

# LESSONS FROM CAMBOURNE

Stephen Platt



# Acknowledgements

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On reading the report you will see that, as far as possible, people have been allowed to speak for themselves. So with minor editing, the report quotes people's ideas and opinions. This gives the report a context and authority it would otherwise lack. Those interviewed were given the opportunity to read a draft of the report both to correct errors and remove things they would prefer to remain in confidence. It is important, however, to emphasise that the opinions expressed are personal rather than reflecting the official attitude of the organisations people work for.

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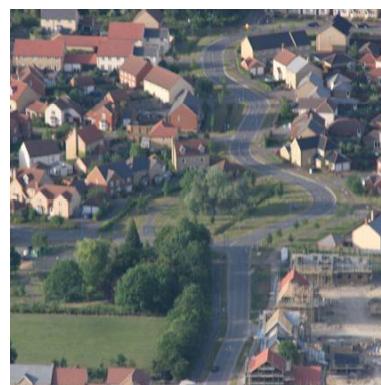
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# 1 Summary

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The aim of this evaluation of Cambourne is to provide lessons for future development in the region. The study does not provide all the answers, nor does it give a simple template for new settlements. It does, however, come to conclusions about the success of Cambourne and provides useful insights and ideas about the process of planning other major new settlements in the region.



Cambourne is a new settlement nine miles west of Cambridge. The Master Plan and Design Guide by Terry Farrell and Partners were approved in 1996 and work started on site in June 1998. Cambourne's current projected size is 4,250 homes and at the time of this study in May 2007 just over half have been built. The total area of the site is 417 hectares (1,030 acres) only 133 hectares of which are for housing. The final density will be 32 dwellings per hectare which is very similar to other current housing development in the region.

Two questions underpin this study. Firstly, does Cambourne meet the objectives of the original Master Plan? And secondly, can we learn lessons that can guide future large scale development?

## Method

This evaluation of Cambourne involved a review of existing reports and surveys, observation by the author and a survey of over 50 'stakeholders'. 26 people were interviewed, the majority by telephone, and 34 responded to a paper-based survey.

## Some facts

Over half the residents of Cambourne are local. 16% came from Cambridge and 42% from elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. The main reasons people gave for moving to Cambourne were: appearance of property (39%), like the idea of living in a village (37%) and house price (25%). 40% of households intend to stay less than three years.

Cambourne has a younger population than the rest of the region. 30% of Cambourne residents are children aged up to 16 (compared to 22% in S.Cambs) and 42% are aged between 30-44 (compared to 23% in S.Cambs). Homes are bigger. 70% of homes have 3 or more bedrooms (compared to 63% in S.Cambs). House prices are similar to S.Cambs but 15-20% lower than in Cambridge.

The majority of people (71%) travel less than 12 miles to work. Only 6% travel to work in London. This pattern is similar to that in the rest of S.Cambs. 81% travel to work by car compared with 78% of S.Cambs and only 42% in Cambridge. Only 8% walk or cycle compared with 14% in South Cambs and 40% in Cambridge. Car ownership is high. 95% of households have at least one motor vehicle compared with 88% in S.Cambs. Over half Cambourne households (56%) have 2 or more vehicles.

In Cambourne, 97% of children attend state schools compared with about 80% in Cambridge and 87% in S.Cambs. Most nursery and primary age children walk to school compared to only 30% in S.Cambs and 32% in Cambridge.

The things that people like about living in Cambourne are the environment (43%), quiet (20%), nice people (18%), new house (16%) sense of community (15%) and schools (13%). The things people dislike are the slow provision of services (34%), youth behaviour (30%), the poor range of shops (23%) and traffic (15%).

### Master Plan vision

The vision for Cambourne painted an idyllic future where families could get the best of both worlds – a place in the country with urban amenities. This harks back to the Garden City movement and the advertising of new London suburbs in the 20s and 30s.

The Master Plan vision for a new settlement tends to get watered down as the plan is put into practice. But in Cambourne, the consensus is that much of the vision has been achieved. Cambourne is not, however, either in terms of size or character, a village as was originally conceived. Nor is it a small town. It is in fact a new hybrid – an ‘exurb’.



The key objectives of sustainability embodied in the master plan, of self-sufficiency and high performance environmental design, do not seem to have been met. Cambourne is not self-contained in terms of jobs, secondary schools or services. Consequently car use and car ownership is high. However, the number of local jobs and services is increasing.

### Size and location

There is immense pressure from developers for Cambourne to grow, possibly to double its present size. This growth pressure beyond the original numbers allocated in the planning permission is probably a feature of most new settlements. A doubling the size would allow a secondary school to be built and would make other facilities like shops and services more viable.

There is a lack of connection to surrounding villages and Cambourne is poorly integrated into the surrounding countryside. A new settlement should have good pedestrian and cycle links to local footpaths and bridleways and these rights of way need to be established well in advance of construction. There are footpath links to the south but it is more difficult to

reach footpaths to villages to the north of the A428. More might have been done both to improve footpath access and to publicise it.

Developers also reduce the intended permeability of a new settlement by fencing off different parcels of housing. Nevertheless pedestrian access within Cambourne is generally good..

### **Built form and green space**

The design of the houses tries to reflect that in local villages. But the size of the settlement and the form and density of much of the housing and other buildings is quite different from that found in villages. Another objective in the Master Plan was to create three physically separate communities divided by green space. This open space is one of the most appreciated features of Cambourne and without this green space Cambourne would feel much less rural and more like a housing estate.

Compared to other new housing in the region, the design and layout of the housing is good and there are many parts of Cambourne that are very attractive. The houses are popular with new residents and have sold well. But the design of some of the civic buildings is mediocre. The High Street is unfinished five or six years into the development and this creates a bad impression on visitors and new arrivals.

One of the best things about Cambourne is the ecology. People very much appreciate the areas of woodland that have been retained and the green spaces that have been created. A key to the success of the green space is that the local Wildlife Trust is responsible for maintenance and is based in Cambourne.

### **Environmental design and sustainability**

Although Cambourne was planned ten years ago, sustainability was the central aim of the Master Plan. However, apart from some of the social housing developed by Circle Anglia, the housing in Cambourne is unexceptional in terms of environmental design. Private developers and social landlords are applying different environmental standards which means that some of the affordable housing is built to a greener agenda than the private housing.

Using CABE's Building for Life checklist Cambourne performs best on design issues. Over 50% of stakeholders think that the 'Public space is well designed and managed', that Cambourne has a 'Distinctive character' and an 'Architectural quality'. Over 50% also think it offers a 'Range of community facilities'. The two issues on which Cambourne really falls down are 'Integrates with its surroundings' and 'Buildings outperform statutory minima in terms of environmental design'. Only 13% of stakeholders believe Cambourne performs well on these issues.

### **People and community**

A new settlement like Cambourne attracts certain kinds of people – couples with young families wanting a better place for their children; people wanting to make a fresh start and people moving to the area with their work and needing somewhere convenient.

Some stakeholders think Cambourne is a lonely place, and on weekdays it does seem deserted. But others suggest that since everyone is in the same boat in a new place they are more ready to make friends. For people who don't readily mix, Cambourne may seem unfriendly, while for others it provides a milieu of like-minded people. For some, a new

settlement like Cambourne can be lonely and new residents need considerable support in helping to settle. In particular key services must be in place from the beginning before people arrive.

Various agencies need to meet regularly to co-ordinate their efforts in providing this help. This co-ordinated effort was one of the key success stories in Cambourne. A group, which included the planners and developers, as well as service providers, met regularly to listen to people's concerns and to deal with problems.

