

DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES FOR NORTHSTOWE

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **13th December 2011**

From: **Executive Director: Environment Services**

Electoral division(s): **Willingham**

Forward Plan ref: **Not applicable** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To invite Cabinet to consider and endorse the emerging model of public service delivery at Northstowe and proposals for a joint team between the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to oversee the planning process for Northstowe.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is invited to:**

- a) Consider and endorse the proposed model for delivery of public services to Northstowe set out in paragraph 2.1; and**
- b) Agree the principles of a joint team between the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to oversee the planning process for Northstowe as set out in paragraph 2.8.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Northstowe project has stalled in recent years. Progress was brought to a halt during 2008 by the financial crisis and has been slow to regain momentum. However during 2011, renewed effort has been put into the Project by the Joint Promoters. The planning application lodged in 2007 for the entire new town proposes 9,500 dwellings and infrastructure to support the expected 25,000 population.
- 1.2 The withdrawal of the A14 improvement scheme during 2010 and its subsequent cancellation has resulted in the joint promoters wishing to submit a planning application for a Phase 1 development during early 2012. This application is likely to seek planning permission for 1,500 dwellings, a primary school, a local centre and other supporting infrastructure. This paper describes the emerging vision for the provision of public services in a Phase 1 development and the overall Northstowe project.
- 1.3 The key issue for public service providers is how 'discrete' or co-located they wish the service provision to be. Given the significant S106 burden on Northstowe and a range of other financial factors, innovation is needed in how, where and when public services are provided. There are good examples of co-located services provision in the County which deliver a better solution for the public at lower cost than separate provision of each service. However Northstowe needs to be even more innovative and ambitious, and we have the ability to be so given that it is easier to plan ahead for co-location of services in the context of a new town than it is within the constraints of an existing town. The remainder of this paper sets out a possible model for both Phase 1 and the whole of the new town.

2. POSSIBLE SERVICE MODEL

- 2.1 A working group of representatives of the key organisations has helped shape the model – the detailed output from that process is attached as Appendix 1. Whilst the model deals in detail with a Phase 1 application it can be broadly applied to the remainder of the new town. Essentially, a model of two community hubs is proposed. One of these will be focused around the first primary school for Northstowe and the other will be focused around early provision of an initial 4 form of entry (600 place) secondary school. This will need to come on stream very early on in the building of Northstowe Phase 1 to avoid the often experienced problem of major infrastructure such as this only being available much later in the build cycle of major new developments. The principles of public service delivery in Northstowe are a direct result of the recent Member led review on Children's Young Peoples Services (CYPS) in new communities. It is important that this continues to be given consideration together with exploring innovative funding streams to meet budget deficits such as social impact bonds.

The Two Hub Service Model

- 2.2 One of the proposed community hubs could be based around the first primary school in Northstowe. This would essentially provide facilities for children in the age range 0-11 years and would combine facilities together and promote

joint use of facilities such that the most efficient use possible could be made of buildings. Potential services provided at this hub could include

- Early years and wrap-round nursery care
- primary school for 4-11 year olds (Diocese of Ely sponsored)
- Support/advisory services – peripatetic health services; community development workers; other family based services
- Initial library provision (could possibly be at early secondary school campus instead)
- Facilities within the hub could include community rooms and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)

2.3 The second proposed hub could be based around the secondary school campus. This would provide facilities for all of the adult community and specifically including children of secondary school age and older. Services provided at this hub could include:

- Secondary school for 11-16 (Swavesey Village College sponsored)
- Special education provision including for children with profound need and also post 16
- Indoor and outdoor sports and leisure for all of the community
- Adult learning
- Adult social care provision
- Support/advisory services – as necessary
- Youth services – possible out-post for locality staff
- Arts and performing space/Faith services
- Community rooms
- Initial library provision
- Early home/HQ of the Northstowe Town Council

2.4 Discussions are still taking place as to where the GP services for Northstowe could be provided and this may in the early phases of development for example, be in the existing branch surgery in Longstanton.

