

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Agenda Item No: 5a

Primary School Provision in Cambridge Southern Fringe

To: **Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee**

Date: **10 November 2010**

From: **Education Capital Strategy Manager**

Purpose: **To provide members with information about the proposed education provision and processes for decision making on this within the Cambridge Southern Fringe**

Recommendation: **The Committee is invited to note and comment on the pattern of school provision to serve the Cambridge Southern Fringe and the design process for new schools.**

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1 Background

- 1.1 Major progress has been made on the Southern Fringe sites with the issue of planning approvals for up to 4,000 more new homes on Clay Farm (outline approval for up to 2,300 homes), Glebe Farm (full permission for 350) and Trumpington Meadows (outline approval for up to 1,200) with the expectation that construction of homes will commence in early 2011.
- 1.2 Now that we have entered the delivery phase for the Cambridge Southern Fringe (CSF) sites (with the exception of Bell School), greater focus is being placed upon how and when homes and infrastructure will be delivered. The earliest public infrastructure for each site is likely to be the provision of new primary schools.
- 1.3 The County Council, as the Education Authority, has a statutory responsibility to ensure that sufficient school places are available for all children and young people, and continually undertakes work matching the supply and demand for school places by ensuring provision is made in line with the key policy principles agreed by the Council's Cabinet in September 2007. These key principles include:
- Primary schools being sited so that the maximum journey distance is less than the 2 mile statutory walking distance; and
 - New primary schools should be planned to open to ensure that places are available to serve the first children to live in new communities.

2 Planned Position

- 2.1 Throughout pre-application discussions and planning of the three major CSF developments, the County Council has considered different approaches for securing sufficient primary school provision. The proposed final pattern of provision was:
- A 1.5 Form of Entry (FE) school at Trumpington Meadows;
 - A 1 FE extension of the existing Fawcett Primary School to meet the initial demand from the Glebe Farm and Clay Farm development;
 - A 2FE primary school, potentially built in two phases, on Clay Farm to serve the Clay Farm and Glebe Farm developments.

In addition, it was proposed that a new secondary school, serving the new developments and existing Trumpington community, will be built as part of the Clay Farm development.

- 2.2 School provision was planned on the basis of each development site coming forward at different times, to ensure that each development was self sufficient in relation to the provision of primary schools places. It was proposed that each site would have school places provided from the outset, and be expanded to meet the demand arising from development.
- 2.3 The County Council's position throughout S106 negotiations with developers reflected this position, to minimise the risk to which the Council's capital programme was exposed through the need to forward fund schemes. However, the Council always considered that the order in which primary schools would be delivered to be

indicative, and that the Council would retain the flexibility to change this to reflect changes in the pattern of development, pace of housing completions and community need

- 2.4 In line with the anticipated development timescales, the County Council, in 2008, undertook competition processes to determine the promoters for the new secondary school and Trumpington Meadows Primary School, the first of the two new primary schools proposed. The promoters of the schools were determined as the City of Cambridge Education Foundation, with the school to be federated with the Parkside Federation, and the Fawcett Federation Group (FFG), with the school to be federated with Fawcett Primary respectively.
- 2.5 As a consequence of these competitions and the proposed pattern of education provision across the CSF, the only substantial, statutory decisions remaining relates to the processes for determining the promoter and opening dates for the new Clay Farm primary school. Based on the currently shared development trajectories, it is anticipated that the new primary school on the Clay Farm development will not be needed until around 2016. However, it is unclear what statutory requirements for establishing this school will exist; as a Government review of the competition process is anticipated during 2011. Given the Government's focus on localism, it is not anticipated that the emphasis on public consultation as part of the competition process will be removed.

3 Changing patterns of provision

- 3.1 There has been a significant time delay between the start of pre-application discussions and permissions being issued. During this period a number of key assumptions made in planning school provision have changed significantly, including birth rates and prevailing economic conditions.
- 3.2 The demographic profile across the City has changed, and as a consequence, surplus primary school places previously assumed to be available for the CSF developments no longer exist. The County Council, therefore, is faced with a need to secure additional capacity to meet the need arising from the new developments. The Council, therefore, is investing additional capital resources to expand the Trumpington Meadows Primary School from 360 (1.5FE) to 420 places (2FE). This additional capacity will ensure that sufficient provision can be secured to meet the medium and long-term demand arising from the three developments.
- 3.3 As the CSF developments are now on similar timescales, the Council considered it appropriate to review the previous approach which assumed different timescales for delivery. This was to ensure that the provision of places is affordable through the Council's capital programme, makes the effective use of resources and realises opportunities to deliver high quality educational outcomes for early residents.
- 3.4 To achieve these objectives, following discussions with Councillors and the Fawcett Governing Body, it has been agreed that the planned extension of Fawcett from 1FE to 2FE should be delayed and instead Trumpington Meadows should be built in a single phase. This change provides the same number of places in the same timescale and provides a better solution. A number of benefits arise, including:

- Admissions and school capacity can be effectively managed across the federation, minimising the provision of surplus places;
- Reduced pressure on the federation's management team;
- Supports management, organisation and utilisation of resources across the federation;
- Reduced disruption to educational outcomes arising from phased building works across two sites;
- Minimised disruption to additional services provided from the two school sites; and
- Better locates school places in relation to early phases on development across the CSF.

4 General design process

4.1 The design of new schools, involves a series of detailed stages, through which the design team gather information and requirements before arriving at a final design that forms the basis of a planning application. In broad terms, these different processes can be broken down as follows:

1. **Initial design options / feasibility**
2. **Detailed brief development**
3. **Detailed brief refinement**

These three broad phases each involves different processes which provide opportunities for input from key stakeholders and users.

4.2 Throughout the design process, work is co-ordinated by the Design Team, with support and input from a Core User Team. Although final decisions are signed off by the County Council, and the school promoter as the key user, input is sought from other key users throughout the process, as outlined below.

4.3 *Initial design options / feasibility*

4.3.1 This phase runs from the development of the initial strategic brief to the confirmation of a preferred design option, which is then costed against the available budget. During this phase, several key pieces of work are undertaken:

- ***Site investigation, developing an understanding of site constraints and opportunities, includes use of:***
 - Developers' Design and Access Statements; and
 - Design Guidance or Design Codes.
- ***Understanding user and community expectations and key user vision, developed from sources including:***
 - Key planning documents;
 - Consultation with key stakeholders, including community workshops, Design Quality Indicator (DQI) Workshops and discussions around key planning strategies;
 - Understanding the promoters educational vision; and
 - Understanding the vision of key users and service providers.

- **Development of design options** – key to which is understanding how site and building organisation and adjacencies support the key visions whilst taking advantage of site opportunities and constraints.
- **Design review and critique, in two parts:**
 - Member Design Critique and overview – undertaken by the County Councillor Executive Members for Learning and Resources and Performance. This focuses on deliverability of the scheme in context of programme and budget as determined by the S106 agreement and the County Council’s capital programme. This provides a clear line of accountability for programme and budget management relating to the delivery of capital projects
 - Design Peer Review –by the Cambridgeshire Horizons Design Quality Panel. This addresses the appropriateness and quality of design solutions in the context of the site and the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter.

4.4 **Detailed brief development**

4.4.1 In this phase the preferred design solution is developed into detailed design proposals for presentation as part of pre-application public consultation. Key elements of work within this phase are:

- **Stakeholder consultation** – includes consultation with key stakeholders and statutory consultees. Consultation is over several stages, using a variety of approaches including targeted workshops, DQI workshops and themed meetings, allowing stakeholders to shape the design work.
- **Development of supporting documents and strategies, including:**
 - Public Art Strategy;
 - School Travel Plan; and
 - Planning Statements.

Consultation with stakeholders, experts and officers will take place to support this work.
- **Pre-application public consultation, including:**
 - Public meetings and consultation workshops;
 - Formal pre-application consultation with statutory consultees and key stakeholders – including local authorities;
 - Design Peer Review – by the Design Quality Panel; and
 - Member Design Critique and overview – by County Council Executive Members

4.5 **Detailed brief refinement**

4.5.1 Following pre-application public consultation, the Design Team refine design proposals to address comments, issues and suggestions raised. The final planning application includes a summary of these comments, and will demonstrate how these have been incorporated into the final design proposals. Where it has not been possible to incorporate comments, an explanation as to why will be provided.