The doctors surgery, the primary school, the library and the church become key meeting places and providers of the social framework that helps knit the new community together. A new settlement like Cambourne needs a place, like a community hall, for people to meet from very early on. And, importantly, it also needs more informal meeting places that can be accessed by non-joiners that are status and stigma free.

A sense of community is growing but will take time to fully develop. There is a high turnover of people in a new settlement and we need to be realistic about time scales and perhaps wait twenty years or so to judge Cambourne in terms of community well-being.

### **Social mix and social housing**

In 2006 25% of the homes in Cambourne were affordable, of which just over half (52%) were Rented Social Landlord (RSL) and the rest were intermediate tenure. The housing still to be built will increase the proportion of affordable housing in Cambourne to about a third of the total. There has been an attempt to create small clusters of affordable houses, but over half are in one large cluster of 71 dwellings to the north of the shopping centre in Great Cambourne.

It is most important in new settlements to avoid creating ghettos of affordable housing. It is important to inform all prospective residents of the scale and disposition of the social rented housing before they decide to move in. The social rented housing, for various reasons, arrived later than the private housing and this caused resentment. Wherever possible it would be sensible to phase the development of the private and social rented housing in tandem.

Self-build and co-operative housing does not seem to feature in the planning of new settlements like Cambourne and Northstowe. This is unfortunate since self-build has many economic and social benefits over and above the provision of housing.

### **Schools and services**

Facilities such as shops, places to meet and sports facilities came later than the houses and this can cause frustration and resentment. The demand for primary school places was higher than expected and three schools will have to be built rather than the two schools that were planned. The size of the new settlement is too small to justify building a secondary school, so children have to go to Comberton Village College, over seven miles away. The schools have very good reputations and this has been a strong selling point. But Comberton will soon have to turn away children from Cambourne and they will have to go to schools in Cambridge.

Once finished Cambourne will offer a wide range of facilities. Clearly there is less happening than in Cambridge, but on the other hand there are more facilities and social activities than in most villages. Cambourne is a good place for young children to play and

for young families to live. There are many clubs and societies. So, for those joiners that like regular social activities, Cambourne seems to offer a lot. But until recently when the pub opened, there was nowhere to meet informally. The developers are obviously very keen for these facilities to be in place as early as possible, but facilities like shops and pubs will only appear when there is sufficient demand. Cambourne also badly needs a church.

What has been most important in Cambourne's success, and it is successful in many ways, is the quality of the people in charge of key services – the original master planners, the schools teachers, the doctor, the vicar, the community workers and the local planning officers. These people were interviewed as part of this study and impressed with their energy, enthusiasm and knowledge.

### **Employment and transport**

People identify the need the lack of local employment opportunities and the need to travel to work by car as the key issues in Cambourne's failure to be 'sustainable'. But the business park and shopping centre are less than half finished and local employment opportunities will increase with time as the settlement grows.

At first sight it would seem sensible to locate all new settlements near main-line railway stations. But only a small proportion of working residents travel to work in London and in today's highly mobile labour market, it may be unrealistic to plan for most people to work where they live even if there are local jobs available.

There is a regular bus service to Cambridge and a train service from St Neots for people commuting to London, but many people may prefer to travel by car. People in Cambourne do seem to be very car dependent and the level of car ownership is high relative to other places in the region.

Live-work and business starter units may need subsidising to woo new businesses from cheaper accommodation in neighbouring villages. The units in Cambourne also lack scope for adaptation and expansion and planners may need to be more flexible in granting change of use in Northstowe and elsewhere.

Cycle routes and footpaths out of Cambourne are not well provided. However, once work on the new A428 is finished the old road may provide a safe cycle way and fast bus lane to Cambridge. Insufficient attention has been paid to disabled access and there are problems of accessibility for disabled people and parents with buggies getting around the pavements and accessing the sitting places near the lakes.

### **Planning and development process**

The current process of procuring new settlements like Cambourne using Section 106 agreements seems cumbersome when compared with the New Town development corporations. But planners and developers have made it work in Cambourne and there are indications that, with the mediation of Cambridgeshire Horizons, dialogue and negotiation can deliver successful communities at Northstowe and elsewhere.

There is a case for retaining architects to oversee the design and procurement process and to try to ensure higher quality design of civic buildings than has been achieved in Cambourne. However, the landscape master planners delivered a very high quality green environment that many appreciate.

A new settlement takes a long time to build and much longer for a sense of community to develop. Developers need to be more careful in raising expectations in their marketing literature.

Using InspireEast's Excellence Framework, Cambourne does best in terms of three criteria: Equity, Housing and Environment. Cambourne does badly in terms of Economic criteria. People think that the lack of local jobs and a thriving local economy are currently Cambourne's main shortcomings.

## **Conclusions**

Cambourne is in some ways a unique type of settlement. The vision of the master planners was to create a village environment with the facilities of a small town. In many ways Cambourne delivers this promise. You can get to the city fairly easily and you have nice countryside within walking distance. You are relatively close to main line railway stations.

Cambourne is less congested than Cambridge and there is less pollution and better air-quality than in the city. It is quieter and there is a better sense of community. Despite the bad press, there is less crime and less antisocial behaviour. It is perceived as a safe place to bring up a family and young children seem to be given more freedom and independence than in Cambridge or established villages. Houses are cheaper, there is more choice and the houses are new. Above all people really appreciate the green space and lakes that have been incorporated into the built form.

But Cambourne can feel isolated, especially for those without children who have less opportunity to make friends or for those who find mixing more difficult. There is an obvious lack of history, a continuity of generations and a sense of belonging. There is less reason for civic pride, compared with Cambridge and some villages. There is less choice of shops, fewer public transport options and facilities were late in arriving.

The key issue in new settlements like Cambourne is the lack of local employment opportunities. But it maybe unrealistic to expect people to work where they live, even if there are more local employment opportunities.

If we compare Cambourne with Bar Hill, the other new settlement in the region built in the late sixties, the first thing that strikes you is that the design of the houses, the architecture of the business park, the road layout and green areas are much better in Cambourne than in Bar Hill. Bar Hill has, however, got time on its side and there is a strong sense of community. In time Cambourne will settle in a similar way and it is likely to be a popular place to live.

There has been considerable new development in Cambridge. The main difference between Cambourne and all of these existing and proposed developments is location. The housing in Cambridge will be nearer jobs and services than housing in Cambourne can be.

Perhaps most interestingly we need to ask whether the development proposed for Northstowe will be any more sustainable. If many people use the guided bus to get to work rather than cars, and if Northstowe provides a much better range of shops and services than Cambourne, then it might be.

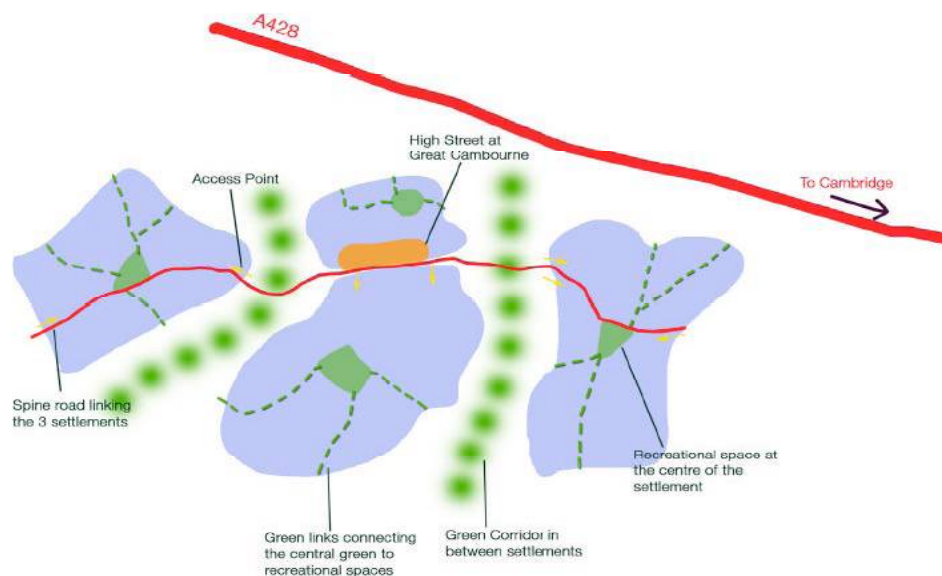
## 2 Introduction

Two questions underpin this study. Firstly, does Cambourne meet the objectives of the original Master Plan? And secondly, can we learn lessons that can guide future large scale development? These two questions throw up further strategic questions and many issues of detail, for example, is there an ideal size and density for new settlements, how can affordable housing be successfully integrated, what type of housing is needed and how should the whole process be managed?



