



Landscape strategy

The landscape strategy draws together a number of aims set out in the NAAP. The NAAP includes specific landscape related design principles which the proposals must be consistent with:

The town of Northstowe will be developed:

- As an attractive and interesting feature in the landscape with which it is well integrated through a variety of edge treatments
- With a distinctive town character with well designed and landscaped urban and residential areas to create neighbourhoods with their own character and legibility
- As a balanced, viable and socially inclusive community where people can live in a healthy and safe environment and where most of their learning needs are met
- To integrate Rampton Drift sensitively into the new town to preserve residential amenity
- To a flexible design which will be energy efficient, and built to be an exemplar of sustainable living with low carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and able to accommodate the impacts of climate change
- Making drainage water features an integral part of the design of the town and its open spaces, so that they also provide for amenity, landscape, biodiversity and recreation

The South Cambridgeshire Community Strategy's vision is split into 6 aims as set out below:

- Active, safe and healthy communities, where residents can play a full part in community life, with a structure of thriving voluntary and community organisations
- Building successful new communities, where large-scale developments have created attractive places with their own identity, supported by a range of quality services
- A prosperous district where jobs, skills and learning are developed and sustained to benefit everyone
- Good access to services for all sections of the community, including older people, children and families, through better transport links and improved local services
- Quality homes for all, with new affordable homes developed to meet local needs and assistance provided for those needing help, and
- A high quality environment with better access to a more bio-diverse countryside, which is protected and improved

In May 2003, a Landscape, Green Spaces and Ecology Topic Group (LGSETG) was set up as a joint forum with the developers and SCDC to ensure that landscape and biodiversity issues were fully considered within the planning, design and development of Northstowe. This group initially included representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council, the Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Later meetings included representatives from English Partnerships (now the Homes and Communities Agency) and Cambridgeshire Horizons.

The overall objectives identified for Northstowe in relation to landscape are as follows:

- 1) To be notable for the demonstrable excellence of its landscape design; diversity of species and habitats; network of functional public open space; and incorporation of biodiversity into the urban realm
- 2) Infrastructure design, including drainage, transport and utilities, will focus on the need to protect habitats and enhance landscape quality, particularly within ecologically sensitive areas and will be influenced by ecological requirements
- 3) Create an appropriate setting for the new town, which ensures it is integrated into the fen edge landscape and minimises any adverse visual or landscape impacts to the surrounding area or settlements, in particular Oakington and Longstanton
- 4) The high level of connectivity between and within the new town, its open spaces and the wider countryside will suitably balance the needs for public access and recreation with the needs of wildlife, existing habitats and existing landscape character
- 5) Alterations to the topography of the site, creating new landforms, uses and habitats will be designed to respect and reflect local landscape characteristics
- 6) The management of informal open space and semi-natural vegetation within Northstowe will be managed in the long term according to accepted best ecological practice to maintain their value and potential for wildlife
- 7) The design of the built environment will incorporate measures to maximise biodiversity within the townscape, utilising green spaces to contribute to legibility, and permeability, with the emphasis on creating attractive, multi-functional urban areas, optimising land use
- 8) Create an effective network of interconnected habitats within and between the town's 'green' areas and its boundaries
- 9) Creation of 'green spaces' that have a high degree of integration with the development, which contribute to legibility, are pleasant, attractive and multi-functional, optimising land use
- 10) Create within the urban areas a pleasant and attractive external environment which is appropriate for the needs of the population, is functional and durable, and uses the existing landscape features to contribute to the creation of an attractive urban environment which has a sense of place
- 11) Use of landscape areas to provide an environment suitable for the mitigation of adverse wildlife impacts and to maximise benefits to wildlife in balance with the constraints of other 'green' space functions, and
- 12) A diverse landscape in terms of landscape character and biodiversity which must also be durable, cost effective, safe, sustainable and adaptable to the needs of the population. It should be managed holistically and the management structure in terms of land ownership of public open space and the number of operating companies managing public open space should be as simple as possible



Figure 7.1 Landscape strategy plan

Landscape and biodiversity strategy

The landscape and biodiversity strategy for Northstowe Phase 1 is consistent with all the principles set out in the preceding paragraphs. It has been developed as part of the overall landscape strategy for Northstowe. The landscape areas are multifunctional, enhancing biodiversity, providing space for sport and informal recreation and providing an attractive landscape that complements the distinctive landscape of the area and gives a strong sense of place. The following paragraphs set out the range of elements comprising the landscape and biodiversity strategy.



Retention of existing features

The site contains a number of natural features such as trees, hedges and water bodies. These vary in how important they are in contributing to the local landscape and their biodiversity value. Trees and hedgerows have been assessed in a tree survey undertaken and submitted as part of this application. The landscape and natural heritage chapters of the Environmental Statement also submitted, record the landscape appraisal and the ecological value of features on the site.

The best of the trees are concentrated in the area closest to the eastern edges of Longstanton. This area is on the edge of the golf course, and many of the original trees and hedgerows pre-dating the golf course have been retained. These areas of best existing vegetation coincide with the strategy for providing a separation between Longstanton and the proposed development, allowing most of it to be retained.

The south eastern boundary hedgerow has good retention value. The landscape strategy provides a sustainable new role for the hedgerow, forming the

eastern edge of proposed Green Corridor C1, ensuring its long term management.

Trees and the hedgerows along Station Road also have good retention value. The transport and access strategy requires road improvements along Station Road to enable adequate access which will be the main entrance into Northstowe Phase 1 and in close proximity to the civic area. As a result the only significant areas of roadside vegetation to be retained are located at the western end of Station Road.

