

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Agenda Item No: 8b

Progress Report on Major Developments and Infrastructure

To: **Cambridgeshire Horizons Board**

Date: **23 March 2010**

From: **Director for Development**

Purpose: **To update Board members on progress in delivering major developments and strategic infrastructure projects.**

Recommendation: **The Board is invited to note progress and comment on the matters raised in the report.**

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1. OVERALL PROGRAMME

- 1.1 The housing market across Cambridgeshire continues to show some signs of recovery, but this is neither universal nor uniform.
- 1.2 Horizons and the authorities are continuing to work with the housebuilders, the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), and other key stakeholders to progress development on major growth sites.
- 1.3 The decision letter from the Secretary of State, dismissing Countryside's appeals on the Clay Farm and Glebe Farm, was issued on 26 February, see paragraph 2.1.2 below.
- 1.4 **Housing Growth Fund (HGF) Capital Projects:** See Agenda Item 10.
- 1.5 **HCA Kickstart**
 - 1.5.1 The HCA shortlist of housing projects provisionally accepted into Round 2 of Kickstart includes five Cambridgeshire schemes (of 15 applications). None of the five has yet succeeded through 'due diligence' and they are not yet accepted for Kickstart funding.
 - 1.5.2 Glebe Farm, Cambridge, failed to make the shortlist but remains on the reserve list and could still be brought forward. A further announcement is to be made in "the late spring".
- 1.6 **Major Infrastructure Projects:**
 - 1.6.1 The County Council Cabinet considered a report on 16 March 2010 regarding the **Cambridgeshire Busway**. Cambridgeshire County Council and the contractor BAM Nutall Ltd are engaging in talks aimed at ensuring the northern section of the busway opens as soon as possible.
 - 1.6.2 Work has commenced by the developers on the final section of the **Addenbrooke's Access Road** (the Boulevard through the Cambridge Biomedical Centre) and completion is anticipated in June 2010.
 - 1.6.3 Following the Government's scrapping of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), the County Council is commencing the exploration of other sources of funding for transport, notably for the proposed **Chesterton Station**. It is considered unlikely that the emerging Urban Challenge Fund, which effectively replaces TIF, will be unable to yield sufficient to fund the station in its entirety, but such funding may form part of a collection of sources that make up the total, potentially also including Regional Funding Allocation, and it could be delivered by 2015/16, subject to funds. The risk of failure to secure the funding necessary for transport schemes related to growth is of increasing concern.
- 1.7 **Risk Management:**

1.7.1 Issues of particular significance include :

- Management of traffic demand arising from growth and securing necessary funding for mitigation works: risk heightened following Government's scrapping of the Transport Innovation Fund. Alternative transport strategy to be determined.
- Delays to securing early adequate infrastructure delays progress on growth sites, e.g., Cambridgeshire Busway.
- Services pressures arising out of population growth.
- Securing and using funding effectively.
- Capacity within the authorities to manage growth effectively.

1.7.2 Issues where good progress has been made include:

- Improved demographics for planning new communities.
- Work on the on the Community Infrastructure Levy/Local Investment Plan.
- Progress on the spatial strategy.
- Roll out of Quality Charter.

1.8 Resources:

1.8.1 In response to the funding pressures on authorities and uncertainty about the levels of future revenue growth funds, officers have started to look at how to make the best use of future resources deployed on growth, and to explore the potential for more effective and efficient joint working. Options to be considered include further use of formal or informal joint team arrangements and the internal consultancy model developed with the Joint Urban Design Team. The next stage will look at potential principles and objectives for enhanced joint working, and work areas for consideration.

1.8.2 It is felt that there is greater scope for more integrated working within the Cambridge City and SCDC area, given the formal joint planning arrangements and other factors. However, any proposals emerging from this work would be shared with the Growth Partnership Board and the Horizons Board as wider application may also be possible in some areas. The aim is to deliver the same (or more) with less.

2. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS WITH MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

2.1 Cambridge Southern Fringe

2.1.1 It is anticipated that the Design Code for **Trumpington Meadows** will be presented to the Joint Development Control Committee

(JDCC) in May 2010. Reserved matters applications for the first phase of 350 housing and site wide infrastructure are being progressed concurrently. Start of construction of infrastructure is anticipated in late summer/early autumn 2010.