Cambourne is a new settlement 10 miles west of Cambridge. It takes the form of three villages (Lower, Great and Upper Cambourne) separated by two shallow green valleys radiating out from the settlement centre, which now has a supermarket, shops, pub, library, health centre and community hall. It is bounded to the north by the new A428 dual carriageway from Cambridge to Bedford and on the other sides by a fence and ditch. The housing reflects the vernacular styles of local villages. The non-domestic buildings are fairly bland and there is a business park of well designed modern offices.

The idea of a new settlement west of Cambridge was first mooted in 1988. Outline planning permission was granted in 1994, the Master Plan and Design Guide were approved in 1996 and work started on site in June 1998. Wimpey took over from McAlpine and Randall Thorp Landscape Architects took over the master planning from Terry Farrell & Partners. Cambourne's current projected size is 4,250 homes (increased recently from the original planning permission for 3,300 homes) and at the time of this study in 2007 just over half have been built. At 2.6 people per household this will give a population of 10-11,000.



Chosen settlement type. Cambourne Master Plan 1995, Prepared by Terry Farrell & Partners

To put Cambourne in context, 47,500 new homes are planned for the Cambridge region which gives a projected population increase of about 112,000 people. The current population in the region is 475,000 so the projected increase is nearly a quarter. This will have a big impact on the local economy, the demand for services and traffic congestion.

There are also various proposals by developers to extend Cambourne, the most likely of which is a proposal for 4,000 homes to the east on the Bourn Airfield site. There is also development pressure for new housing in surrounding villages like Caldecote, Papworth, Elsworth and Comberton. These conflict with the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. The LDF classifies Cambourne as a Rural Centre. Rural centres are defined as *'the larger more sustainable villages which generally have a population of at least 3,000 and have good access to a secondary school, i.e. Shelford and Stapleford, Histon and Impington, and Sawston'*. Northstowe is defined as a New Town.

The key organisations involved in Cambourne's development are the master planners Terry Farrell & Partners, the Cambourne developers consortium of Wimpey, Bovis and Bryant; Randall Thorp Landscape Architects, the housing association consortium of Cambridge Housing Society, Circle Anglia and Granta Housing Society; South Cambridgeshire District Council; Cambourne Parish Council (previously the Management Liaison Group); the Cambourne Residents Association (who produce the *Cambourne Crier*) and the Cambourne Service Providers Liaison Group.

It is hoped that this evaluation of Cambourne will shed light on these questions and provide lessons for the development of other new settlements proposed in the region – at Northstowe, Marshall's (Cambridge airport) and Trumpington.

Different stakeholders may assess Cambourne with different priorities.

Developers, house builders and estate agents are likely to be interested in improved ease of obtaining planning permission, increased saleability of the houses and reduced investment risk.

Planners may be concerned with issues such as minimising the need to travel by providing housing near to jobs and services.

Social landlords may be concerned with factors that reduce maintenance and management costs.

Prospective residents will be concerned about the quality of the local environment, the provision of local services, transport links, the future sale price of their homes and the good-neighbourliness of people living nearby.

Existing residents in the region will be concerned that the new housing doesn't affect their quality of life. They will be resistant if the new homes put pressure on existing services and roads and more supportive where the new homes make local services and public transport more viable.

And finally, as a society, factors related to social cohesion and long-term stability may be important.

### 3 Method

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This evaluation of Cambourne involved a review of existing reports and surveys, observation by the author and a survey of 55 'stakeholders'. 26 people were interviewed, the majority by telephone, and 34 responded to a paper-based survey.

The approach is ethnographic and the stakeholders, most of whom know Cambourne well because they live or work there, have largely been allowed to speak for themselves.



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This was a relatively small study conducted in March 2007. The whole study from contract to completion took only three months and was conducted by one person. This speed of delivery was necessary to discover if Cambourne had met the objectives of the master plan in order to provide input to decisions being made about Northstowe and other major developments in the region. Nevertheless, given these constraints, the methodology was rigorous and thorough. There was a high response rate to both the telephone interviews and paper survey. A copy of the survey forms is provided in the Appendix.

#### Interviews

The following list of prompts were used in the interviews.

- What's your job/role?
- How well do you know Cambourne?
- What do you think of Cambourne?
- What works well? What works less well?
- If we were to redo Cambourne what should we do differently?
- What's better about Cambourne than other similar sized villages like Comberton?
- What are the pros and cons compared with living in Cambridge?
- If you could magically change Cambourne, what would you do?
- Is Cambourne any more sustainable than anywhere else in South Cambs?
- Do you think opportunities were missed to make Cambourne more sustainable?

#### Survey

People were asked to evaluate Cambourne against three sets of criteria. (See Appendix)

- 1 **Master Plan objectives:** to what extent does Cambourne meet the objectives outlined in the 1996 Master Plan?
- 2 **CABE's Building for Life Questions:** how does Cambourne measure up against CABE's 20 Building for Life Questions?
- 3 **InspireEast's Excellence Framework:** how does Cambourne measure up against InspireEast's new Excellence Framework?

## **Approach**

The approach adopted is ethnographic and the information presented is based on the interviews and paper-based survey with stakeholders, most of whom know Cambourne well, either because they live or work there or because they are responsible for its design or provide a service. The intention has been, with minor editing, to let the stakeholders speak for themselves by reporting their views as quotations.

However two things should be clarified. Firstly people say things in interview that they may later wish to reconsider. So a draft was circulated to all the stakeholders asking them to correct errors of fact and offering them the opportunity to moderate or change their views. Secondly it is important to stress that the views expressed are those of the individual people interviewed and do not represent the official position of the organisations these people belong to.

The insights in each chapter are summarised with lessons relevant to the development of other settlements.

The author has tried as far as possible to see Cambourne with fresh eyes and offer an unbiased assessment based on the evidence collected. Nevertheless, in doing a study like this an author will form a personal opinion which may colour the way the findings are expressed. So it is important, in the interests of objectivity, to inform the reader of this position.

Overall the author's view is that Cambourne, both physically and socially, is a success.

## 4 Some facts

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The Research Group of Cambridgeshire County Council published a survey of Cambourne residents in July 2006 which has been compared with 2001 Census data for South Cambridgeshire and the city of Cambridge.

A total of 816 households answered the Cambourne survey, a response rate of 41%. Current house price information was obtained from Land Registry data.



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### Where people moved from and why

Over half the residents of Cambourne are local. 16% came from Cambridge and 42% from elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. 30% came from other places in the South East (including London), 8% from elsewhere in the UK and 4% from abroad. There is anecdotal evidence from interviews that later arrivals came from farther afield than pioneers. The main reason people gave for leaving their previous home were: wanting a different size of house (30%), to be nearer work (24%), or for a better quality of life (16%).