Retained trees and hedgerows will provide foraging areas for bats as well as cover and feeding areas for breeding birds. Hedgerows containing elm also provide a potential food source for the BAP species, White Spotted Pinion Moth.

Most of the site is typical golf course, including minor artificial landforms small ponds and several areas of young tree stands of limited landscape and biodiversity value. The removal of the golf course landscape is an inevitable consequence of developing the site. The submitted arboricultural report records that the majority of the trees to be removed are young and of relatively low amenity value.

There are a number of ponds and ditches in the areas of retained landscape, including the Kingfisher pond and these will be enhanced and integrated into the new landscape.

Topography strategy

A relatively flat topography is an important feature and characteristic of the local landscape but for much of the site, the undulating golf course topography is uncharacteristic. Most of the landform of the site will need to be raised for reasons explained in the drainage strategy. The proposals provide an opportunity to replace an uncharacteristic landscape character of the existing site with a number of new landscape areas that are strongly characteristic of the local landscape, more biodiverse and fully accessible.

The requirement to raise development platform levels progressively eastwards is similar to the way in which historically, local settlements in the area have developed

on the areas of ground, which are naturally raised to a similar degree. The landscape assessment took account of the raised ground for development areas and the conclusion is that this characteristic would have very little additional impact on either the landscape character of the surrounding area or on views. Within the development, the level differences will add interest and character and will be mainly expressed in the difference between the main landscape areas, particularly the green corridors and the adjacent development, but the level changes will be appropriately integrated into the design.

The drainage strategy and the need to provide soil to create the development platforms will result in a number of excavated areas which provide a good opportunity to create a variety of water bodies including a network of new ponds and ditches designed to maximise their potential as wildlife habitat. The specific requirements of a range of species including water vole, kingfisher, water beetles and other aquatic invertebrates have been included in the design of these features.

Longstanton separation strategy

Separation between Longstanton and Phase 1 will be achieved through the retention of the area of existing landscape that contributes to the setting of Longstanton, including small fields, golf course peripheral uses and the trees and hedgerows within that area. This area will receive additional planting and appropriate management to retain the rural characteristics of the area and enhance the screening effects of the planting.

Strategy to address effects on the character of and views from, the wider landscape

On a wider landscape scale, the landscape strategy also plays an important part in ensuring that the effects on the character of the surrounding landscape, and the effects on views from the surrounding area are fully addressed.

The NAAP recognises that the proposal is for a new town and therefore the scale of development should be appropriate and commensurate with that function, including some landmark buildings. However, there is also a recognition that the interface with the countryside and adjacent settlements needs to be sensitively designed and that although visible, the development will have an attractive appearance and reflect local character.

The measures included to achieve a sensitive interface with the surrounding landscape include:

- **Building height strategy** The building height parameters plan shows the gradual reduction in building heights towards edges of development
- **Density strategy** The density parameters plan shows the gradual reduction in density to allow more landscape to soften the development edges.
- **Landscape measures** Softening the effect of the proposals will be achieved through a combination of retention and management of existing trees and hedgerows and new planting particularly on the development edges. Key areas of vegetation to be retained and areas of new planting to soften the effect of the proposals in the wider landscape.

Landscape connectivity, accessibility, permeability, legibility and integration strategy

A key element of the Phase 1 strategy will be the creation of a series of publicly accessible spaces and corridors which will provide a pleasant and attractive external environment but will also provide a range of appropriate multi-functional uses. The design of these spaces will reflect the local landscape character but within an urban context and will be a key element in giving the Phase 1 development a sense of place. These areas will also form the backbone of the biodiversity strategy.

Strategy to integrate infrastructure, access and movement, biodiversity and landscape.

The landscape strategy has been closely integrated with the infrastructure, access and movement, and biodiversity to achieve the minimum impacts on biodiversity and landscape whilst maximising the efficient use of the land available.

Strategy for street and public realm design

The public realm will be designed with reference to the English Heritage guide to the management of streets, 'Streets for All: East of England' 2004. This sets out a series of principles to oversee a quality response to the demands upon the environment. Principles for street management include:

- **Co-ordination** Create a multi-disciplinary public realm management team to coordinate the management activities and provide continued advice on siting, design, materials and liveries (following on from the Design Codes produced at detailed design stage)

- **Partnership** Encourage community groups to take an active part in auditing of streets, and monitoring their own environment
- **Expertise** Adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to the presentation and management of the public realm and all highway works and improvement schemes
- **Training** Create a shared understanding across professional disciplines of urban design, traffic engineering, management and safety issues
- **Policies** Ensure that clear policies for paving, street furniture and the public realm are included explicitly in local development frameworks, conservation area statements and non-statutory guidelines
- **Guidance** Follow the advice in the East of England Streets for All manual; national, regional and local policies (as identified in Section 1.5 Planning Policy context); and in the Design Codes that will be produced for Northstowe at the detailed design stage
- **Context** Respect local distinctiveness and ensure that all work in the highway or public realm follows good streetscape practice and principles
- **Quality** Invest in quality solutions which should endure and offer best value for money. If resources are inadequate, do less to a better and higher standard, and
- **Less is more** Nothing should be placed in the street unless there is clear public benefit. Much street furniture is unnecessary, so reduce street furniture to a minimum, and take away redundant items. Where it is essential, co-ordinate its location carefully in relation to the buildings and the overall townscape. Use the whole street width. Wherever practicable, locate signs and street furniture on buildings or at the back edge of the footway to minimise their visual impact, on the street scene. However, if signs are required, they must be placed where they can be seen.