2.1.2 The outcome of the appeals on the **Clay Farm/Glebe Farm** sites (total around 2,550 homes) was announced on 26 February 2010. The Secretary of State upheld the authorities' requirements in respect of 40% affordable housing and community infrastructure contributions (but not revenue contributions for the library), and supported the authorities' view that current land value should be used in viability negotiations (rather than historic land values). This decision is seen as of national importance, establishing for sites like this, that residual land valuation is the appropriate basis, rather than price paid, in the assessment and means that developers will have to look to writing down the value of land in appropriate circumstances. Negotiations have now re-opened with Countryside Properties regarding the duplicate applications on the potential use of Flexible Fund to support the development at 40% affordable homes overall. We are now hoping to move quickly to concluding an equity investment to try to move the development forward as soon as possible.

2.1.3 Countryside has also lodged a separate full application for **Glebe Farm** to meet the eligibility requirements for funding in Kickstart Round 2, although it currently remains a reserve scheme. Horizons' Chief Executive has written to the regional director of the HCA urging that Glebe Farm is prioritised: a further announcement from the HCA is anticipated in the late spring. The planning application is due to be considered by the JDCC on April 21st.

2.1.4 Negotiations are continuing on finalising the **Bell School** Section 106 agreement and it is anticipated that the Section 106 agreement will be completed by early April 2010.

2.2 North West Cambridge

2.2.1 Following release of the Clay Farm appeal decision, it is anticipated that the planning application for the **NIAB** site (1,593 homes) will be considered by the JDCC in April. The frontage site (187 homes) has commenced with support from the HCA's National Affordable Housing Programme.

2.2.2 The developer of the **NIAB Extra** site has begun initial work on an application for the site with the submission of a formal request in February for a screening opinion in respect of the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment. The developer is meeting with South Cambridgeshire District Council officers this month to discuss how to take the site forward.

2.2.3 The University is working with local authority officers on the Masterplan for the **Cambridge North-West University** site,

particularly addressing key issues such as demographics (including the crucial role of the lettings policy for the proposed key worker housing), transport and access, noise, air quality, and retail proposals. A Member briefing was held on 28 January. The draft master plan will be taken through the University's internal processes up to July 2010, working up to anticipated submission of outline planning applications to Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils later in the year.

2.2.4 Work on the **retail study** in the North West Cambridge area is nearing completion and the transport implications and other planning issues are now being assessed. The findings will be considered through the authorities' democratic processes in the summer.

2.3 Cambridge East

2.3.1 Cambridge East remains subject to discussions between Marshall and key partners, including Government officials. The focus of the work remains around identifying a suitable local relocation site, and establishing a clear plan for taking the project forward.

2.4 Cambridge Northern Fringe (East)

2.4.1 Initial work has started on the production of a new Joint Area Action Plan. It is anticipated that the AAP could be ready for submission to the Secretary of State by mid 2011 and to be adopted by July 2012.

2.5 Orchard Park

2.5.1 Development continues at Orchard Park with 555 of the planned 900 homes on the development now occupied. Planning permission was granted for the commercial centre in November 2009 and an application for a second hotel has just been received by SCDC.

2.5.2 Delivery of the local centre is largely dependent on the results of the North West Quadrant Retail study (currently underway). Completion of POS1, consisting of the sports pitches, tennis court, changing rooms and skate park, is expected in March 2010.

2.5.3 Proposals for a self-provided housing scheme on the City Council land at site K1 are being taken forward following the study carried out by Stephen Hill of Futureplanners. A small project team is developing the proposals, gaining member views and design/policy guidance ahead of some soft marketing of the idea over the summer.

2.5.4 A Supplementary Planning Document is to be prepared by the Joint Urban Design Team and SCDC officers, in consultation with stakeholders and the local community. The SPD will set out guiding design principles for the remaining undeveloped sites, particularly

along the northern edge and the south-west corner site. A first draft is expected by May to enable consultation in early summer with a view to adoption in the autumn. The guidance and process to be followed will build on comments made by the Orchard Park Task and Finish Group.

2.5.5 Orchard Park continues to be used as a reference site for other authorities, with visits from Rackheath (near Norwich) on 1 February, “Prague 13” on 2nd February, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods Network on 15 March. The Partners Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis (next meeting 10 May) and remains an important element of the strategic delivery of the development.