Cambourne was marketed as a new village with open space and traditionally designed houses. The main reasons people gave for moving to Cambourne were: appearance of property (39%), like the idea of living in a village (37%) and house price (25%). People mentioned in the interviews that they felt they got more for their money in Cambourne, especially in terms of number of bedrooms and new kitchen and bathroom fittings.

A number of people interviewed mentioned that the population of Cambourne is highly mobile. 40% of households intend to stay less than three years, 13% aren't sure how long they'll stay and 47% say they intend to stay three years or more.

### Household composition

Cambourne has a younger population than the rest of the region. 30% of Cambourne residents are children aged up to 16 (compared to 22% in S.Cambs) and 42% are aged between 30-44 (compared to 23% in S.Cambs). 42% of households have children at home (compared with only 30% in S.Cambs) and 13% have at least one person of pensionable age (compared with 22% in S.Cambs). This pattern of families with young children is typical of most new settlements.

### Dwellings

70% of homes have 3 or more bedrooms (63% in S.Cambs) and 35% of homes are detached houses (43% in S.Cambs and 11% in Cambridge).

In 2006 the tenure mix in Cambourne was very similar to that in the rest of S.Cambs. 72% were owner occupied (75% in S.Cambs and 54% in Cambridge); 15% were rented from social landlords (15% in S.Cambs) and 9% were privately rented (5% in S.Cambs). The

tenure mix in Cambourne will change as the proposed proportion of affordable housing increases in later phases.

### **House prices**

Cambridge is one of the most expensive places to live in Britain. In February 2007 the average cost of a home in the UK was £185,000. In Cambridge the average price was £280,000 and in S.Cambs £253,000. (Land Registry of England and Wales, Crown copyright.)

In Cambourne prices are similar to S.Cambs but less than in Cambridge – 15-20% lower for all sizes of dwelling. This means that you pay about £50,000 less for a three or four bed house in Cambourne and £100,000 less for a five bed house than in the City. (Source: [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)) Room size and plot size of large houses with five or more bedrooms are usually smaller in Cambourne than in Cambridge or S.Cambs.

### **Work**

The majority of employed Cambourne residents (71%) work in managerial, professional or technical occupations. This is the new National Statistics Socio-economic Class 2: Lower managerial and professional occupations, or the old Socio-economic Groups B and C1.

### **Travel and car ownership**

Contrary to the widely held view that most Cambourne residents commute, only 6% of Cambourne's employed travel to work in London, most of whom drive to St Neots station and catch the King's Cross train. Having said that, only 3% of Cambridge employed work in London.

The majority of Cambourne's employed (71%) travel less than 20km to work or study, the distance to Cambridge. Only 8% travel more than 40km. This pattern is similar to that in the rest of S.Cambs. However, only 19% employed in Cambourne travel short distances of less than 5km compared to 37% in S.Cambs. This means that the average distance to work and study for Cambourne residents is farther than for other S.Cambs residents, about 23km compared with 15km.

This greater distance is reflected in slightly greater car use and less cycling and walking. 81% of Cambourne residents travel by car compared with 78% of S.Cambs and only 8% walk or cycle compared with 14% in South Cambs. 11% of Cambourne residents use the train or bus. The difference is greater if we compare Cambourne with Cambridge City. In Cambridge only 42% use their car for work or school and 40% cycle or walk. It is possible that, with regular bus services from Cambourne to Cambridge, the proportion of people using public transport has increased.

Car ownership is high. 95% of households have at least one motor vehicle compared with only 68% in Cambridge and 88% in S.Cambs. Over half of Cambourne households (56%) have 2 or more vehicles, compared with 38% of S.Cambs. households and only 21% of Cambridge City households.

### **Schools**

In Cambourne, 97% of children attend state schools compared with about 80% in Cambridge and 87% in S.Cambs.

In contrast to the journey to work, most nursery and primary age children walk to school. In Cambridge and S.Cambs a much higher proportion are taken by car. The percentage of children walking to school is only 32% in Cambridge and 30% in S.Cambs. The percentage of children cycling to school is 13% in Cambridge and 5% in S.Cambs. Not only are homes closer to school, but the Heads at the two primary schools say that parents feel safer about letting their children go to school unaccompanied than they did elsewhere.

### **Shopping**

74% of residents do their main food shopping at Morrison's in Cambourne; 11% go to Tesco's at Bar Hill and only 10% go to Cambridge or St Neots. Not surprisingly, since there are few other shops in Cambourne, 80% of residents do their non-food shopping in Cambridge.

### **Resident likes and dislikes**

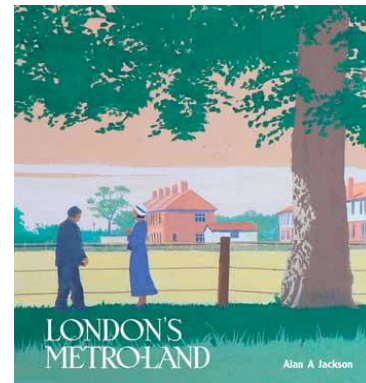
In order, the things that people most like about living in Cambourne are the environment (43%), quiet (20%), nice people (18%), new house (16%) sense of community (15%) and schools (13%). The things people dislike are the slow provision of services (34%), youth behaviour (30%), poor range of shops (23%) and traffic (15%).

### **Sources**

The population figures are drawn from *Census 2001* data [www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001) and from *Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group Mid-2006 Population Forecasts*. The school data has been obtained from the *January 2007 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data*. The Cambourne figures are drawn from the *Cambourne Survey 2006*. House price information was obtained from *Land Registry of England and Wales* data published on [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk).

## 5 Master Plan vision

The marketing of Cambourne painted an idyll in which families could get the best of both worlds – a place in the country with urban amenities. This marketing harks back to the Garden City movement and the advertising of new London suburbs in the 20s and 30s which emphasised the social benefits of living in high quality housing with open space. The suburbs were painted as a place where *I might be Master of a Small House and a Large Garden*. Will the Cambourne vision have such a widespread influence?



Bovis advertises its development in Cambourne as: *Fantastic new modern facilities springing up and acres of beautifully landscaped open spaces and woodland, make Cambourne the perfect combination of town and country living.* ([www.bovishomes.co.uk](http://www.bovishomes.co.uk)) George Wimpey's website says, *Cambourne actually comprises three villages, each radiating out from a green and having its own distinct character. They are separated by many acres of green open space, lakes and woodland...*



Cambourne Master Plan 1995, Terry Farrell & Partners

In some ways Cambourne delivers this vision. There is green space and the homes are new. As Gary Young, Terry Farrell & Partners' project manager for the Master Plan said when he saw the built Cambourne for the first time, *It works. As far as I can see 70% of the Master Plan objectives have been met.*

The main aim of the master planners was to reinterpret the ideal of English villages linked to a town centre. In a way this was an ambitious strategy knowing how shops in small towns are struggling to stay in business. We would have liked to have provided a pub and a local shop in each of the three villages, but we knew this wasn't going to happen, so we planned to locate these common facilities at the top of the settlement within walking distance of most homes. Gary Young, Terry Farrell & Partners

## Master Plan Objectives

For the purposes of this study the key objectives are summarised in Table 1. In the paper-based survey stakeholders were asked to say to what extent they feel Cambourne meets these objectives.

People think that two of the six objectives, ecology and rural character, have largely been met. More than anything, people appreciate the areas of woodland that have been retained.