Planting strategy

The planting strategy will be based on the following principles:

- Use of native species that are locally characteristic for enhancing existing hedgerows and vegetation or where new planting is to be established (such as ash, oak, lime, cherry, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, holly and native viburnum). Boundary planting will be undertaken immediately after site preparation works (or in advance if levels remain unaltered) to act as advance planting. This will allow small stock to be used and time for the plants to establish prior to first occupation

- The use of larger, more mature stock around the main points of access into the site to provide more immediate impact and maturity. These will be planted where possible during the construction stage, ensuring they are provided with adequate space for establishment and growth
- Promotion of biodiversity in the urban environment, through the use of street trees, and a presumption towards native species and, where appropriate, wildlife-friendly non-native species
- Where practicable, the transplantation of trees from parts of the site to be developed into the principal landscape spaces and subject to appropriate aftercare management
- The use of planting, including enhancement of retained vegetation to provide an appropriate setting to Northstowe and reduce the effects of the proposals on landscape character and on views
- The use of planting to protect and enhance wildlife areas

The planting will be specifically designed to maximise feeding and nesting opportunities for birds, shelter for common reptiles, provide a food source for badgers and encourage a range of invertebrates which will in turn provide a food source for bats. Some planting areas will be designed to provide a dark area for foraging bats. Different parts of the site will be suited to provide different forms of habitat.

Strategy for water in the landscape

Water is a key element in the local landscape and is an important element in the design of Northstowe, enlivening and enhancing the built environment. There is also a need to provide an effective drainage strategy. Where possible this drainage strategy will be expressed with a range of different drainage features including strong linear water features reflecting the local drains. In the eastern water park, the flood attenuation area will be designed to permanently hold a substantial area of water in a series of linked ponds. The proposals will result in a greatly extended range of habitats to attract more native species. New ponds will be designed to maintain water beetle habitat and additional habitat for kingfishers. New ditches will be designed specifically to enhance the existing habitat for water voles. There will be a variety of treatments for water features depending on their location.



Within the urban fabric a more formal approach may be appropriate whilst in other areas such as on the edges of the town an informal and naturalistic approach may be appropriate.

Hard landscape strategy

Much of the proposals area will be hard landscaped due to its urban nature. All major and minor paths will be hard surfaced, including where appropriate and practicable, permeable surfacing. Surfacing materials will be appropriate to the local area and will reflect the local landscape character and the particular urban character area. Lighting will be restricted within and adjacent to the ecological areas and corridors although adequate lighting is necessary along highways and to create a safe night time environment. The following features will be located within this area:

- Street furniture such as seats, benches, litter bins, telephone boxes, bus and cycle shelters, particularly within public spaces
- Bird and bat boxes in appropriate locations
- Informal and formal play equipment, including a designated floodlit sports MUGA (multi-use games area) in the western park
- Street lighting appropriate to use and location
- Varied paving and formal hard landscaped public realm areas, such as within the local centre and around the primary school
- Public art installations
- Signage and notices, and
- A neighbourhood recycling point and information access point will be provided within or in close proximity to the local centre, in accordance with the requirements of the NAAP.

The landscape and biodiversity proposals

The landscape and biodiversity strategy is an integral part of the design of the proposals permeating throughout all parts of the development and it will be realised both through the creation of the principle landscape areas, which provide the majority of the public open space, landscape setting, recreation space and biodiversity and through the application of the design principles throughout the remaining areas.

The key landscape areas are:

- A. Western Park (Longstanton separation zone)
- B. Eastern Water Park
- C Green corridors (C1 and C2)
- D Community Park
- E Civic Green

These areas are illustrated and described in more detail in the following paragraphs:

A. Western Park (Longstanton separation zone)

The Western Park is designed to fulfil two important specific functions to meet NAAP objectives:

- C1/b To ensure that Northstowe will not merge with any of the surrounding villages
- C1/c To provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation and public access to the open countryside around Northstowe

In addition to providing a setting to Longstanton, the area will also provide an attractive setting for Northstowe and this is an equally important role for this area.

In its role providing green separation between Northstowe and Longstanton, the area will contain primarily open land uses, including formal playing fields, informal public open space allotments and a small orchard. The exception to this will be a synthetic turf pitch and multi-use games area (MUGA), which will need to be fenced and at times, lit.

The character of the setting of Longstanton will be maintained by the retention of nearly all of the existing vegetation and the planting of new vegetation to enhance and in some cases replace existing planting. Most of the planting to be removed will be due to its inappropriate character and the proposals represent an opportunity to replace the current golf course character of much of the area with a more sensitive approach. This planting will be of a rural character and will rationalize and link some of the more disparate existing groups of isolated planting. Golf course bunkers and mounding will be re-graded, particularly in the area of new playing fields.

