



Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

Springstead Village (LNCH) - RMA5

14th November 2024

Venue: Springstead Village Project Office, Cherry Hinton.

Quality Panel Members: Robin Nicholson (chair); David Taylor, Kirk Archibald, Oliver Smith, and Luke Engleback.

Local Authority Officers: Sarah Chubb – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Rebecca Ward – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Emily Jacob – Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, Jon Finney – Cambridgeshire County Council (remotely), and Tia Nagi – Cambridgeshire County Council (remotely).

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles for the level of quality to be expected in new development across Cambridgeshire. The [Cambridgeshire Quality Panel](#) provides independent, expert advice to developers and local planning authorities against the four core principles of the Charter: connectivity, character, climate, and community.

Development Overview

Springstead Village (formerly known as Land North of Cherry Hinton) is situated to the east of Cambridge city centre and north of Cherry Hinton. It forms part of the wider Cambridge East proposals for up to 12000 new homes in total, together with the consented Marleigh development and future re-development of Cambridge Airport.

Springstead Village received outline planning consent for up to 1200 homes in 2020 and this panel review is to consider a reserved matters application for up to 292 dwellings, retail units, a community centre and cafe, estate management offices and an allotment site, ahead of an expected submission in February 2025.

The Panel has previously considered the Design Code and other Reserved Matters applications for this development.

Presenting Team

The scheme is promoted by Bellway Latimer with the design team lead by Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE). The presenting team at the review comprised of: -

- Alexis Butterfield- PTE
- Sean Vessey- Liz Lake
- Tom Kendall- Wayward
- Daniel Storer- Bellway Latimer
- Ulrich van Eck- Bellway Latimer
- David Fletcher- Ceres Property

Local Authority's Request

The local authority has engaged in pre-application discussions for this parcel since April 2024 covering reflections from previous parcels of development, high level layout principles, green and blue infrastructure, public art, sustainability and noise, and the community centre and allotments. They have asked the Panel to focus on various matters from these discussions including management of the community centre, infrastructure, public art and servicing of the retail units.

Panel's Consideration of Key Issues

The Panel thanked the developer for their presentation and tour of site and congratulated them for the visible progress from the early sales village since their last visit to current occupation of 43 dwellings. The continuity of developer and design team across the whole development cycle was welcomed too.

There were no questions of clarification.

The Panel's main points of discussion are set out below. They may include comments or observations from the site visit and pre and post review meeting sessions.

Community – *“places where people live out of choice and not necessity, creating healthy communities with a good quality of life”*

It was recognised that the developer had undertaken several consultation events in differing formats to engage with the surrounding and emerging community and this was applauded by the Panel, especially the work with the local schools. The planting of the tree nursery was noted on the site visit as a good community event and a more affordable way of (trans)planting larger trees as the development is built out.

It was suggested that whilst the emerging development seems a good place to live, there seems a strong emphasis on play and younger people. What about other groups of people? Others, including older residents, might want places to sit and dwell, in quieter, contemplative spaces perhaps away from main paths or play areas. Others may wish to experience more active spaces but not necessarily aimed at children. It was suggested a review or audit of the expected demographic be undertaken to ensure the development provides for all. Other new developments in and around Cambridge have not always attracted just new families, but also down-sizers and couples without children, and it was pointed out that society generally is aging. In response, the developer stated they wish to attract a broad community, and these points can be addressed as the development progresses.

What is the role of the village centre, is it to serve the development or the surrounding area too? If it has a wider role, will the proposals meet that need? The commercial units are off the main road (although on the primary road through the site), so will it draw people in from the surrounding area? The developer recognised this question

and highlighted that the cafe will allow for outdoor seating to help activate this space and enhance the visibility of the high street and local centre.

Effective management of the community centre will be crucial for its' long-term success and viability. Examples at Eddington and Trumpington were cited as worth looking at, both of which serve their local communities well.

Allotments are envisaged as being popular community-led facilities but may not always take off. Is there a Plan B for this scenario?

Connectivity – “*places that are well-connected enable easy access for all to jobs and services using sustainable modes*”

The Panel applauded the Landscape Institute Award-winning Design Code and recognised it sets a lot of the requirements for connectivity.

However, it isn't clear where visitors should park. It was understood that there are some designated visitor spaces around the site, but these may not be obvious or near people's destination. Is there a car ownership plan to inform where parking is needed and ensure emerging trends are provided for? For example, rising electric car use means some households may have more than one electric car, so can the chargers cope with this (see below) and will spaces outside homes be able to cope with multiple cables (as well as bins and bikes).

It was noted that an incidental link between the development and Teversham Drift had emerged, so are the links to Cherry Hinton in the right places? It was explained that not all planned links are in place yet, but there is confidence in the proposed network and the role of the ridgeway link between the secondary school and March Lane.

The blue network appears sound, but the edges are weak. This is further addressed below in the Character section.

Climate - “*Places that anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of development and minimise environmental impact*”

The Panel queried why the southern part of the parcel had a lower density of dwellings and not more terraces. Recognising the concern, the developer stated this was

because of a practical issue on being unable to provide sufficient parking, bin and bike storage.

It was suggested the thermal envelope of walls should be better than $0.24 \text{ (W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{K}^{-1})$. Values of $0.2 \text{ (W}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{K}^{-1})$ or better should be the target. It was not clear where heat pumps will be placed and whether consideration of their impact on noise levels and nuisance had been given?