The marketing dream or concept for Cambourne was of beautiful couples cycling through leafy woods, making a new life in the heart of the country – a village Utopia. Some of this dream has been delivered. There are nice walks and everything is within walking or cycling distance. Peter Bailey, GP, Cambourne

Master Plan Objective	met	neither met nor unmet	unmet
<b>4 Ecology</b> Protection of existing habitats and species. Enhanced biodiversity. Creation of new habitats characteristic of area.	74%	23%	3%
<b>3 Rural character</b> Attractive rural landscape of parkland, woodland and intimate open space integrated harmoniously into wider expanse of South Cambs arable farmland.	62%	19%	19%
<b>5 Transport</b> Services and facilities within walking or cycling range. Attractive cycle ways and walks. Motor vehicles not dominant. Good public transport to wider area.	38%	31%	31%
<b>1 Village character</b> Settlement will respect the traditional character and settlement patterns of English of villages and market towns, particularly those in S.Cambs.	33%	37%	30%
<b>2 Community</b> Village life centred around activities and buildings that contribute to social and community well-being.	26%	39%	35%
<b>6 Energy</b> Low energy buildings, energy efficient homes, renewable energy supplies. Rain harvesting, composting and recycling.	26%	33%	41%

**Table 1: Master Plan Objectives** – Stakeholder views on achievement of the Master Plan objectives from the paper survey (responses = 34)

But people are divided on whether Cambourne really achieves the key objective of reinterpreting the character of an English village. People believed that they could have the benefits and amenities of a town in a rural setting with plenty of open space. As one person interviewed said, *new residents are buying into the lifestyle of a self-contained rural community in the heart of Cambridgeshire.*

People are agreed that although Cambourne might have been sold as a village or as three villages, it isn't. Technically, in the planning jargon, it's a 'rural centre'. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

I was surprised that the term village was used for Cambourne. People bought into the idea, but Cambourne doesn't function as three villages. They don't each have the facilities or character – shops, a pub, a church. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

Yet it is worth emphasising that many residents really like Cambourne and want it to thrive.

I really like the stand-alone size of the place, its growing sense of identity. It's not an anonymous suburb like so many other new places. I'm delighted with the open space and like the quality of the Cambourne schools. It has the potential, with time, of becoming a much more characterful place. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

Cambourne is different. It's a new form of settlement. In essence, it's a large housing estate with some of the character of a village and some of the amenities of a town. Maybe we need to coin a new name for this type of place. The distinction between rural and urban settlements is generally regarded as 10,000 people and Cambourne may exceed this.

The crucial difference between Cambourne and surrounding villages is that it is much bigger and much denser. Village dwellings generally have more generous gardens. Even on the more densely developed village high streets, the houses often have long gardens with outbuildings. And they usually have a church and a pub. Small towns generally have a much wider range of shops and retail outlets. But Cambourne is much better than many housing estates that have been built in the last ten years. Given the current planning strictures of high density development on brown-field land, will Cambourne prove to be something of a one-off, never to be repeated? The views of one of the planning officers for Cambourne are interesting.

They marketed Cambourne as a village and used the forms and materials of local villages. It worked, the houses were popular and sold. There is a difference of overall character though. For example, old villages exhibit dramatic differences in storey height. Today this isn't possible with building regs. There have been attempts to create character in different areas for legibility, with higher density development in the centre. However, in Lower Cambourne there is a tendency to lurch from one style to another. Overall Cambourne does not really have the character of a village. It has the character of a new settlement. Density declines from the centre but the developers can't make the periphery as low a density as a traditional village so they have succeeded in creating a gradation of density. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

And, most significantly, the three key objectives that give a measure of sustainability – transport, community and energy – don't seem to have been met.

Cambourne is no more sustainable than other places. The idea was that you wouldn't have to drive out to work or play, that it would be self-contained. This hasn't happened and anyway it doesn't sound healthy to me. People need to move around and mix. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School.

## Lessons

- 5.1 The Master Plan vision for a new settlement tends to get watered down as the plan is put into practice. But in Cambourne, the consensus is that some of the vision has been achieved.
- 5.2 Cambourne is not, either in terms of size or character, a village as was originally conceived. Nor is it a small town. It is in fact a new hybrid for which we lack a name. (Maybe it is an 'exurb' from the American term for detached suburbs – 'exurbia'.)
- 5.3 Given the Government's imperative to build at higher densities on brownfield land, a settlement like Cambourne may never get approved again. If so, Cambourne may prove to be unique.
- 5.4 The key objectives of sustainability embodied in the Master Plan, of self-sufficiency and high performance environmental design do not seem to have been met.
- 5.5 Cambourne is not self-contained in terms of jobs, secondary schools or services. Consequently car use and car ownership is high. However, the number of local jobs and services is increasing.

## 6 Size and location

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Cambourne is located nine miles from Cambridge and three miles from the nearest secondary school in Comberton. It was planned to accommodate 3,300 homes on 1,030 acres of land. Numbers are projected to rise to 4,200 homes. This is a fairly low density and the green spaces – the village greens, greenways, lakes and woodland – create an impression of space. The density varies from flats and three-storey terraces in the centre to detached houses on the periphery.



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There is pressure to grow bigger from developers and house builders and resistance from residents who want Cambourne to stay the same size. Local councillors are concerned about this conflict of interest.

We are facing pressure from developers to make Cambourne much bigger. Three new developments have been proposed – 6,000 homes on Bourn Airfield; 4,000 north of the A428 towards Papworth and 1-2,000 towards Caxton. This is going to create a town by engulfing a number of villages, villages that were given assurances that Cambourne wouldn't grow more than 3,300. Other villages are also being targeted for development. Caldecote for example is being targeted by developers wanting to build 3-700 homes. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne PC

We haven't the road system to take 5-6,000 homes. People bought into the idea of three separate villages totalling 3,300 homes maximum. The inspector has agreed an enhanced size of 4-4,200 homes but we risk a legal challenge from residents about misrepresentation and miss-selling. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

If enhanced Cambourne goes ahead this may kill off all local businesses in surrounding villages. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

Developers have too much money and power and they always want more. They delayed finishing Great Cambourne because they couldn't get the densities they wanted at the periphery and continued building once they'd managed to get higher densities in Lower Cambourne. The problem is there isn't sufficient planning approval to build the third village so they are negotiating for an additional 1,000 homes which will bring the total close to the 4,800 that was rejected by the planning inspector on appeal. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne PC

The developers insist this is nonsense.

We developed Lower Cambourne before finishing the southern end of Greater Cambourne because it was more efficient in terms of the creation of the attenuation lakes needed to manage run-off. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

Some stakeholders, admittedly most of whom are not resident in Cambourne, acknowledge that there is a critical mass that would make Cambourne more sustainable.