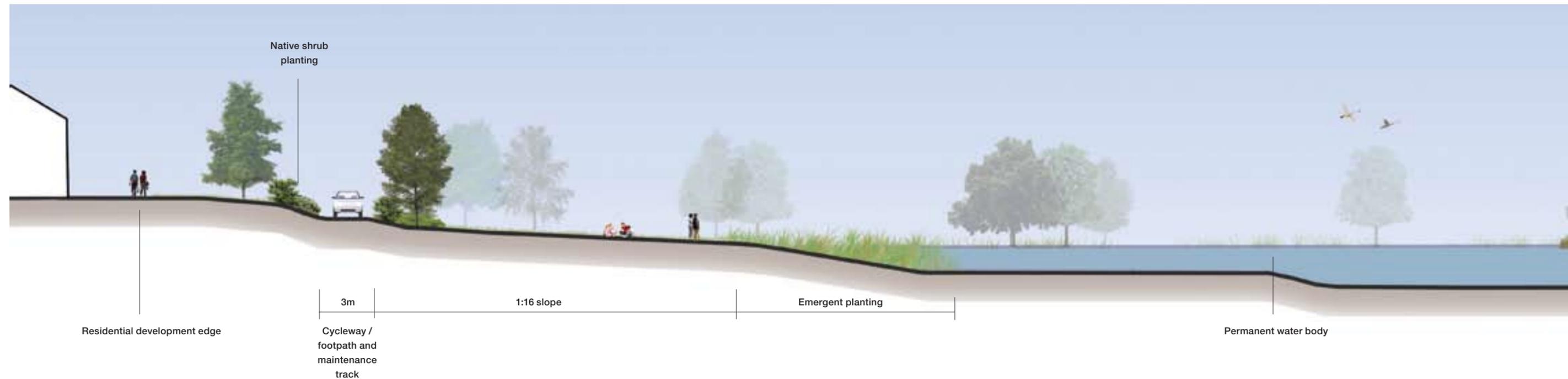
The area will have a high degree of public access but a combination of existing planting, and new planting will maintain a good degree of privacy screening for the small number of properties adjacent to the site boundary.

The area will be a key part of the biodiversity strategy. The existing 'kingfisher pond' will be retained and enhanced and several more water bodies will be created in the southern part of the area. Dark areas, suitable for foraging bats will be reserved and enhanced. Peripheral areas will be developed as scrub and grassland to provide reptile habitat and ponds will be created for invertebrates and amphibians.

The park will provide an area of allotments and a small community orchard.

In its role as a key area of green separation between Northstowe and Longstanton earth-shaping and planting of this area will be programmed in at the earliest possible stage to provide a degree of visual separation from the earliest stages of development.

Figure 7.2 Eastern Water Park



B. Eastern Water Park

The eastern water park fulfils a number of functions:

- It is the main interface between Northstowe and the surrounding countryside
- It provides the setting for Northstowe in views from the landscape to the north
- It provides a large and varied area of informal recreation space
- It is an integral component of the accessibility and permeability strategy
- It is an important part of the drainage strategy
- It is an important part of the biodiversity strategy

The linear eastern water park on the northern edge of Northstowe is a large area varying from 50m width at it's narrowest point in the north west, to several hundred metres width at its widest point. The scale of the space enables the development to be sensitively integrated with the rural landscape beyond, providing a subtle, soft edge to development. The park is illustrated below.

The drainage strategy includes a large drainage attenuation basin at the eastern end of the area, a series of smaller water bodies feeding in to the main area and earth-shaping to contain and manage the flow of water. The drainage basins will require extensive excavation to achieve the required volume whilst still maintaining a natural appearance.

From the outset of the proposals for a new town at Northstowe, there has been a recognition that one of the aims of the landscape strategy will be to tie it in to the local landscape character and provide an appropriate setting to the new town rather than attempting to screen it. Most surrounding settlements have a concentration of planting around their edges that softens their appearance in the landscape whilst remaining as recognisable areas of settlement and the eastern water park planting will duplicate this pattern.

The park provides an opportunity for large scale enhancement of the biodiversity of the area, replacing habitats that have, over time, been lost or reduced. The intended character of the park is strongly influenced by the drainage and biodiversity roles, but these strategies

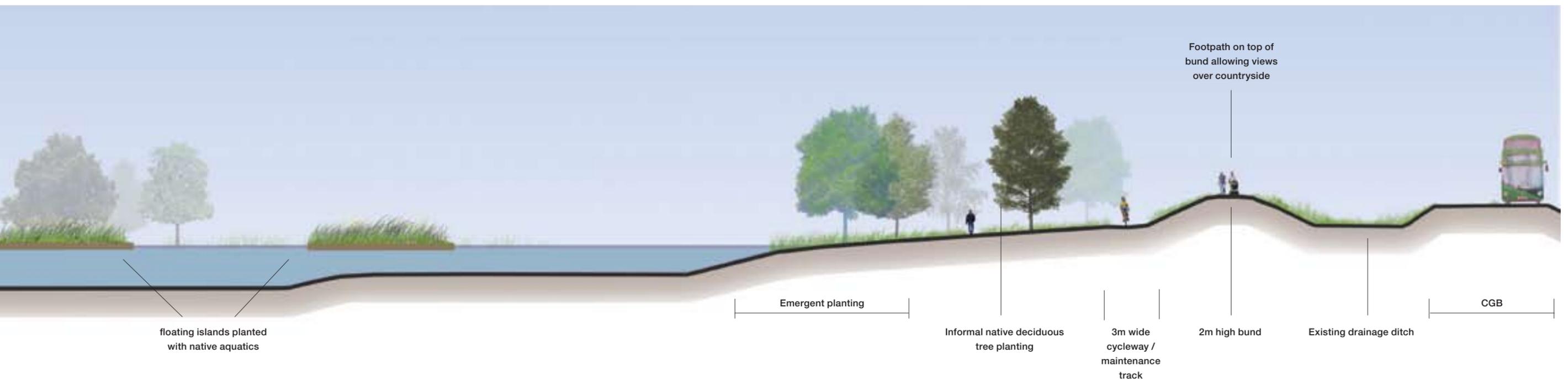
reinforce the landscape strategy to establish a semi-wild area on the edge of the town. The edges immediately adjacent to development will be more formally managed but the predominant character will be of long-grassed meadow areas, extensive wetland and water and occasional tree groups and areas of scrub.