2.6 Northstowe

2.6.1 The housing minister announced on 9 March that Government has awarded £1.5m to Northstowe to help it to achieve eco town standards, and to progress some demonstrator projects. Northstowe was highlighted as an early prototype in the Eco-towns Prospectus, and the plans have always envisaged the town reaching very high standards of quality and environmental sustainability. The new funding will help to achieve full eco-town standards in the way that Northstowe development is carried out and accelerate delivery of the local plan. Work will build on the existing evidence base and support analysis of how to develop the town to PPS standards while ensuring the scheme remains financially viable. An innovative demonstrator project will provide a Northstowe information centre within a station building for the Busway and Park and Ride, which will demonstrate a wide range of sustainability measures, together with a retrofitting programme at Rampton Drift to improve the environmental performance of existing homes within the footprint of the new town.

2.6.2 Discussions continue between the HCA and Gallagher Estates on the best options for moving Northstowe forward.

2.6.3 The Northstowe Renewable Energy Project has evolved and is now part of a wider regional-scale scheme, the Low Carbon Development Initiative that will enable knowledge to be shared among growth sites in the county and the wider region.

2.6.4 A legal agreement is being drawn up for the solution proposed developers to upgrade **Uttons Drove**. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by March 2011. Lord Smith, Environment Agency Chairman, visited Cambridge in February and attended a briefing with Cambridgeshire Horizons on the growth agenda more broadly, which included a description of the Uttons Drove project, which is potentially something the Agency would want to use as a template for other parts of the country.

2.7 Cambourne

- 2.7.1 Development at Cambourne continues and 2,883 homes have now been completed. The police station is under construction and due to open in the summer of 2010. Planning applications for the fire station and a garage are being considered, and a planning application for the sports centre is due to be submitted in March 2010.
- 2.7.2 The current outline application for 950 extra houses is the subject of viability discussions at present, along with refinement of the S106 obligations. Amendments to the application are expected shortly.
- 2.7.3 Colleagues associated with the Rackheath (q.v.) Eco-town proposals visited Cambourne on 1st February when SCDC hosted a GO-East seminar as to what Rackheath can learn from Cambourne and Orchard Park, and shared experiences and ideas.
- 2.7.4 The County Council application to the Department for Children, Schools & Families for capital funding for a secondary school at Cambourne has not yet been determined. The DCSF is currently reviewing all of its existing capital funding streams and no decision will be made on the application until this is complete.

2.8 Market Towns - East Cambridgeshire

- 2.8.1 The **Ely Masterplan** was adopted as Council Policy in February 2010. The plan sets out key proposals to enable the City to accommodate growth sustainably over the next 20-25 years. 3,000 homes are proposed in the Plan.
- 2.8.2 It is clear that a major package of infrastructure measures is required to ensure that the impacts of this growth are mitigated successfully, in particular major improvements to the A142 around the railway station. The next phases of work are underway to consider detailed development options for key opportunity sites and to investigate the feasibility of an alternative alignment for the Southern Link Road.
- 2.8.3 The first phase of works for the Ely Country Park project is planned to commence on site in spring 2010 with enhanced play areas, landscaping wildlife habitats and access.
- 2.8.4 Work is also progressing on a Masterplan for growth in **Soham**. The draft Masterplan explores the potential for substantial growth of the town in the next 30 years, including the possible reopening of the Soham railway station, and this will inform the RSS review.

2.9 Market Towns - Fenland

- 2.9.1 **Wisbech:** The Nene Waterfront scheme failed to attract Round 2 Kickstart funding and Fenland is now exploring alternative sources with the HCA. Design and tendering of the site infrastructure

(funded by HGF capital, see Agenda Item 10) is being progressed and completion is anticipated in April 2011.

2.9.2 March: Fenland District Council is continuing work on a housing and regeneration project that would deliver up to 400 homes and other associated works. This project was, however, considered by Fenland DC to be a lower priority than the Wisbech project, in part due to the withdrawal of LSC funding for the new College of West Anglia (COWA) campus relocation, and it is therefore in the HGF capital programme (see Agenda Item 10, para. 4.1) as a reserve project to be brought forward if funding is available.