Cambourne should be bigger and 6-8,000 homes would provide a secondary school. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

The expansion space included in the building from the outset ensures that the library will increase when needed to serve the community as it grows. We already do a lot, but it would be nice to do more. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

It's not the right size. It's too big for a village and too small for a town. It should be bigger. The planners should have been braver. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

### **The lessons learned from how growth pressures can work on a new settlement have implications for Northstowe.**

Northstowe was initially planned at 6,000 homes on 750 acres. Numbers have now increased to 8,000. During consultation, the residents of the adjacent village of Longstanton negotiated an area of separation with a green way. But this is likely to disappear in the latest plans as the government has lifted the ceiling on numbers and ruled that 10,000 homes are permissible. There will be very little open space and the development will be quite unlike Cambourne with its generous green space. It will be just somewhere to live. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne PC

### **Location**

**Cambourne is located on a green field site 9-10 miles west of Cambridge on the road to Bedford.**

It's built in the worst place in Cambridge at the top of a ridge 240' above sea level which makes it very windy. No-one wanted it here. It's 3° colder up here than down in Bourn and the north-east wind cuts right through the village. But you get used to it. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

**There is the lack of connection to surrounding villages.**

The Master Plan set out ideas for footpaths linking Cambourne to the surrounding countryside but in the consultation process people in neighbouring villages who were opposed to a large new settlement pressed for separation. This has meant that Cambourne is poorly integrated into the surrounding agricultural landscape. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

There had to be respect for other communities in the area. This was a political issue as the Council wanted to address the concerns of the residents of local villages about amalgamation. So there is no easy way to get from Cambourne to the surrounding settlements. And there is no safe cycle way to Cambridge. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

It's in the country, but it doesn't feel like it. The countryside isn't that nice. And it feels like an adjunct to Cambridge, only a long way. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

**Although Cambridgeshire is not one of the best counties for walking in terms of drama or challenge, this is one of the nicest parts of the County and are beautiful walks to Bourn, Elsworth and Knapwell and even to Cambridge through Hardwick and Coton.**

Cambourne is surrounded on three sides by a perimeter fence and ditch, and on the north side it is bounded by the A428 dual carriageway. There is only one crossing over the A428, using the access road flyover. So to reach any attractive footpath involves a stretch of road walking across the flyover, and along the old A428. There has been no attempt to advertise these walks from Cambourne, so many residents may be unaware of them. Roger Moreton, Ramblers Association

**Various people complained about this isolation.**

It would have been nice, they say, to stroll to a pub in one of the villages rather than have to drive. These pedestrian rights of way should have been established before building started. There is a need now to make

these links, to establish seamless connections with lanes to surrounding villages and to sign these footpaths from within Cambourne. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

There are plans for some of the pathways to be dedicated as public rights of way, but this provision could be usefully extended, and some formal definition applied to the majority of paths, in order to guarantee continued public access and to clarify responsibilities for their maintenance. Roger Moreton, Ramblers Association

There does seem to be a lack of connection to some surrounding villages and Cambourne is poorly integrated into the surrounding countryside. This may have been intentional, since the residents of existing villages were largely opposed to Cambourne being built. A new settlement should have good pedestrian and cycle links to local footpaths and bridleways and these rights of way need to be established well in advance of construction.

The developers insist that these footpath links were established and upheld. There are, in fact, three footpath links to the south: a footpath and a bridleway to Caxton and a footpath to Bourn that involves a short stretch of road. But a footpath to Bourn windmill is blocked two metres from the Cambourne boundary. It is also much more difficult to reach footpaths to villages to the north since walking around the traffic interchange into Cambourne to cross the A428 is inhospitable and intimidating. This is unfortunate since in many ways this area is one of the most attractive parts of the county. It might seem that this issue of footpath access is insignificant in the complex planning of a new settlement, but these linkages are important in creating a civilised environment. More might have been done both to improve footpath access and to publicise it.



Bourn Windmill. Possibly the oldest windmill in Britain

This failure to integrate new settlements with their surroundings seems to be a feature common to other large housing developments in the region at Bar Hill, Trumpington and the NIAB Huntingdon Road site. Planners and developers must resist the pressure from existing residents who may feel threatened by the proposed development by explaining the dangers of creating ghettos unless new housing is integrated into the fabric of the surrounding area.

Nor are the pedestrian connections between the settlements within Cambourne as good as they might be.

There is a lack of permeability of the minor roads between different groups of housing. Developers don't seem to want this permeability and fence things off. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

Walking round Cambourne is also something of an adventure since it is difficult to get any detailed maps, and because the layout is constantly changing. Street plans showing road-names and footpaths, on local display-boards and in printed form, would be useful. Roger Moreton, Ramblers Association

Provision for disabled access is poor. There are big kerbs at junctions and metal barriers on the sidewalks to deter cyclists which create obstacles for wheel chairs and buggies.

Access to footpaths and the lakes is difficult. And in some homes there is restricted access to front doors through narrow parking and garage spaces. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

In line with the Design Guide, a decision was made early on to keep the paths as rural as possible and this may be part of the problem of disabled access. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

## Lessons

- 6.1 There is immense pressure from developers for Cambourne to grow, possibly to double its present size. This growth pressure beyond the original numbers allocated in the planning permission is probably a feature of most new settlements.
- 6.2 A doubling in size would allow a secondary school to be built and would make other facilities like shops and services more viable. Northstowe is planned to be twice the size of Cambourne.
- 6.3 There is a lack of connection to surrounding villages to the north and Cambourne is poorly integrated into the surrounding countryside. A new settlement should have good pedestrian and cycle links to all local footpaths and bridleways and these rights of way need to be established well in advance of construction.
- 6.4 Developers reduce the intended permeability of a new settlement by fencing off different parcels of housing. Nevertheless pedestrian access within Cambourne is generally very good.

## 7 Built form and green space

The objective of the Master Plan for Cambourne was to *respect the traditional character and settlement patterns of English villages and market towns, particularly those in South Cambridgeshire*. But the size of the settlement and the form and density of the buildings is quite different from that found in villages. A secondary objective was to create three communities divided by green space. This open space is one of the most appreciated features of Cambourne and without it Cambourne would feel much less rural.



Most people will only see Cambourne as they roar past on the A428 and the impression they get is of an estate of little boxes. This is unfair. If one takes the trouble to enter Cambourne, get out of one's car and walk round, one's second impression is better. Making allowance for its newness and the contrivance implicit in the reflection of traditional village forms, many parts of Cambourne are very attractive. Supermarkets are not noted for their architecture, but Morrison's has been successfully integrated into the High Street with the car park at the back. A major problem is that the High Street is less than half built and there are few shops in the completed part which creates a bad impression on new people and visitors.

Cambourne compares favourably with much other new housing in the Cambridge area. One of the things that strike you as a visitor is that everywhere is neat and tidy. There is no vandalism, no graffiti and very little litter. The village greens are well kept, there are no broken trees or smashed benches. Individual gardens are well tended. All this suggests that people are proud of living here.

Cambourne doesn't have the desolate feel of many new housing estates. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

The design of the aesthetic of the housing is subjective, and anyway it's what people want. But the civic buildings could have been much better and the architecture in the centre is pretty poor. If Farrells had been retained for the central hub, it would have been designed better. Some of the civic buildings could have been much better. But there are some good buildings along Broad Street and the Belfry Hotel is not bad. Maybe the Design Guide should have been more prescriptive in specifying the design intent for key buildings. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

### Some people are quite critical of the architecture.

People feel let down by the design. They feel we haven't been proactive enough in insisting on quality. I'm not sure that the pastiche works or whether it was worth the effort. The emphasis was on making it look nice, but people aren't getting the space of a traditional rural development. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

The architecture is a dismal failure – an unadventurous pastiche with barely a nod to energy conservation. But I like the layout with everything within walking distance. People can go for a walk and enjoy the green spaces. It's better than the unremitting density planned for Northstowe. Peter Bailey, GP, Cambourne

Volume house builders provide a very different product to the RSLs. They say people want to buy them, but if that's all there is, then people will have no choice but to buy them. The RSL's have been more adventurous with their eco-homes and people have approached the RSLs about purchasing them. Sarah Lyons, Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire DC

#### **And others are more positive about the design aesthetic.**

People are generally pleased with the housing and design. People in the eco-homes really love them. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

As a design it's a nice place, a good place. It's open with lots of green space and is at the lower end of the Government's recommended density. I like the openness and the breaks between the three villages. The layout and mix of housing is impressive. Care was taken with style, form and mix. Other new settlements have too few designs and seem monotonous. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne PC

The architecture is very good, mainly due to the designers and filtering by the planning department. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