The substantial new water body located within the flood attenuation basin, will feature floating islands for breeding birds and will include areas of shallow water with emergent vegetation for breeding wetland birds. The pond will have an area of steep slope to provide suitable kingfisher habitat. New areas of semi-natural grassland will replace the species poor golf course grassland and the scale of the area will provide a substantial unlit area for foraging bats. Barn owl boxes will be located overlooking the grassland foraging areas.

The planting strategy takes account of the biodiversity requirements for large open areas of grassland and meadow and most of the planting will form naturalistic edges to these areas with no concentrations of plantation or woodland. This will provide a balance between achieving a lightly treed setting and softening of the development and a degree of transparency to the

edges enabling a strong sense of connection between Northstowe and the countryside. The relative levels between the park, the drainage attenuation earthworks and the CGB vary but for much of the park the surrounding countryside will not be visible. The recreational value of the area is provided in several ways. The area will be accessed from several points and will be an important part of the formal and informal network of paths and spaces. The park will have a strong semi-natural character and the linear nature of the spaces within it, punctuated by water bodies will give a strong sense of space. However, the park will be enclosed by the development platforms to the west and the secondary bund to the east providing flood protection and so the park will also have a sense of enclosure. To enable views, the drainage attenuation earthworks will include paths and there will be a number of viewing platforms created at intervals along the bund, which will be part of the public art strategy.

In its role as the main interface between Northstowe and the surrounding landscape, earth-shaping and planting in this area will be programmed to ensure the earliest possible establishment of an effective landscape edge.



C. Green corridors

(Green Corridor C1 and Green Corridor C2)

There are two Green Corridors in Northstowe Phase 1 and both connect the Western Park with the Eastern Water Park. Green Corridor C1 runs centrally through the proposed developed area and Green Corridor C2 is on the south eastern boundary of the site. As well as providing landscape and biodiversity value, they will provide space for informal children's play and include the main drainage channels. Public access will include provision for walking, cycling and horse riding. To maximise their value they will connect to other key internal open spaces within the development and to the larger green areas on the periphery and the surrounding countryside. In addition to their functional value, these features are unifying elements that are frequently experienced whilst moving through Northstowe being perpendicular to, and traversed by, all the main movement corridors. They are therefore an important and visible part of the character of Northstowe.

The linear axis of the green corridors are emphasised by the drainage features that are integrated into their design. They comprise a swale feature at the western end of the development that, further east, becomes an open ditch with some standing water. These linear features are characteristic of the local landscape and provide a direct physical and visual link towards the surrounding rural landscape via the eastern water park. The drainage features will be designed to also be wildlife corridors planted with native species to provide a habitat for insects and mammals. These will be similar to the ditch network found in the wider countryside. The ditches will also provide foraging opportunities for bats such as the common and soprano pipistrelle.

In order that the Green Corridors can safely fulfil their landscape, recreational and biodiversity functions the number of road crossings have been limited to the minimum necessary for efficient movement within the development. Road and bus crossings through the Green Corridors will be designed to limit any adverse safety implications for people and be low-key in character to limit adverse effects on the landscape. Safe and appropriate crossing facilities for wildlife will also be provided, such as tunnels under roads and ditches