4.6 **Summary of Community / Member involvement**

4.6.1 The level of involvement of Members and the community will vary from scheme to scheme, depending on the specifics of each proposal. However, the design process, as set out above, demonstrates that there is a significant amount of engagement and consultation throughout the design process, to draw out the expectations and views of members and the community. For example:

- Workshops to establish aspirations and the community vision for the site;
- Consultation with key stakeholders throughout all three phases of design development work; and specifically;
- Formal pre-application public consultation workshops, which allow the opportunity for comments on the detailed design proposals to be sought;
- Presentations to the Cambridgeshire Horizons Design Quality Panel; and
- Oversight and review from the County Council's Design Critique process.

5 **Current position**

5.1 At this stage, the only project for a school within the major developments sites around Cambridge is the design development work for the Trumpington Meadows Primary School. A significant amount of time and effort has been devoted to developing this scheme through the design option/feasibility stage of the design process, with the Design Team currently beginning work on the detailed design development of the preferred option.

5.2 The design project is co-ordinated through a Core User Team, which consists of:

- County Council Education Capital Officers;
- A City Council Officer (nominated by both the City and South Cambridgeshire District Council) to provide guidance and oversight for community facilities;
- Representation of the FFG through the Chair of the Trumpington Meadows Temporary Governing Body (TGB); and
- The Headteacher from Fawcett Primary School, to provide education expertise, oversight and guidance.

5.3 The Core User Team provides direction and guidance to the design team, but defers the TGB for approval and endorsement of design proposals. The TGB includes representatives of the FFG, education experts as well as significant community representation, in the form of local parent governors, and representatives from both the Trumpington Residents Association (TRA) and Haslingfield Parish Council (HPC).

5.4 In developing the preferred design option, a significant amount of consultation with stakeholders has taken place. This includes:

- Consultation undertaken by the FFG with the Trumpington community in developing their competition bid proposals;
- A community workshop to explore key vision and aspirations for the school and community facilities, attended by community representatives, Council officers from the three authorities and Councillors;
- Formal DQI workshops to set Design Quality Aspirations for the school with stakeholders from across the three authorities and community groups;

- Early consultation and engagement with statutory consultees, planning officers and urban designers and the master developer for the site;
- Informal discussions of design proposals undertaken by community representatives of the TGB, with both the TRA and HPC; and
- Extensive design development work undertaken by the design team with a range of stakeholders.

5.5 The preferred design option, endorsed by the TGB has been presented to the Cambridgeshire Horizons Design Quality Panel. Although formal feedback has yet to be received, on the basis of comments and feedback shared during the discussions and the meeting, officers and the design team consider that, given the early stage of this consultation and the limited detail on building form available, the proposal were reasonably well received. The Panel through discussions and feedback identified a number of areas on which they considered the design team should focus during the next stage of design development; they also challenged the design team to question the perceived site constraints to further enhance and explore their development of the wider school site. This feedback, and that contained in the formal comments when received will form a key part of the development work for the design team, and with this the focus for further detailed consultation during the design development process.

5.6 It is currently anticipated that the design development work will progress to enable pre-application public consultation to take place at the end of 2010 or early in 2011. This in addition to the early stakeholder engagement throughout the design development phase will provide the opportunity for wider comments upon the scheme to be sought. Following this consultation process, as noted above, the design proposals will be refined and a detailed planning application submitted. It is hoped that this should be completed to enable the planning application to be submitted early in 2011.

5.7 This consultation process is managed by the Design Team throughout design development. This ensures that input is sought at the most appropriate time to effectively inform design development. It is neither possible, nor appropriate, to engage with all interested parties constantly throughout the process. Without the targeting of consultation by the Design Team, it would be unlikely that a coherent design proposal would emerge, within the budget available or within a timescale to allow effective delivery of school places to meet the needs of new communities. This is especially true for the first schools in each development area, where the timescale for delivery for the early residents of new development sites already represents a significant challenge; both in relation to providing schools for the early residents of the new communities in line with the Council's agreed policy, but also, more importantly for the County Council being able to meet its statutory requirements to provide school places for all children. This is especially true in light of recent pressures on primary school places across the city, which means that there are few surplus places within existing schools.

6 Planning for future sites

6.1 The County Council has established long-term design and contractor partnerships. These partnerships provide the environment for continuous improvement and review of lessons learnt during the delivery of all capital projects. Projects are reviewed at

the end of each phase of the design and delivery process. This is followed by a review of lessons learnt post-handover, which is shared with all partners. Where appropriate, specific formal instructions for Do's and Don'ts for future projects are issued to all partners as Technical Advice Notes. As with all phases of the design and delivery process, this is overseen and reported to County Councillors through the Design Critique process.