Fresh, open and well laid out. Some of the architecture is very attractive, although some of the flats look out of place. Overall they have created a pleasant place to live with a good community feel. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

We put our house on the market and chose a plot. That's the big advantage of a new village, you get the opportunity to choose where to live in the landscape. We knew it was planned to have a library, a health centre and a supermarket. We were coming up to retirement and knew we could manage. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council

#### **There may be an issue with the size of homes being built.**

Developers are refusing to acknowledge the demand from smaller households for 1-2 bed homes. The apartments are not very nice. The 2-bed flats are much too small. This part of the sustainability agenda seems underplayed. Larger 1-2 bed homes are seen as part of the affordability agenda rather than as part of a balanced community providing lifetime homes for all age groups. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

#### **The developers would disagree.**

We pride ourselves on the mix of homes we provide. 30% are 1-2 bed; 30% are 3 bed and the rest 4-6 bed. There is also some sheltered housing and we are considering providing a care home. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

#### **The impressions of the planners are interesting.**

The settlement is new, easy to get to and a pleasant place to live. It's a product of its time. In some ways it was ahead of its time. Whether people like Cambourne in the long term and want to continue to live here is a question. I think it will be extremely popular. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

Cambourne doesn't hold together – the separate clusters don't gel. The centre doesn't work yet either visually or functionally, the architecture is unexceptional and there is no sense of place. Sawston is a real village with a church, old family houses, shops and centre. It holds together. My initial response is that we haven't learnt how to design new communities. It could be its newness is part of the issue. The question is, will it become more of a centre? The business park and hotel are brave attempts at reasonably distinctive architecture. But the business park is isolated when it could have been integrated into the village centre. I would have preferred a tighter development with a mix of uses integrated with housing. There should be more opportunities for small scale businesses. The main disadvantage is the limited range of amenities and local jobs. People look to Cambridge as a service centre. Then again, over time people will probably enjoy living in Cambourne. The

architecture is more successful than Bar Hill. I have friends in Bar Hill. They like it, it works for them. It meets their needs. Cambourne may well be the same. Brian Human, Head of Policy and Projects, Cambridge CC

More than anything in Cambourne, people appreciate the green space. There is an 80-acre country park with lakes and a 20-acre eco park. The woodland is delightfully natural and greenways between the houses create a sense of space. There are two allotments. There is an active allotment society that has attracted a whole new memberships of families interested in growing their own organic food.

It's lovely here. I've never lived in the city. I like the open space. There are lovely walks. Ruth Poulton, Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council

They didn't put in the community facilities from the start. You need a health centre, a community building and somewhere for young people from day one. You need to get the facilities in place earlier. We need a church and a place to sit and be quiet. The community centre is too small. When planning a new settlement you have to recognise the possible future extent. Ruth Poulton, Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council

People really appreciate the open green spaces, the country park, the woods and greenways. Whenever we ask, that's what people mention most. One of my fears for Northstowe is that there won't be anywhere near the same amount of open space. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

The green spaces, the woodland, eco park and lakes, the recreation areas and greens, are brilliant. For some, the walking, cycling and allotments are a great attraction. Children cycle, roller blade and skateboard to school. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

The wildlife areas work well and residents appreciate all the green space. There is a lot more green space within the community, it's not just village greens. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

It doesn't look like a conventional housing estate because the housing has been linked into the green space with village greens and greenways. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

I like the integration of green spaces – the village greens and greenways. They give the place a distinctive and recognisable character. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

In Cambourne there is more contact with nature. You can walk into green areas practically from your front door. You can walk through green space on your way to work. It's the most successful thing about the Master Plan. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

The 'green cities' movement argues that nature should be encouraged to permeate the built environment. A recent report by Urbed for the Town and Country Planning Association entitled *Bioversity by Design* describes how master planning can establish a 'green infrastructure network'.

Dick Longdin, the master planner from Randall Thorp, landscape master planners, says how this was achieved in Cambourne.

The landscape and environment are exceptional – the open spaces and their value for people and wildlife. It wasn't expensive though. A lot of detailed thought went into it. I'm particularly proud of the way the existing trees and woodland were retained. Apart from the road widening, only a handful of trees were lost. The site was rather bleak and featureless. Now it seems well treed, but it was achieved with careful planning of site lines and views so that the same trees are seen from different angles and contexts. This has worked really



well and gives a feeling of maturity and sense of place. Dick Longdin, Master Planner, Randall Thorp

The landscape designers and master planners have taken full advantage of the original woodland to create pleasant walks which act as sort-cuts from housing to the centre of the village. The well established woodland flora is full of wild flowers and filled with bird-song. Although these green wooded spaces are not large they afford an experience of ‘wildness’ only five hundred metres from the centre.

One of the main factors in the success of the green space is the on-site management by the Wildlife Trust.

We are very fortunate to have the Wildlife Trust managing the local ecosystem and encouraging the use of the allotments. Not every village has experts like this on hand who are so pro-active in involving the community with teaching sessions and walks on how to appreciate the environment and nature. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

There is a big advantage having the Wildlife Trust on the doorstep because they care for the green spaces. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

Cambourne is highly regarded by residents and visitors alike, and combined with ecology it gives a lifestyle they enjoy. Cambourne is considered to be an exemplar development by the Wildlife Trust and is also well regarded by Natural England. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

The Wildlife Trust’s officer described some of the maintenance issues she deals with.

There are minor things we can learn from, like trees planted further apart so we could mow between them more easily. And fences that were easier to repair rather than the rather twee rustic fences with mortised posts and chamfered rails the planners insist on. These are easy to break and difficult to repair because the posts need to be pushed apart to slot in a replacement rail. The narrow winding streets were designed as a traffic calming measure and have caused problems with cars and lorries having to mount the kerb and damaging the grass. The planners want to keep things looking rural and are resistant to the use of bollards. But people park on the grass verge and something needs to be done. We didn’t anticipate these problems and the extra expense when we took on responsibility for maintenance. We also get minor vandalism – littering, knocking over trees and breaking fences. But this isn’t Sheffield and we have much more problems in our urban reserves. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

Cambourne offers some families what they want in terms of value for money.

The population is predominately young families. They talk about the open spaces and how much they like the green space. They like the quality of the new housing. But they have small gardens. It suits some people. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

People get more house for their money in terms of number of bedrooms, but the houses have small gardens and the houses are close together. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

## Lessons

- 7.1 Cambourne is much more attractive than the impression one gets speeding past on the A428 to Bedford and, compared to other new housing in the region, the design and layout of the housing is fairly good and there are many parts of Cambourne that are very attractive.
- 7.2 Some people are, however, critical of the design quality of the housing in Cambourne. They dislike what they see as a pastiche and deride the quality of mass

produced housing by volume house builders. Nevertheless they are popular with new residents and have sold well and other stakeholders are much more positive. In part these differences of opinion are matters of taste rather than substance.

- 7.3 The design of some of the civic buildings in the centre is mediocre. The architecture is bland and the High Street is unfinished five or six years into the development. This creates a bad impression on visitors.
- 7.4 One of the best things about Cambourne is the ecology. People very much appreciate the areas of woodland that have been retained and the green spaces that have been created.
- 7.5 A key to the success of the green space is that the local Wildlife Trust is responsible for maintenance and is based in Cambourne.

## 8 Environmental design and sustainability

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Cambourne was planned ten years ago when the sustainability agenda was not as advanced as today. Nevertheless the Cambourne Master Plan opens with the following statement. “The primary aim for the development of Cambourne which is embodied in the Master Plan is Sustainability.”



How well do stakeholders feel Cambourne realises this aim?

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Stakeholders are not impressed by what has been achieved in Cambourne in terms of environmental design and sustainability.

