



# Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

North Ely – Phase 3 Reserved Matters

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019

East Cambridgeshire District Council HQ

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.

**Scheme Description**

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**Architect/Designer:**

**Applicant:** Taylor Wimpey

**Planning status:** Pre-application for Reserved Matters

**Issue date:** 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019

### **Declarations of Interest**

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Panel members are required to declare any interests they may have in relation to the development before the Panel and any such interests are recorded here.

None.

### **Previous Panel Reviews**

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24 <sup>th</sup> March 2011	Ely Framework Plan
4 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	North Ely SPD
25 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	North Ely Design Code, Orchard Grand Character Area
19 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	Ely North Design Code first Phase

### **Development Overview**

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An application for pre-application advice was submitted to ECDC in July 2019. The proposal is for 255 homes, of which 26 are affordable, within Phase 3 of the Orchards Green Masterplan at Ely North. A variety of homes are proposed - including 2-5 bedroom detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. Access to this phase is taken from a new roundabout along the A10 to the north, and a further connection to the south along Cam Drive. Green space incorporates communal gardens, informal parkland and linear green space, and formal junior and toddler play spaces.

Ely North is proposed to deliver up to 3,000 homes, allocated under Policy ELY1 of the Local Plan 2015. Other key planning documents that have informed proposals include the North Ely Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), February 2014. An outline planning application for Orchard Green, comprising of 1,200 homes was granted permission in June 2016 (Reference: 13/00785/ESO).

## **Cambridgeshire Quality Panel views**

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The Panel had been issued with background reference information from the applicant and local planning authority ahead of the review session. This information is listed at Appendix A.

The advice and recommendations of the Panel reflect the issues associated with each of the four 'C's' in the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter and the main comments below include both those raised in the open session of the meeting and those from the closed session discussions.

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

The Panel discussed the phasing of Ely North, the delivery of the community hub and small amount of retail space. It was noted marketing of the nearby retail space is planned soon.

The Panel encouraged the developer to continue working up detail of the landscape strategy. The linear parks present opportunities for community meeting points, and improved links between them would maximise their amenity value.

The Panel had concerns about some of the parking courts and poor visibility. Consideration should be given to maximise natural surveillance.

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

The Panel observed the importance of connections to the existing centre of Ely for retail and services. Ely North was not based on a polycentric model and limited provision on site is proposed. Therefore the links from the site to the centre of Ely and beyond to the railway station are fundamental to its success. The Panel would welcome illustrations of the wider walking and cycling links.

It was noted Cam Drive is a busy road. Three crossings of Cam Drive are proposed, one of which has been delivered. The Panel felt the crossings of Cam Drive were of high importance and the design needed to be of sufficient quality so not to deter residents from cycling and walking to nearby schools or the centre of Ely.

The Panel asked if an east to west route for pedestrians and cyclists through to the linear green space (to the west of the site) can be provided.

The Panel suggested bringing cycle storage to the front of houses, e.g. as at the Berkeley Homes, Kidbrooke development. Cycling is important to the development and this would reflect that and actively promote sustainable travel.

The Panel welcomed the mixed approach to parking with on plot, on street and parking courts being used. The Panel also welcomed garages sized to easily accommodate a car. However the Panel were concerned parking provision was above standard. Future proofing a development for less cars, considering alternative uses of spaces is encouraged.

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

It was noted chimneys are a key character of Ely houses and as such are proposed as part of the architecture for the development. The Panel enquired if they will serve a purpose if not as a flue then ventilation.

The Panel asked that consideration be given to appropriate street furniture and lighting to not detract from views of the cathedral.

The Panel would encourage the developer to continue working up detail of the landscape to help define character areas. The linear parks present opportunities for thematic and ecological links as well as community meeting points.

Parking courts are large areas of hard surface. Thought should be given to introducing SUDs as well as incorporating planting to provide shade and improve the quality of the space. The parking squares - near the centre of the site, and at the boundary to Cam Grove, need further thought, particularly to planting to deliver quality space within the community.

The Panel welcomed tree planting on street and its use to break up on street parking, and felt more could be made of the planting scheme proposed on the main boulevard from the A10 entrance. However there are some large sections of parking fronting some properties.