2.10 Market Towns - Huntingdonshire

2.10.1 St Neots: The Love's Farm development is of strategic importance to the district. In addition to about 1,400 new homes, it will also include a new school, sports facilities, and a community building. BPHA has almost completed 275 of the 477 affordable homes that will be built here and the next phase will soon be under way. They will offer a range of affordable tenures including rent and shared ownership and a scheme that offers applicants a chance to rent a home now with the option to buy it later. Aldwyck Housing Association has also secured funding for 14 homes, which are now complete. The number of affordable homes to be provided on Love's Farm will exceed the number initially sought in the planning agreement, supported by £19.8 million of grant funding secured from the Homes & Communities Agency

2.10.2 The remainder of the site to the east of the railway at St Neots is shown in the Adopted Core Strategy as a strategic direction of growth for circa 4,000 homes and associated infrastructure. Discussions have now commenced with the landowners/developers with a view to drawing up a joint masterplan. A Delivery Board has been established and its first meeting being arranged under the chairmanship of Cambridgeshire Horizons. It remains an aspiration for this area to be developed in the style of an "eco quarter". Consultants have completed a report on the potential for renewable energy for the "eco quarter" and the town as a whole, including using waste heat from the adjacent Barford Power Station. This report is informing the Quality Charter stream of work under the title "Transforming Utilities", specifically focused on delivery.

2.10.3 Huntingdon: The regeneration of Huntingdon Town Centre including an extension to the west is reaching a critical stage. The detailed design of the 'link road' is progressing and the Compulsory Purchase Order documentation being prepared, and discussions with landowners are continuing. The District and County Councils have commissioned further studies and design work to facilitate the redevelopment of the Chequers Court Area to provide a critical mass of retail floorspace and additional parking. Development Agreements to deliver the schemes are at Heads of Terms stage.

2.10.4 The development of **Mayfield Road** comprising 29 affordable homes built to code level 5 is nearing completion.

3. QUALITY OF LIFE AND STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 Quality Charter for Growth

3.1.1 The work programme for the Quality Charter for Growth will be reviewed and rolled forward by the Quality Charter Steering Group (comprising Members and officers of the authorities, and a representative from Housing Associations). Meanwhile, work continues on the development of a learning and development prospectus, running through to the end of 2010 and working with all authorities in Cambridgeshire on embedding the Charter principles in planning processes, e.g., local development plans, transport planning and community plans. We have completed the process of recruiting for the Quality Panel that will provide independent advice to the authorities on major developments across the County. An oral update is to be given at Agenda Item 12(d).

3.1.2 A number of training activities have been held or are planned, including Sustainable Construction, Planning for non-Planners, and Transforming Utilities, the last of which aims to equip the authorities with an understanding of the elements required to procure renewable energy for new developments, including legal, financial, and logistical considerations. Proposals at St Neots and the Cambridge City and Anglian Ruskin University Combined Heat and Power scheme for Parkside Pool will be used as case studies.

3.2 Strategic Infrastructure

3.2.1 Cambridge Gateway (CB1) Project: The original developer of the CB1 scheme, Ashwell, has gone into administration. The CB1 development site is now being taken forward by Brookgate Development and the City Council granted planning permission for the first phase (1,000 student flats) on 10 March 2010. Work on the site is now expected to commence later this year.

3.2.2 The County Council is preparing a planning application for the transport interchange to enable it to be constructed by mid-2011, using the £1.5m of HGF capital allocated. The interchange scheme has interdependencies with the link road between Hills Road and the station, which is reliant on funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund monies that were secured in 2008, and which are time-limited (the funds must be used by end March 2011)

3.2.3 Proposals for **The Hive** were launched on 11 March 2010. A project board comprising representatives of Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge Regional College, Horizons and Citylife has been established. A planning application is anticipated early in 2010, with implementation by summer 2011.

- 3.2.4** Public consultation on the **Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy** review ended on 7 March 2010 and the comments and advice received are being assessed and acted upon. A second draft of the Strategy will be produced by June 2010. This will then be circulated to partner organisations (including through Member processes) for comment in the year and to inform a third draft, to be finalised later.
- 3.2.5** See also Agenda Item 10 for progress on other GI projects funded by HGF Capital.