Figure 7.3 Green corridor C1

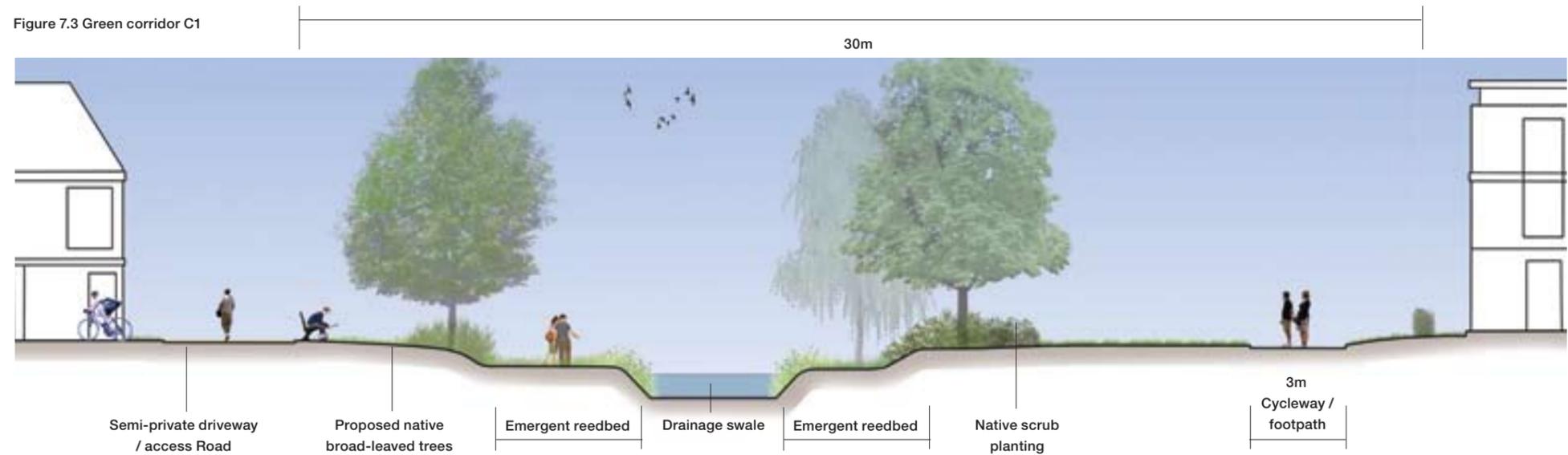
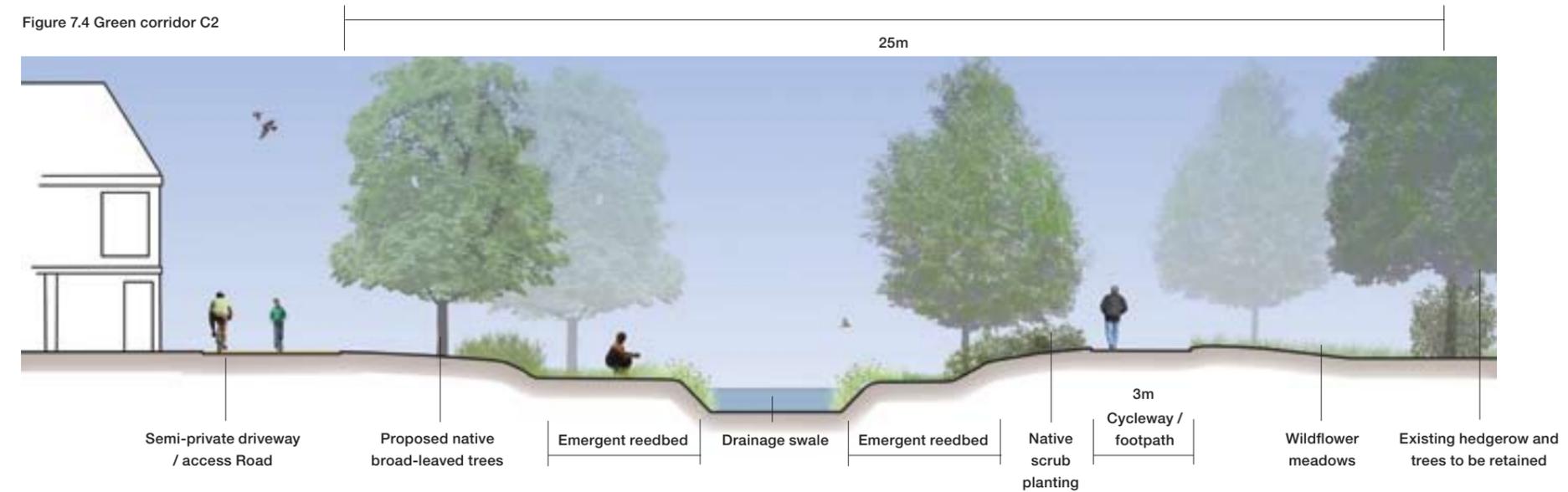


Figure 7.4 Green corridor C2



alongside roads where appropriate. Any crossings will be well designed and complement the local landscape character.

Green Corridor C1 is a minimum 30m width, but through most of its length, it is considerably wider as it incorporates a range of spaces that extend into the residential development, knitting the green corridor into the community. These spaces include some of the play spaces and the community park. It also lies adjacent to the school grounds. The emphasised geometry of the

spaces and the close links with development will give this corridor a semi-urban character appropriate for the high level of activity occurring throughout its length.

The cross section in figure 7.3 illustrates the way in which the raised development areas relate to the drainage feature in Green corridor C1. The change in level is achieved through a well-designed series of banks and slopes which maximise the useable area of the corridors and which also emphasise their linear nature.

Green Corridor C2 is a minimum 25m width and incorporates the south western site boundary hedge and trees for much of its length. It includes two offsets along its length dividing it into 3 subsections. This gives the corridor a more intimate feel and complements the more rural and informal character of the retained trees and hedgerows.

The hedgerow and additional planting will provide a feeding corridor for bat species and nesting areas for common birds. It will also be managed to provide suitable habitat for common reptiles.



Figure 7.5 Illustrative sketch of Greenway C1

D. Community Park

The community park is located centrally in Phase 1 and is no further than 600m from any part of the neighbourhood. The community park will be a focus for outdoor community activities and events and this function is reinforced by its position at the heart of the neighbourhood, in a prominent and accessible location next to the busway and alongside the centrally located Green Corridor A. Its central location in the urban area will be reflected in its sophisticated contemporary urban character and the spaces created will be simple and open, flexible areas enabling a range of activities. It will provide an informal recreation and meeting place. The space will accommodate a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP).

E. Civic Green

The Civic Green provides the setting to the local centre at the main access into the development via Station Road. Its location in a busy trafficked area means that its main function will be to contribute to making the gateway into Northstowe an attractive and distinctive experience. It will have a simple open design allowing good visibility and promoting a sense of space commensurate with the scale of Northstowe. The style of landscape will be largely dictated by the architectural style of the built form but it will be a high quality forward looking contemporary style.

Provision for play, sport and informal recreation

The NAAP minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space is:

- Outdoor Sport – 1.6ha/1,000 people
- Children's Playspace – 0.8ha/1,000 people
- Informal Open Space – 0.4ha/1,000 people

Based on 1500 houses with 2.57 persons per house, the envisaged population of Northstowe Phase 1 would be 3,855. The requirements are therefore:

- Outdoor Sport – 6.17ha
- Children's Playspace – 3.08ha
- Informal Open Space – 1.54ha

The provision will comply with the NAAP and also with the requirements set out in the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework 'Open Space in New Developments' supplementary planning document adopted January 2009.

