

Principle 6: Designing in flexibility

The town centre will grow and evolve alongside the rest of Northstowe for decades. It will succeed by being agile enough to adapt to changes in the way we live and do business.

The Northstowe Economic Development Strategy calls for Northstowe to be an incubator of new talent and ideas and a collaborative and flexible business environment.

The masterplan for Phase 2 accommodates the essential services and leisure opportunities that residents and visitors expect from the town centre at the appropriate stages of development. The masterplan incorporates enough flexibility in land allocation to give businesses an opportunity to stay in Northstowe as they grow from start-ups to mature companies, helping to drive the local economy.



Principle 7: Refining the town centre by engaging residents and visitors

Through the on-going marketing and feedback exercises, opportunities to improve the town centre can be discovered. Flexibility will be integral to the development of Northstowe town centre. Community and civic buildings should be designed to accommodate multiple complementary uses and undeveloped land can be utilised where appropriate to provide an opportunity for informal 'meanwhile' uses, including play and landscaped areas.

Capitalising on this flexibility to introduce 'meanwhile' uses, pilot projects and other opportunities can give the town centre a distinct advantage and character in contrast to nearby destinations. These projects will offer opportunities to engage local people in the design of temporary projects and build a sense of ownership.

Initially, a range of events, services and uses may co-locate inside buildings in the centre. This would maximise the use of these structures and allow uses to be trialled to establish demand before investing in dedicated buildings. The co-location of facilities would promote cross-discipline working, create buzz and save cost. Over time, visitors would be attracted from further afield to come and experience the events and activities in the town centre.

Northstowe will build a reputation for being a fun place to be. In the town centre there will be a combination of events, exhibitions and interactive public art, with a particular focus on public involvement.

Principle 8: Integrating clean technology

Sustainability is integral to the design of Northstowe, and the town centre is no exception. Buildings, spaces and public art should be used to educate everyone in a fun and interactive way about the effective use of natural resources and the benefits of the latest sustainable technologies.

The landscaping in the town centre has been designed to retain and enhance the ecological value of the town. The exemplar drainage solution proposed for Phase 2 incorporates swales and will not only effectively deal with rainwater, but provides a beautiful landscape feature. Trees and landscaping can be utilised in the town centre to provide shaded areas and help with way-finding.

For more information;

- The *Northstowe Economic Development Strategy* focuses on Northstowe becoming a champion of clean technologies.
- The *Northstowe Phase 2 Energy Strategy* details the specific steps that could be taken to ensure Northstowe uses natural resources efficiently.



5.3 Convenient

Principle 9: Sustainable travel

The Phase 2 masterplan places the town centre in a highly accessible location within Northstowe. It is situated in the geographical centre of the town, benefiting from easy access from the A14, an existing population in local villages and a dedicated bus route with links to other towns in Cambridgeshire.

Nearly all of Northstowe falls within 2km of the town centre facilities, well within the maximum 5km indicated as best practice for residential communities.

The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB) provides an attractive and sustainable transport option for visitors to Northstowe town centre from further afield. A number of these services will leave the CGB and travel through the town on the dedicated busway. These express services will be accessed from Longstanton Park and Ride, the local centre in Phase 1 and the town square. Future phases will add another stop to the south of the town centre. Local buses will stop every 400m, allowing even greater access to local towns and villages.

The CGB itself features a bridleway running alongside it, which is used for cycling and walking. This gives the option for residents and visitors to access Northstowe town centre from Cambridge and the surrounding villages in a sustainable way.

Principle 10: Flexibility for business and new ways of working

Northstowe should encourage the provision of flexible business space to aid SME and 'third place' working, increasing the amount of people working within the town centre on a day-to-day basis. Third place working will help retain workers who live locally but have their main place of work outside Northstowe. Encouraging workers to stay in Northstowe will contribute to the vibrancy and viability of the town centre.

Employment floorspace has been considered as an integrated part of the town centre, rather than being 'zoned' encouraging a greater variety of uses and architecture. The town centre will feature a range of unit types and sizes, aimed at attracting different types of businesses to serve Northstowe. It will also ensure that the businesses created by the entrepreneurial attitude called for in the EDS can be accommodated within Northstowe throughout their development.