What is the feedback on heat pumps from residents on earlier parcels? The developer stated that whilst there was a learning experience for some residents to feel confident with heat pumps, feedback was generally good, and they didn't envisage any issues on acceptance going forwards. They had chosen the quietest units currently available on the market. Heat pumps are the way forward for Bellway schemes.

The Panel suggested that if more homes met Passivhaus standards then it would reduce/minimise the need for any heat inputs. Octopus energy have plans for a zero energy house. The developer responded that rather than meet an earlier 5% Passivhaus standard this has been amended to provide better standards across the whole development resulting in a net gain.

Are houses future proofed for more PVs and zero carbon ready? Where could future battery storage solutions be accommodated? It was understood that roof structures are being reviewed to ensure they can take fixings and loads for PVs.

There was a discussion around acoustic impacts and mitigation, including anything arising from the current airport operations, and over-heating. It was responded that there were only some minor issues that can be resolved by purge vents and natural ventilation with heat recycling. Heat pumps will be monitored for noise and performance.

The whole life carbon and embodied carbon elements should be assessed, which whilst this is not yet believed to be happening at this development it is something the developer as a business is considering. For example, they are measuring the whole life carbon of the selected bricks.

E.V. charging points are welcome but can they charge more than one car and are there charging points for e-bikes? The developer advised that the charging points are 7Kw chargers but there is no charging points for e-bikes.

BREEAM excellent standard is noted and supported for the housing and the developer is reviewing the impacts of timber frames and cladding.

The Panel challenged that the ventilation figures are not great and raised some concerns about lack of humidity control. They emphasised the need for good maintenance regimes for heat pump fans to ensure efficiency and minimisation of noise.

Character – “Places with distinctive neighbourhoods and where people create ‘pride of place’

The landscape-led approach was welcomed with the delightful crinkle crankle hedge, as well as the public art proposals. It was suggested that the scheme needs more refinement rather than major changes.

Health and healthy places was highlighted as something of importance as place can have significant impacts on health outcomes across all age groups. For example, the blue water network could be improved with surface rills and rain gardens.

Isolation, especially for older people can have significant impacts on mental and physical health and earlier concerns about the development perhaps being too concentrated on children and younger people were reiterated. Opportunities for people to linger, to have chance meetings with neighbours, looping paths or quieter spaces near the public art were all suggested.

The SuDs basins are engineered at the edges but would benefit from being more sculptured. Logs, planted willows and perhaps even an elevated boardwalk could help activate these spaces and create richer and more exciting spaces.

The allotments are great, and it is hoped they will be successful. Alternative options may include an element of community farming. Has the cost of the upkeep and management of the allotments been considered? Could the main shed (it was understood there will not be individual sheds) utilise rainwater harvesting and accommodate PV's on the roof?

In general, build on this approach but do more of it. Think about the open space being for all, water for children's play and remediation materials to ameliorate carbon and filter metals,

plastics and rubber. Safe surfacing of play areas can make for too sanitised an area whereas more natural interactions, with mud for example, can actually be healthier; but it was recognised that health and safety requirements and management of risk are required.

The public art is great but, in the post-review session, it was mentioned that these features should be able to be enjoyed by all; so, could a wheelchair/pushchair user or visually impaired person be able to engage in the same way as others?

The nature of space in the city typology was explored and it was suggested that further thought be given to the use of hedgerows to create a sense of enclosure, as in Cambridgeshire village edges. Black poplar trees might help define the settlement better. Beyond the sales village, a calmer, more distinct village character is needed. Landscape should help define the character more.

The southern part of the parcel has too many small, detached houses which look rather odd with poor form factor.

The northern central park disappoints in that it is surrounded by roads parking bays for visitors separating them from the houses. Efforts should be made to reduce the amount of hard surfacing. Some paths, in the open spaces, are perhaps too wide. Paths in Cambridge open spaces/commons are often less wide, which tends to calm cyclists and cause more interactions between people – maybe that's a good thing to have?

It is important to prohibit the retail units' windows from being blanked out to the detriment of the public realm. It was noted that the rear servicing space for the retail units has been thought about as a place rather than just a back space.

It is a pity the Ridgeway skirts the village centre rather than passing through it.

Summary

Community

- Audit the demographic profile and provide facilities for the elderly and others, not just children.
- Who are the community facilities for? The development or wider area and will it meet those needs.

Connectivity

- Ensure sufficient, well-placed and obvious visitor parking.
- Resolve the incidental path to Teversham Drift.

- Monitor car ownership and usage patterns.
- Manage EV cables and bins and bike interactions at front of dwellings.

Climate

- Consider form of dwellings and narrow houses and avoid small, detached houses
- Fabric performance could be better and consider Octopus offer.
- Housing plots to consider locations and operation of heat pumps.
- Plan for future battery storage and ensure the houses are PV and net zero ready.
- Be mindful of over-heating.
- Calculate whole life cycle of carbon impacts.
- Address ventilation/humidity concerns.

Character

- Keep water above ground and as connected as much as possible.
- SuDs – sculpt the basins more and consider planting (willows) and boardwalks.
- Plan B for allotments.
- Consider hedgerows for enclosure.
- Calm the palate for housing materials and mix.
- Think through management of community centre.

Contact details

For any queries in relation to this report, please contact the panel secretariat.

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RMA5 Site Overview (Applicant image)