Formal sports provision

The strategy for formal sports provision will be developed following outline planning permission being granted. The Strategy will be completed in partnership with professional bodies such as Sport England and the Governing Bodies of Sport. It will provide an assessment of the formal indoor and outdoor sports facilities required to meet the needs of the new community. It will take account of the Major Sports Facilities Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region prepared by Cambridgeshire Horizons, and consider the implications for Northstowe.

The area for formal sports provision, primarily located in the western park provides 6.17ha as required. The location places it well within the requirement that all homes should be within 1,000m of outdoor sport provision.

The outdoor sports area will offer a combination of grass pitches, and ancillary changing and storage facilities, and social facilities will be provided. The scale of the area will be in keeping with the character and amenity of the proposals.



Play space

The NAAP includes the requirement for provision of play spaces to NFPA standards. These play spaces range from a Local Areas of Play (LAP), Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) and Spaces for Imaginative Play (SIP).

LAPs

LAPs will be provided as the smallest scale of play provision, typically aimed at children aged 2 to 6 years old. Normally these would not include formal play equipment but would include informal landscape features such as planting earth mounds or sculptural features to create an imaginative and versatile play environment. LAPs should contain a green buffer around the officially designated site of 5m without compromising visibility and security.

LEAPS

LEAPS require at least 9 different types of formal play equipment aimed at young children typically aged 2 to 8 years old (with 6 pieces of equipment aimed at 4-8 year olds). No home will be more than 5 minutes walk (i.e. 400m actual walk distance) from a LEAP. Seating is an important requirement of LEAPS to encourage parent supervision and family use and enclosing the space through fencing or low level planting (with a minimum of two egress points) to provide a sense of enclosure and safety as well as deterring dogs. LEAPS should also contain a green buffer around them of 10m.

NEAPS

NEAPs are unsupervised formal play spaces aimed at young people aged 8 to 14 years old. No home should be more than 15 minutes walk (i.e. 1,000m actual walk distance) from a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) NEAPs will contain at least 8 different types of play equipment, as well as an activity area for ball sports or wheeled sports such as skate parks, basketball hoops or cycle circuits. NEAPs consequently serve a larger community than LEAPs and often include informal play space such as areas of mown grass left free for ball games and general recreation purposes. Seating and shelters will accommodate younger users of the space and provide an area to rest.

The location and design of NEAPs will be carefully considered to ensure good visibility into the space (and informal supervision), safety and positive use. Some lighting, although not floodlighting, will be needed to allow play on darker evenings in autumn and winter.

The users of NEAPs generally want something of their own and of their own choosing. Here the Public Art Strategy proposes, for example, to set up a Teen Shelter commissioning programme. Other public arts projects can involve the younger age groups and be temporary projects as well as permanent ones. All of them could help new communities assign character to new spaces.

The design of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs areas will be in accordance with SCDC requirements in terms of approved equipment suppliers, but the design of each area will respond to the play area context and will reflect the character of the area in which it is located, for instance equipment, fencing and layout in a central urban context will have a harder urban approach, whereas play areas closer to the rural edge will have softer rural approach with materials and colours that harmonise with the semi-rural environment.

SIPs – (Spaces for Imaginative Play)

In addition to the formal play space provision, informal play opportunities will be an integral part of the range of public open spaces, set within residential areas and within the larger areas and green corridors. Parts may be landscaped to include undulations and other contoured features for diversity and play interest and provide naturalistic edges through varied mowing regimes, tree and shrub planting.

Informal open space

The landscape parameter plan demonstrates that the area of informal open space is approximately 20ha not including LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs. This provision far exceeds the required amount and includes much of the space provided in the western separation zone, the eastern water park and the green corridors as well as some of the smaller urban spaces.



Figure 7.6 NEAP and LEAP catchment



Links to the surrounding countryside

Access to the countryside is particularly important for Northstowe due to the high density of the development but this high density also means that the countryside is within easy reach. On foot or by bicycle. The surrounding countryside is moderately well served by a number of public footpaths, bridleways and byways. Recent provision includes the footpath / cycleway alongside the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus. Northstowe will include the following enhancements to countryside access which will be developed having regard to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Links to Rampton Road / Reynolds Drove and the CGB path

The CGB presents a physical barrier to access to the countryside north and east of the CGB and the only existing access to the area is via the CGB crossing at Rampton Road / Reynolds Drove. The proposals will provide a new access close to the CGB crossing at the eastern end of the eastern water park. Reynolds Drove will provide access to the countryside to the north and east and the CGB footpath / cycleway will provide access to areas west (with junction at Station Road (Longstanton / Willingham) providing options for movement) and south (with junction at Station Road, Westwick) providing options for movement.

Links to Station Road

Countryside access via Station Road will be provided by two new cycle / pedestrian routes and an existing footpath which currently runs between Rampton Road and Station Road, across the golf course.

Implementation

The descriptions of the areas comprising the landscape and biodiversity strategy identify some key areas and provision that will need to be implemented at the earliest possible stage. This includes the Longstanton separation area, sports field provision, informal recreational facilities and planting where possible to provide screening and

landscape setting. These areas will be identified and agreed in more detail at detailed planning application stage.