6. The Potential Offer

This section outlines the scale and type of uses that Northstowe town centre could achieve. The delivery and evolution of the town centre over the lifetime of construction is incredibly difficult to predict. However, an early indication of the likely uses and how these may be delivered over time is presented below. These have been determined through capacity modelling, market testing and take into account the future trends for high street retailing as it continues to adapt to the challenges and opportunities posed by the increasing use of the Internet.





6.1 Retail Capacity and Impact

The HCA's Property consultants, Deloitte, have carried out a Retail Impact Assessment to assess the floorspace for various uses that could be viable in a town of Northstowe's size and location. The assessment has shown that there will be a sufficient pool of expenditure in Northstowe and the surrounding area to support the development of a town centre, that is at the top of the retail hierarchy for South Cambridgeshire.

This is clearly a broad estimation of expenditure over a significant period of time. Given the exceptional rate of change in high street retailing and the long-term nature of the Northstowe development, these figures are extremely sensitive to change.

The anticipated age profile will influence the planning of other uses, particularly of community, health and social facilities. Modelling the floorspace for these uses has been based on projected population size and likely demand.

The level of floorspace estimated by retail studies to be viable at Northstowe has been integrated into the town centre masterplan which provides sufficient flexibility to accommodate the evolving plans for social uses.

The commercial floorspace proposed provides the potential for creation of a range of job opportunities for local residents that reduces the need for travel, and meets aspirations for local jobs.

In delivery terms, an arrangement similar to that at Bar Hill would be the easiest to achieve. However, in order to create a sustainable centre with a distinct character, the delivery and spatial characteristics of an established town centre have been adopted.

The investment market will not respond to enable delivery all at once. Most retailers are only interested in locating at Northstowe when a sufficient customer base has developed to make their businesses viable. However, some retailers will be able to respond earlier, catering to latent demand in the surrounding area, providing a viable basis for locating in Northstowe.



NORTHSTOWE TOWN CENTRE USES

Use	Rationale
Town Square	The town square will be at the heart of the Northstowe experience. The high quality of the public realm, surrounded by active buildings will create an attractive civic space which can be utilised for events and as a focus for the activity in the evenings.
Residential	The integration of residential accommodation will activate the town centre day and night, and provide housing options for a range of lifestyles. Higher density accommodation will be provided in flatted and townhouse formats, creating building height which will frame public spaces and create a more urban character in the town centre.
A1 Convenience Retail	A complementary mix of businesses offering food, drink and shopping opportunities will offer an exciting variety of attractions which will differentiate Northstowe town centre from nearby trading centres. The mix of activities together with the anticipated employment space and leisure facilities in the centre will create a sociable place to do business and an attractive place to invest.
A1 Comparison Retail	
A2 Financial and Professional Services	
A3, A4, A5 Food & Drink	
B1, A2 Office	Employment space will be intertwined with other uses in the town centre rather than zoning each use separately to create vibrancy. Businesses will cross-fertilise and enable Northstowe to become a sustainable economic centre, contributing to the economic growth of the sub-region. Cleantech, knowledge-based and creative industries are central to the Northstowe Economic Development Strategy. These industries will be encouraged to locate at Northstowe in order to build a critical mass of entrepreneurial activity.
B1 Light Industrial, Research and Development	
D1 Youth Facility	Across Northstowe, there will be facilities provided that help create an attractive environment for all ages. The town centre will have a particularly strong attraction as there are a number of opportunities for younger people to participate in sports, education and community activities.
D1 Place of worship / Day care and other civic uses	Civic uses, day care and places of worship will be carefully integrated into the development according to the demands and needs of residents.
D2 Leisure	Features to encourage leisure/play and health are integrated throughout Phase 2 through pedestrian and cycle routes, greenways and the waterpark. Leisure and health facilities will add to this, offering ways to enjoy free time and have active lifestyles.
D2 Health, Community and Fitness Centre	