2.5 There are a range of potential benefits to this approach as follows:

- A clear focal point for vital public services required by residents of the first phase
- It reduces the possible land take of public service requirements
- It reduces initial capital cost – by building less space
- It reduces early revenue support necessary by intensive use of the facilities provided and possible income streams from lettings etc
- Flexible use of buildings that change their uses through time is allowed for. For example, early library services at the primary school/secondary school and then a permanent home in the larger Northstowe scheme
- The establishment of a secondary school campus that would meet the growing pressure on Swavesey Village College where existing Longstanton pupils attend.
- It offers facilities/venues to stimulate the running of voluntary sector services

- 2.6 It is important to note that at this stage, this is a proposed service pattern and discussions need to continue with the Joint Promoters of Northstowe to establish clearly what will be included in the phase 1 application. The key point though is that the contents of that application need not only to provide for the needs of the phase 1 development but also be consistent with what will follow in terms of the wider development of Northstowe. Should Cabinet agree this proposed model of service provision, it will form the basis of discussions with the Joint Promoters in forming the phase 1 planning application.

Proposed Joint Team for Northstowe

- 2.7 Given the pressing need for new housing in the area, the need to move the Northstowe project through the formal planning process and towards delivery should planning permission be granted as quickly as possible is clear. In order to achieve this goal effectively, it is proposed to establish a Northstowe joint officer team between South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council. This will allow a clear focus of experienced officers on the project to ensure the planning stages and community involvement are completed efficiently and effectively.
- 2.8 The final details of the team are still being worked up but it is expected to consist of a range of skills including planning, project management, education planning, transport and highways and urban design. This will be a task and finish group and employees will be on fixed term contracts. It is anticipated that the cost of the team to the point at which the Northstowe planning application is expected to be determined will be covered by contributions from the former Cambridgeshire Horizons, the planning fee payable to South Cambridgeshire District Council and the developers of Northstowe. .

3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

3.1 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most

- 3.1.1 The service model noted above will provide early and critical support for all parts of the community as Northstowe commences and is built out initially to its first phase.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives in their communities

- 3.2.1 Providing a full range of public services early in the development will assist in meeting this priority. There is added benefit to the wider public of the role of the secondary school based hub. Early provision of this hub will provide early sports and leisure facilities that can help residents to lead healthy lives. The design of the Phase 1 development will be required to build in routes and networks of footpaths and cycle paths that will assist movement in around Northstowe by modes of transport that can help deliver this objective.

3.3 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 3.3.1 Northstowe will provide critical additional housing to meet the acute needs in the broader Cambridge sub-region, and improve the flexibility of the labour market for firms seeking to grow and recruit employees in Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and in key employment areas such as the Science Park. The

rapid public transport connections from Northstowe to Huntingdon, St Ives, Histon, the Science Park and Cambridge provided by the Guided Busway mean that Northstowe is a hugely important strategic development for the economic development of the Cambridge-Huntingdon corridor. The development of the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury will extend this further. Northstowe is also close to other major areas of employment such as Bar Hill. Employment land within the town will also be developed as part of Phase 1 of Northstowe, and of course many jobs will be created in the construction industry and related industries during the construction phase.

3.4 Ways of working

- 3.4.1 It is important to continue the existing strong partnership working with South Cambridgeshire District Council and a range of service providers. This collaborative working has been key in developing the service model described in this report and will be further enhanced by the creation of the joint team.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource and Performance Implications

- 4.1.1 Innovative approaches to service provision at Northstowe will reap financial benefits in terms of capital and revenue savings and will assist the overall viability of the scheme. These savings will be secured by spending less capital in providing new facilities thought a much more flexible approach to service provision. If less but more intensive service hubs are provided there will be a revenue savings to all services provided as operational overheads will be reduced.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 5.2.1. The financial risk to the County Council will be reduced if more efficient means of providing facilities are devised.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.3.1 There are no significant implications for equality and diversity.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation

- 4.4.1 County Council officers have co-ordinated the work of the Northstowe Public Services group since its inception in September 2011.
- 4.4.2 County Officers have provided key input into the shaping of the approach noted in this report. Officers have worked with colleagues at South Cambridgeshire District council in developing the model noted in this report.

Source Documents	Location
Northstowe Area Action Plan (2007) Planning Application for Northstowe (2007) Northstowe Vision Document (2011)	New Communities 2 nd Floor, A Wing Castle Court