Landscape management

The NAAP is not specific about the overall number of management strategies. However, it states that there should be a single agreed Management Strategy covering recreation, landscape and biodiversity. In order to achieve this, all landscaped areas will be maintained by the same organisation. Management will take into account the varying requirements of the different functions which open space has to perform. Local communities using the open space will be fully involved in its development and maintenance as key stakeholders.

Landscape management details will be a matter for detailed planning application, but in line with the NAAP objectives, a management strategy will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders to ensure that arrangements are in place for high quality, robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance of the landscape areas, ahead of any detailed planning permission being granted.

The management strategy will encompass a range of different forms of landscape ranging from the formal urban landscape requiring a manicured approach through to the semi-natural landscapes where management will be aimed primarily at promoting biodiversity.

Management will need to take account of local landscape character and utilize methods that ensure that the landscape is characteristic of the locality.

Landscape management will be integrated with drainage management ensuring that there is no conflict between managing the drainage and attenuation features for drainage function and maintaining the landscape and biodiversity aims.

Public art strategy

Introduction

The NAAP includes the following guidance on public art:

‘Provision should be made for public art in Northstowe to help provide a sense of place and distinctiveness. A strategy for public art should be prepared as part of the masterplanning process.’

‘The provision of quality visual arts and crafts as part of new developments can bring social, cultural, environmental, educational and economic benefits, both to the new development and the community at large. It is considered particularly important that public art is integrated into the overall design of the town including landmark works such as sculpture as well as functional elements e.g. lighting, landscape, street furniture, floor designs and signage.’

‘Whilst public art is normally sought through negotiation rather than being a requirement of development, in view of the scale of Northstowe and that it will be an entirely new community, the provision of public art as an integral part of the development will be a key part of ensuring the creation of a high quality and distinctive new town. Whilst the Area Action Plan does not prescribe a level of public art provision, it does require that a strategy for public art is prepared, with the appointment of (a) lead artist(s) at an early stage in the planning and design of development and a significant level of provision for public art will be required as part of any proposals.’



Aims of the public art strategy

The overall aims for the public art strategy at Northstowe are:

- Provide a sense of place, distinctiveness and local identity
- Bring social, cultural, environmental, educational and economic benefits to enhance the environment and the lives of the local community
- Contribute to making a high quality, attractive and valued living and working environment
- For public art to delight, inspire and stimulate
- For public art to be functional as well as visually stimulating
- Assisting in orientation and interpretation of a place
- Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion
- Promoting participation and involvement in the arts and our environment
- Promoting innovation and creativity

Achieving the aims

The aims of the public art strategy will be met in a number of ways both in the way that art is presented and located and in the way that the concepts are developed and implemented. Key elements and actions will include:

- Public art to form an integrated part of the townscape of the development
- Public art to be closely integrated into the public realm and landscape scheme
- The creation of a public art trail within the open space network with a variety of pieces, each appropriate to their individual location but with an overall theme
- For public art to appeal to as many of the senses as possible
- The use of prominent locations easily accessible to the public
- To involve the local community, including schools, throughout design and implementation
- The early involvement of an artist to inform and develop the public art strategy

Strategy area

The public art strategy applies to the Northstowe Phase 1 application site but also takes into account the future phases

Definitions of public art

The public art policy of South Cambridgeshire District Council states “Public art refers to any contribution by artists in a publicly accessible location and will encompass :

- Landscape design, tree planting and mazes
- Painting, sculpture, ceramic, prints, mixed media and artist in residence schemes
- Brickwork, terracotta and patterned tiling or slates
- doors, gates, engraved and stained glass
- Lighting, metalwork, tapestries and carpets
- Wood and stone letter carving, banners and original graphics
- Seating, bollards, railings, clocks and boundary features

In order to be classed as public art, the work or contribution should involve an artist or craftsman. The work should be appropriate to the scheme and location. It should be visible by and accessible to the public permanently or for an agreed period of time.





Developing the strategy

Public art will take different forms across the site, as set out below:

- a. A landmark at the in one of the key spaces of the development
- b. Small scale features within neighbourhood open spaces to aid with legibility and provide identity at a local level

An artist(s) will develop this broad strategy further.

Landmarks

A large scale, landmark will form a focal point in the development. It will form an integral part of either the urban fabric or the landscape setting of the development. It will form a contemporary feature, which will relate to the local landscape character and is likely to take the form of a sculpture. A series of local landmarks will be created within the primary infrastructure, for example within the local centre. These could include sculptures which may also be used for children's play.

Neighbourhood features

These small scale pieces will be integrated into the neighbourhood open spaces to provide local focal points and identity to these areas. They could include:

- Bespoke fencing or railings to children's play areas
- Small sculptures that could be used for children's play
- Artist-designed seating or other specialist street furniture or lighting
- Mazes or patterns incorporated into paving

Development and implementation of the public art strategy will be carried out in consultation with Cambridge City Council and SCDC. This includes consultation with the Cambridge City Public art Steering Group.

From the outset, the strategy towards development of the site in general has been one of community involvement. It is intended that this will continue throughout the development of the public art strategy, and appropriate local community groups and schools will be consulted.



Implementation

It is intended that the landmark features will be provided at an early stage as part of the infrastructure contract. Neighbourhood features will be created within each of the development parcels, as part of the reserved matters. It is proposed that Gallagher will appoint an artist to develop the public art strategy following outline planning consent. The strategy will be developed further to inform the strategic design code to be submitted prior to the first reserved matters application.

As part of a management plan, maintenance information and schedules are to be provided as the public art strategy evolves in order to ensure the long term success of the artwork.