

5. Design evolution and response to consultation

The evolution of the Phase 1 development has been shaped by lengthy, constructive and proactive public engagement.



Design evolution and response to consultation

The evolution of the Phase 1 master plan has been shaped to a large degree by consultation and community engagement as set out within the Statement of Consultation. The principal stages of this iterative design process can be summarised as follows:

Regular project meetings with the planning authority and county council

Building upon the work prepared for the 2007 planning application and discussions with officers during 2008/2009, regular meetings with members and officers of the local authorities have taken place starting in spring of 2011. A number of design layouts for Phase 1 have been shared with the authorities and a collaborative approach to revising the proposals has been a feature of the discussions.

Parish forum meetings

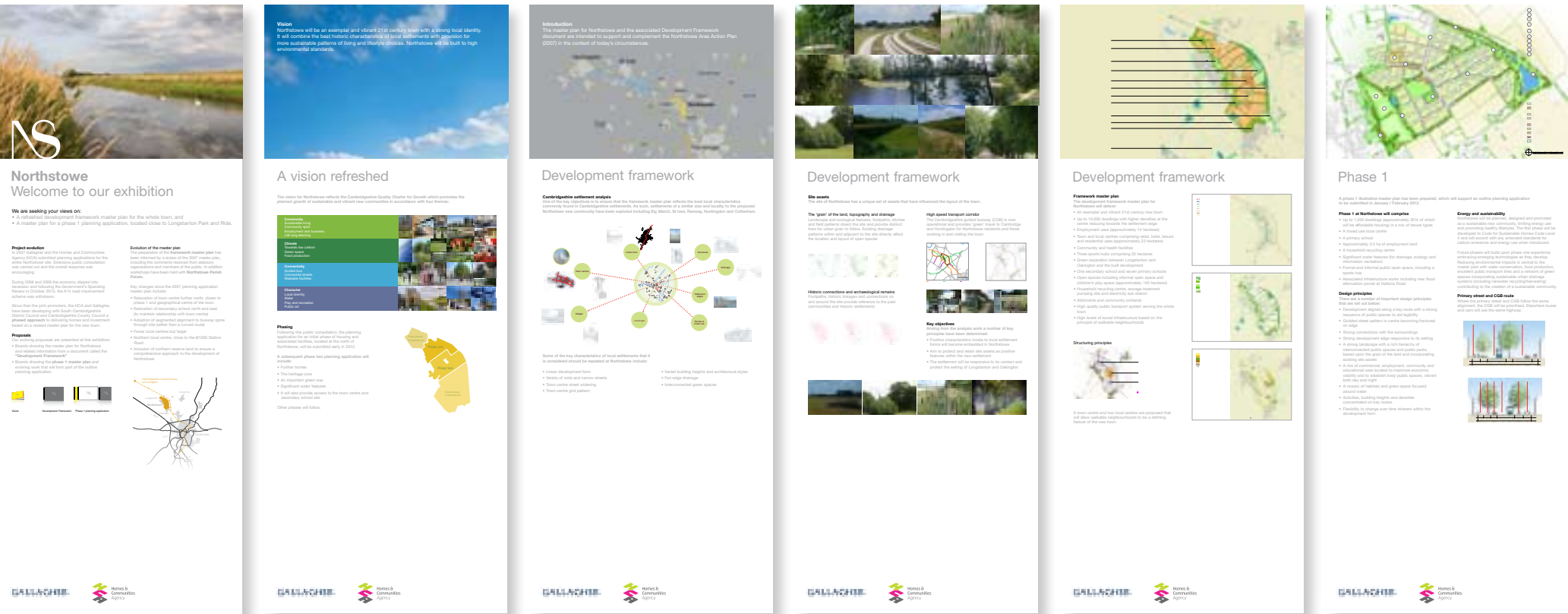
Between May and August 2011 the Parish Forum was consulted on an overall master plan review for the whole of Northstowe and the Phase 1 master plan. The options that were being explored and the timescales for the Phase 1 application submission were outlined by members of the project team at a meeting of the Parish Forum on Wednesday 13 July 2011. Options considering the location of the main facilities, such as the town centre and the secondary school were discussed in detail.

Public exhibition

A three-day public exhibition of the draft Phase 1 master plan was held between Thursday 6 October and Saturday 8 October 2011. The consultation period continued until 28 October.

