

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning and New Communities Joint Portfolio Holders meeting October 6, 2008
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ARBURY PARK DESIGN GUIDE – MARCH 8, 2007

Purpose

1. This report is a request to approve the Arbury Camp (now “Park”) Design Guide prepared by John Thompson & Partners for Gallagher Estates and Lands Improvement Holdings plc. The Design Guide is a requirement of the Arbury Park section 106 agreement (schedule 4) as required by the outline application planning consent of June 14, 2005. The purpose of the guide is to set out strategic and detailed guidance for the development of all the various phases of Arbury Park.
2. The Joint Portfolio Holders are requested to formally approve the Arbury Park Design Guide as the key tool to assess and determine the design matters for planning applications for the site. While it is recognized that many parcels in Arbury Park are already built and occupied, it is necessary to formally approve the guide in order to both “legitimise” the development that has already taken place but also to guide future development and negotiations between development promoters and the District and County Councils.

Background

3. The Arbury Park Design Guide (the document reads “Camp” but hereafter it will be referred to and formally approved with the term “Park”) underwent a series of drafts as prepared by John Thompson and Partners in consultation with the District Council and relevant stakeholders over many months between 2005 and 2007. The Design Guide sets out a series of “character areas” which in turn help organize and define land parcels, formal open spaces and movement infrastructure. The guide provides detail for individual parcels and is accompanied by a design code which sets out materials, furniture and parking standards, amongst others.
4. The guide has already been used as a delivery tool in the review and approval (or refusal) of development proposals across the site. In decisions for approval or refusal, and more recently a planning inquiry on an appeal on the north edge of the site, the design guide has been cited as a key instrument of decision making by the Council.
5. It should be noted that the District Council has also prepared a specific design guide for the north edge of Arbury Park. The consultants Savills were employed to prepare the guide, and consultation on a draft version of the guide is now taking place. Concerns have been expressed by the relevant land owners about the draft and discussions are on going to deal with their concerns. However, depending on the consideration of a separate report to the joint portfolio holders on October 6, 2008 in respect of the housing trajectory short fall across the district, parts of Arbury Park may ultimately become housing led instead of mixed use led. Depending on decisions related to this report, this could have an impact on the future land uses on

the north end of the site and require revision to the design approach now being promoted (commercial led development) in part of the draft design guide for the north edge of the site. Until the ultimate land uses are resolved on the north edge of the site, the brief will be suspended temporarily, although it is recommended that the north edge brief still be finalized so as to guide what is a difficult area to develop and design given the noise constraints imposed by traffic on the A14.

Implications

5.	Financial	None
	Legal	None
	Staffing	No additional staffing required – the Council’s Joint Urban Design Team and Planning teams are already engaged in using the design guide in the build out of Arbury Park
	Risk Management	None
	Equal Opportunities	None

Consultations

6. Various drafts of the Arbury Park Design Guide were consulted on throughout its preparation in 2005-07. Principle consultees included utility organizations, the County Council and relevant council officers (waste, landscape, drainage, conservation, etc.). In addition a public consultation event was held on July 30, 2008, at the Meadows Community Centre to explain the detail of the design guide. At the same time, consultation was undertaken in respect of the draft north edge design guide separately with individual land owners and promoters. The views expressed in these consultations were considered in the preparation of the March 8th version of the Arbury Park Design Guide document.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

7.	Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
	The Design Guide is a key tool in reviewing and considering development proposals at all stages in the development process of Arbury Park, particularly at the stage of reserved matters when considering individual parcels and satisfying highways-related conditions.
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
	While the guide is not a “service” as such, it supports the goal of delivering well designed individual schemes and streets and public spaces.
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
	This is in essence the goal of the design guide.

Conclusions/Summary

8. Approval of the Arbury Park Design Guide provides support to the objective of the District Council in trying to achieve a high standard of design for Arbury Park. While some half of the site has now been built out and while there has been differing views expressed of whether some individual parcels are of a high design “quality”, the guide

and code contained therein have been an important tool in the development of Arbury Park and will remain such in the future. It is considered that comments from the Arbury Park Task and Finish Group will be helpful in considering how successful the guide has been and in considering the preparation and application of such guides for other development in the District in the future.

Recommendations

9. That the Planning and New Communities Joint Portfolio Holders approve the Arbury Park Design Guide (March 8, 2007) as guidance in decision making and development of Arbury Park and in meeting the requirement of schedule 4 of the section 106 agreement for Arbury Park to prepare such guidance.

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