The Panel felt a good start had been made to the use of material and treatment of distinctive corner plots. They encouraged the latter to be in distinctive materials and not render.

There was some confusion as to the front and back of some properties and how legible it is for deliveries to find addresses, particularly properties to the west fronting onto the Green Edge.

The Panel encouraged the developer to carefully consider boundary treatments, the location of meter boxes, bins storage and where bins are placed for collection. All are important to a quality of the street scene. Bike storage at the front of houses (see connectivity above) can provide an opportunity to enhance the frontage.

It was noted the developer does not own the land immediately north of Cam Drive to be able to alter the layout and explore opportunities to have properties fronting the road.

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

The Panel supported the approach taken to recognise biodiversity and connect through the site.

The earth bund on the boundary with the A10 presents opportunities to not just mitigate the noise and air pollution, but create habitats for reptiles and bees on the south facing site. The landscape design and planting should reflect this to incorporate more than just one function.

The Panel encouraged better design of the swales to allow for other uses e.g profile to allow willow planting. This could allow more area to be accessible and have a function when little water is retained.

Passive design of streets and use of trees in the street scene to provide shade was welcomed. Thought should be given to the local climate and it being a dryer and hotter part of the country. Street trees need to have large enough pits and sufficient quality soil to avoid being stressed during dry periods. Combining uses, it was asked if SUDs can be used to direct water to the tree pits. This has the added benefit of capturing

water nearer to where it fell with the potential to reduce the amount of land needed for swales.

The Panel would encourage consideration of rain gardens in open spaces.

The Panel questioned the ambition proposed on environmental performance, particularly mindful of the future homes standards and the move away from gas based heating. Taylor Wimpey have a fabric first approach reducing the carbon footprint of materials used. The Panel encouraged the developer to look further at future-proofing for occupants including roof orientation for future PV installations, battery storage area, and consideration of solar collectors on garages.

## **Panel Conclusions and Recommendations**

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In summary, the main recommendations of the Panel were:

- 1) The developer needs to demonstrate good quality pedestrian and cycle links to local schools, the centre of Ely, and the railway station.
- 2) Further develop character and provide clarity to reinforce wayfinding through the site.
- 3) The developer is encouraged to consider diminishing car use and opportunities to reuse parking spaces in the future.
- 4) The Panel supported the approach taken to recognise biodiversity and connect through the site. Further development of the landscape strategy is needed.
- 5) Develop planting in parking courts to improve the quality of these spaces.
- 6) Maximise the opportunity for open space to fulfil more than one function.
- 7) Realise the opportunities to provide amenities in the open spaces. E.g. Linear parks to provide meeting places and continuity of pedestrian and cycle links.
- 8) Further develop the design of swales to allow for more uses.
- 9) Look to gain best value out of SUDs. E.g. Rain gardens and tree pits.
- 10) Keep materials simple and use the right hierarchy, including for boundaries.
- 11) Consider the frontages of houses, the location of meter boxes and the inclusion of cycle storage.

12) Fabric first welcomed, but buildings and the roof scape should be future-proofed to allow for future climate resilience.

## **References**

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North Ely Design Code

## **Next Steps**

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The Panel would welcome the opportunity for ongoing engagement with the developer and design team as proposals for this site progress.

## **Attendees**

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Chair: Lynne Sullivan

Panel Members: David Birkbeck

Simon Carne

Luck Engleback

David Prichard

David Taylor

Panel Support:

David Carford, Cambridgeshire District Council

Local Authority:

Angela Briggs, East Cambridgeshire District Council

Rebecca Saunt, East Cambridgeshire District Council

Charlotte Burton (Observer from Cambridge City Council)

Applicant Team:

Dan Humphries, Planning Co-ordinator, Taylor Wimpey East Anglia

Andrew Wright, Design & Planning Manager, Taylor Wimpey East Anglia

Martyn Rodzian, Engineering Manager, Taylor Wimpey East

AngliaGraham Kime, Director, Gardner Stewart Architects (**Presenter**)

Susan Bertkau, Associate, Allen Pyke Associates (**Presenter**)

Duncan Jenkins, Projects Director, Endurance Estates

## Appendix A – Background Information List and Plan

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- Applicant briefing note
- Local authority background note

Documents may be available on request, subject to restrictions/confidentiality.

### Indicative masterplan