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel review

In October 2011, the Phase 1 master plan exhibited to the public was presented to the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel. The review process comprised a site visit followed by presentation of the master plan and open design review by the panel members. Feedback from the design panel was received and considered in light of the ongoing discussions with the planning authority.



Examples of display boards as exhibited to the public during October 2011

Summary of changes

In response to the feedback and comments, a thorough review of the Phase 1 master was carried out and the resultant changes are summarised below:

- The street network was strengthened to provide additional cycle and pedestrian connections to Longstanton
- Connections with the guided busway, cycle path and Longstanton were improved
- Commuter and strategic cycle routes were incorporated through the scheme linking with the wider strategic network and surrounding settlements
- The guided bus will run on the central dedicated carriageway through the development, with a dedicated cycleway running parallel. Within this corridor, local traffic is only permitted along defined stretches of the route
- The location and configuration of the local centre, primary school and sports hub layout were improved, as set out below
- The junction arrangement off the B1050 was revised to improve pedestrian and cycle links and aid with the distribution of traffic

- The employment zone was moved west closer to B1050 and Longstanton Park & Ride. The interface between employment, retail and residential land uses were considered further to ensure scale, building heights and massing harmonised and so that the layout responded to key routes
- Drainage ditches were made more linear to reflect the characteristic of fen edge drainage
- Greenways were widened to improve amenity and ecological value, and enhance opportunities for natural play
- The layout of parking was reviewed with a view to minimising courtyard parking in favour of on-plot parking
- The character of the principal routes into the site including the B1050 and access from the Cambridgeshire guided bus were explored further with the objective of establishing attractive urban corridors into the settlement and strong sense of arrival
- Housing parcels were developed in greater detail to better understand the appearance, increase variety through the scheme and to strengthen open space and the landscape structure

Design Evolution

The following plans illustrate the design evolution of the master plan.

1. Initial design sketches helping to establish key concepts

Figure 5.1 Sketch concepts



2. Initial layouts discussed with local authority

Figure 5.2 Layout options and analysis discussed with local authority

Layout 1



Layout 2



Walking distances to local centre and school



Walking distances to play areas



Walking distances to bus routes



Initial movement strategy

3. Design rationale for the position of the primary school and local centre

It was recognised early that the configuration of the chief amenity and social infrastructure facilities; namely the local centre, primary school and sports hubs, will be fundamental to the success of the new community. Equally, the delivery of these elements together with their long-term management has a direct bearing on their siting within the layout. As a consequence, a number of arrangements have been considered and reviewed, with the aim of reaching the optimum arrangement. These are summarised below, culminating with the proposed configuration. It can be seen that progressively connectivity between the local centre, sports hub and primary school has been strengthened.

