objection in principle, subject to future controls.

- k. Circle Anglia, Anglian Water, Natural England, Police Architectural Liaison Officer, British Horse Society, and The Ramblers' Association replies awaited.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

13. Affordable Homes	Facilitating the development of affordable housing Parcels UC 04/05 and 06
Customer Service	Providing consistent and transparent planning advice
Northstowe and other growth areas	Facilitating the continuing growth of Cambourne
Quality, Accessible Services	Facilitating accessible layouts for service and transport providers.
Village Life	Safeguarding the separate character of Upper Cambourne
Sustainability	The LDF Core Strategy and SCDC Design Guide must be acknowledged and expressed.
Partnership	Cooperation with the Cambourne Developer to deliver appropriate development.

Conclusions/Summary

14. The Brief does not make any reference to the policies of the emerging LDF and district-wide design guidance. It must address and embrace the principles of sustainability in respect of climate change mitigation, maximising recycling and reuse of resources, and reduction of waste and pollution as set out in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy ST/g. The SCDC Design Guide advises working towards EcoHomes “Excellent” rating or equivalent, and ultimately carbon neutral homes. These issues are being worked on for incorporation into an amended Brief. The importance of energy and water efficiency cannot be overemphasised, and must be included in this guidance for developers, to direct their submission of reserved matters applications at the outset.
15. In other respects the Brief is a helpful framework for the movement network, the preservation and creation of green spaces and vistas, and the general density character of this Phase. It is therefore requested that, subject to the inclusion of sustainability advice, and the amendment recommended in paragraph 8 above, delegated powers to approve or refuse the Brief be granted to the Head of Planning Services.

Recommendation

16. Delegated powers be given for approval or refusal of the Cambourne Phase 6 Upper Cambourne Development Briefing Document subject to progress on amendment and the incorporation of advice on the sustainability policies in the Local Plan and the LDF Core Strategy.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Local Development Framework Submission Draft January 2006 Core Strategy
- South Cambridgeshire Design Guide Draft supplementary planning document 2005
- Cambourne Master Plan Report
- Cambourne Design Guide
- Cambourne Highway Design Guide

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