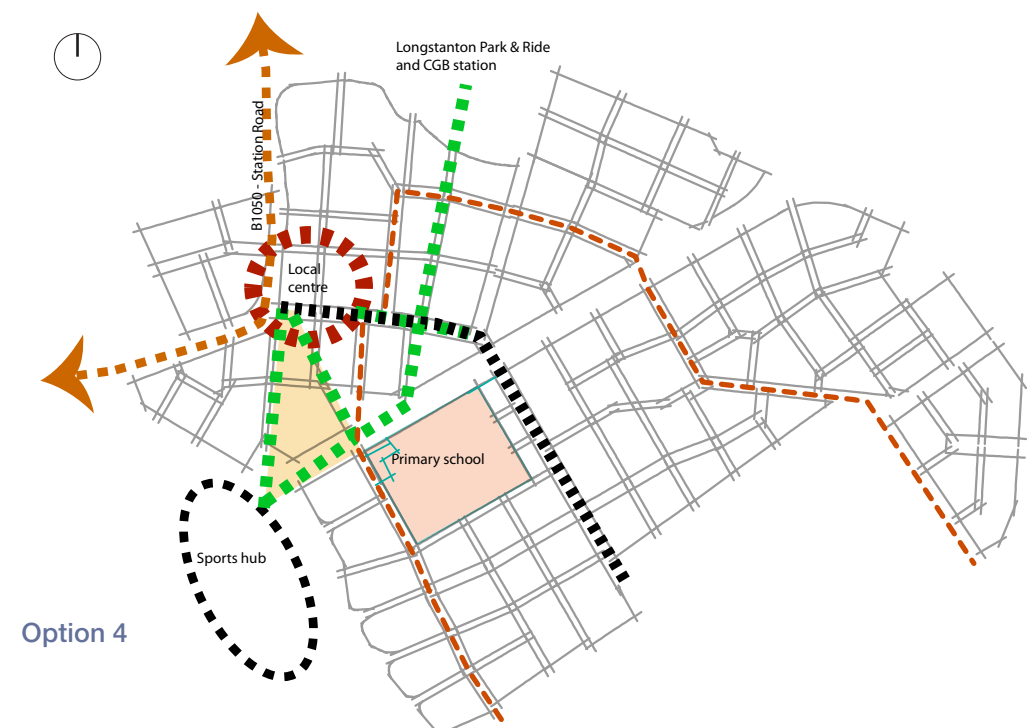
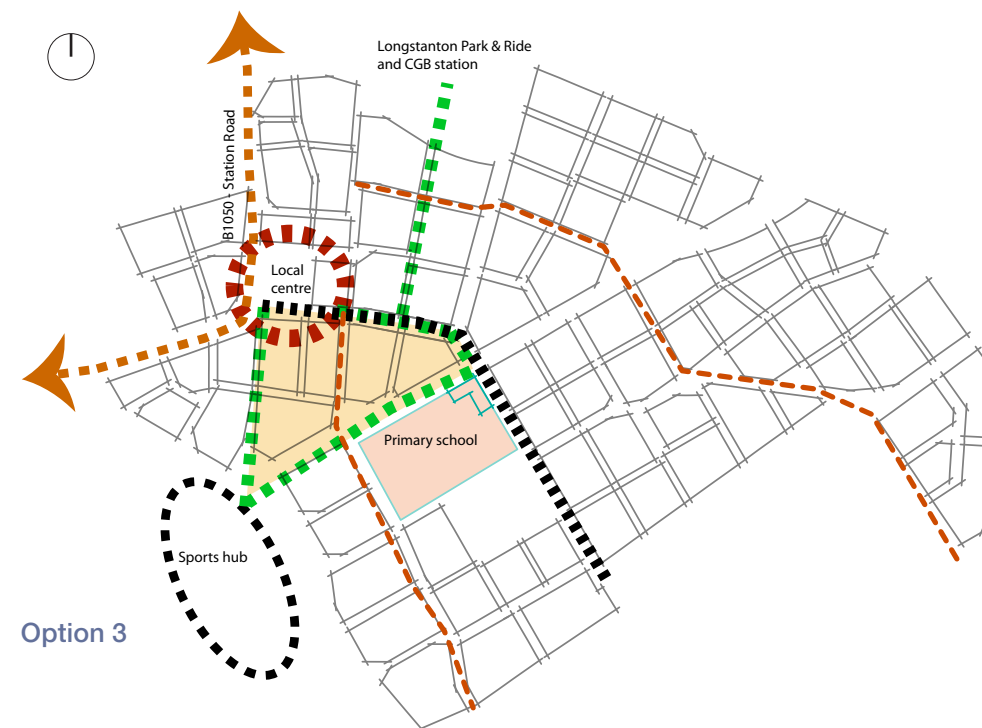
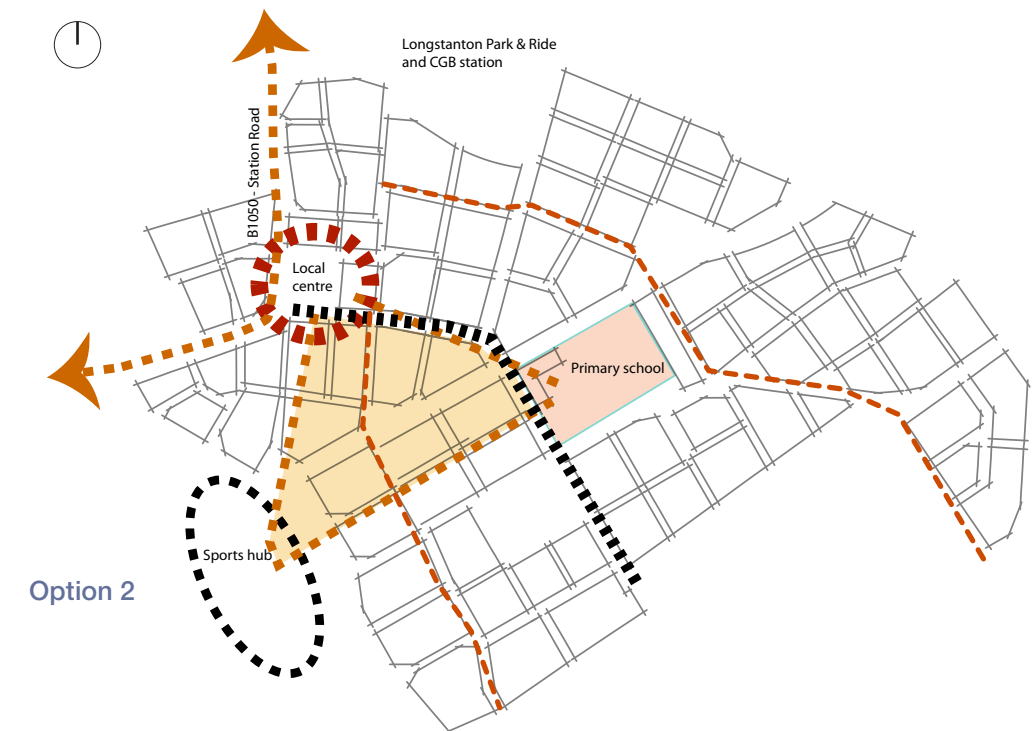
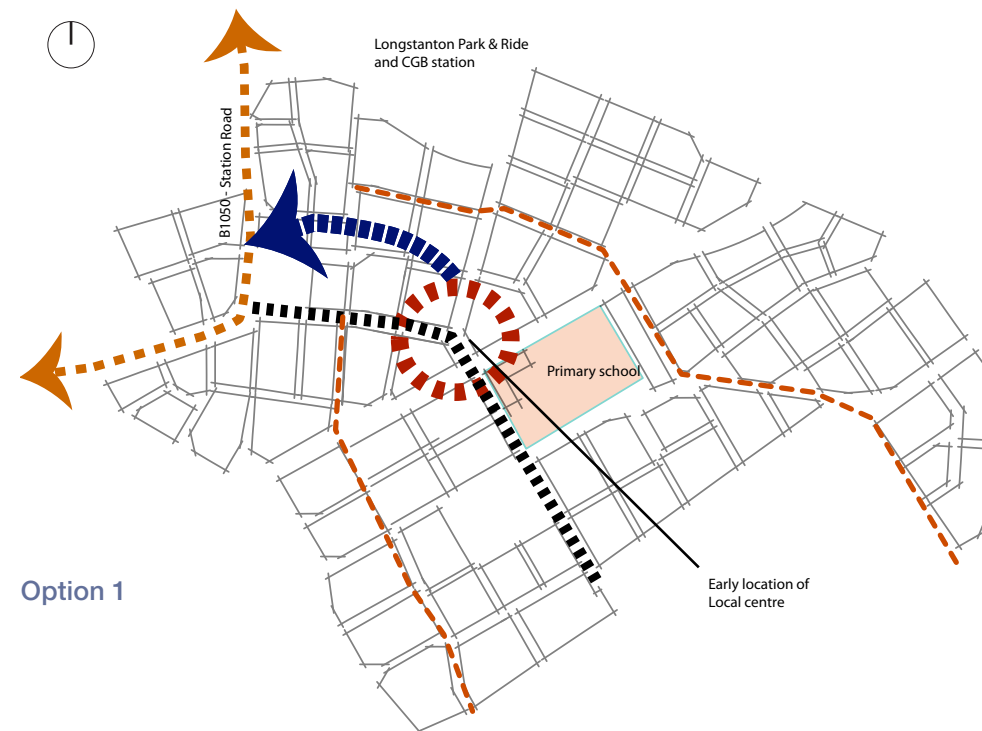


Figure 5.3 Option for local centre, primary school and sports hub

Option 4 creates the best connections between key social infrastructure facilities

4. Preliminary 3D model discussed with local authorities and presented to the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel review



Figure 5.4 Preliminary 3D model

5. The Guided bus corridor

The guided bus will not run through the Phase 1 site until later phases of Northstowe are built and the southern connection at Oakington back to the busway is operational. The infrastructure for the guided bus has however been designed now as part of Phase 1, thereby allowing a dedicated guided bus to run uninterrupted through the development in the future.

After exploring a variety of design options for the bus corridor, it was concluded at a meeting with the local authority and county council on 20 December 2011 that the option set out below was the best all round approach, comprising a dedicated bus and cycle route (with associated tree planting) with local roads joining the corridor along defined stretches of the route. Allowing some private vehicles within the corridor helped to minimise courtyard parking at the rear of properties fronting the bus corridor and was considered to bring additional activity into the principal street within the development.