A lot more could be done. The only sustainable housing is the housing association development. They have solar panels, PV and conservatories. The private housing is fairly standard although it's claimed to be 10% above buildings regs. But the original master planning was some time ago before sustainability and renewable energy were so high on the agenda. We can retrofit things later but it would have been much more cost effective to install things like solar panels and water collection from the beginning. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

What do you mean by sustainability? I would have liked to have seen very high standards of insulation and other energy saving measures in all buildings. As for the location, Cambourne's not on a rail line but we do have a bus service. In this respect Cambourne is just the same as other local villages. To be a more sustainable location, where people live, work, study and shop locally Cambourne would have to be a lot bigger, but then it wouldn't be a village. I'm not sure you can have the best of both worlds. On a positive note our ecologist told me Cambourne now has greater biodiversity than the surrounding farmland due to the improved habitat for wildlife. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

The original master planner for Cambourne hints at the difficulties of pursuing a sustainable agenda.

We knew from the start that we would need at least 15,000 homes to have any chance of being reasonably self-contained and sustainable. There had been an intention to mix houses and facilities and private and social housing more. And we had planned to provide a CHP Biomass and to have very energy efficient housing. The aim was to set a very high standard which would have been an example in the region. But the idea was vetoed at the start. It would only have been viable if there had been no mains gas supply. Developers would not countenance a development without gas. They didn't believe they could sell houses without gas cooking. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

But the master planner for Cambourne lists some areas where Cambourne can claim sustainable credentials.

All spoil is disposed of on site. There is an incredibly rich wild life. When finished there will be more local jobs in Cambourne than in most villages. There is a higher percentage of environmentally designed houses. Drainage is very sustainable. The Environment Agency requires that storm water is stored on site and is released at a slow rate. This can be achieved with large capacity pipes. We decided to store water above ground in lakes, open ditches and reed beds. This reduces outfall and increases evaporation. It also creates a rich habitat and a pleasant environment for people. It was ground breaking at the time. There is the possibility

of using the old A428 as a fast bus lane to Cambridge. If we were planning Cambourne now we could use more renewable technology. Dick Longdin, Master Planner, Randall Thorp

**The housing associations developing the affordable housing have a greener agenda than the private house developers.**

It would have been nice if market housing had done more in terms of materials and technologies to make the houses greener. The HAs have been leading the way with the eco-homes. The private home owners love them and ask why can't we buy this kind of housing and can't private house builders do more. We got to the last twelve of the Sustainable Communities award. People from the ODPM said the eco-home provision should be standard on all new houses. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

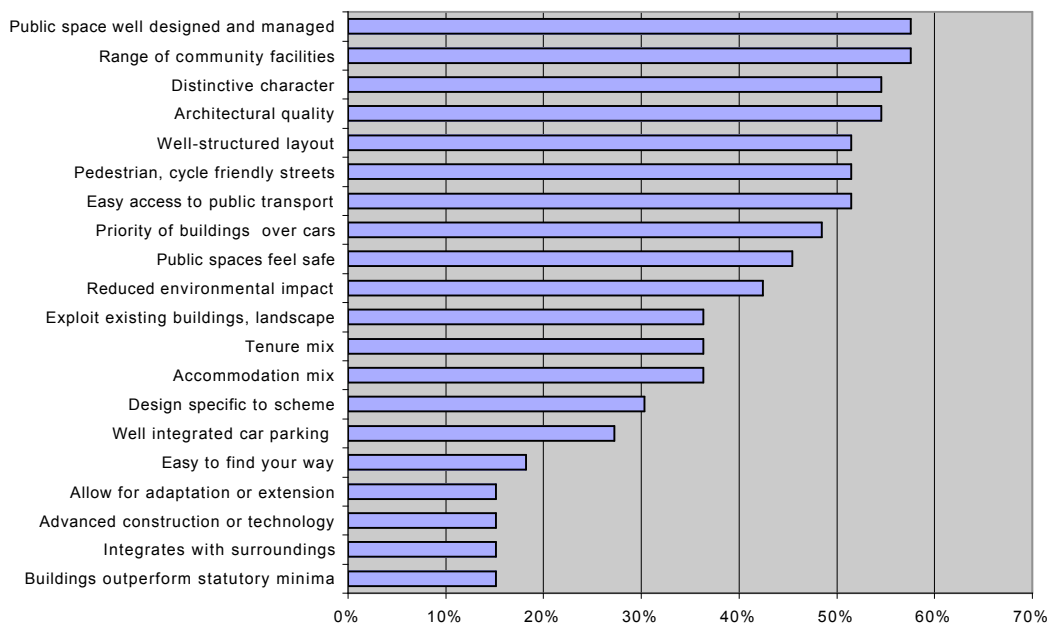
I don't believe it has to be a particular size to be sustainable. It's to do with how people behave. It still needs support as it's still growing. We missed the boat environmentally. We could have done more to make the houses greener and to consider power generation. Sarah Lyons, Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire DC

In terms of location it's obviously not sustainable. If it was more self-contained and you didn't have to travel to work, school or shops, then it would be. Of course opportunities were missed. Nowadays we would make more use of renewable energy technology and if Cambourne had been bigger it would have supported a secondary school. But as a product of its time it's good. Energy conservation and power generation is one area where the developers could have done more and we are looking to progress this in the future. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

We want to look at the use of renewables. Wind power seems the obvious answer but we want to do the research properly. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

**CABE's Building for Life Checklist**

The stakeholder survey used the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's Building for Life checklist to assess Cambourne.



**Table 2: CABB's Building for Life** – Stakeholder views from the paper survey (responses = 34)

Table 2 graphs Cambourne's performance in terms of CABB's Building for Life questions. Most interestingly, three of the four questions that stakeholders think Cambourne does best on are design issues. 55% or more stakeholders think that the 'Public space is well designed and managed', that Cambourne has a 'Distinctive character' and an 'Architectural quality'. 55% also think it offers a 'Range of community facilities'. Over 50% also think it has a 'Well structured layout', pedestrian and cycle friendly streets and 'Easy access to public transport'.

The four issues on which Cambourne really falls down are technical and could have been addressed. They are: 'Allows for adaptation or extension', 'Uses advanced construction', 'Integrates with its surroundings', and 'Buildings outperform statutory minima in terms of environmental design'. Only 15% of stakeholders believe Cambourne performs well on these issues which confirms the findings from the interviews.

The developers object to this assessment.

People are extending their homes but it is easier to trade up than extend. 20% of homes sales are from people already living here and trading up. I believe that the housing is adaptable and will accommodate change.  
David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

**National and regional comparison using CABB's Housing Audit 2004**

It is possible to compare Cambourne's performance with national and regional averages for homes in CABB's 2004 Housing Audit.

CABB Score		East Region	England
70+	Good	24%	18%
50-69	Average	54%	53%
<50	Poor	22%	29%

**Table 3: Housing Audit 2004** Figures from a survey using the Building for Life checklist CABB

Using the Building for Life checklist, 26% of stakeholders scored Cambourne good, 48% scored it average and 26% scored it poor. Overall the average score for all stakeholders combined is 57%. Is Cambourne really only average in terms of CABB's Building for Life questions or was the checklist applied in a different way by Cambourne stakeholders than by CABB assessors?

It is not clear in the published figures how many people were involved in scoring each of the CABB schemes. Maybe only one person on each scheme? There was a wide range of scores in Cambourne, with different stakeholders scoring it very differently. Do different people have very divergent opinions about Cambourne or is the checklist an imprecise measuring instrument?

**Adaptability and long term use**

One of the key issues, in terms of the long term success of a settlement, is how adaptable the housing and other buildings are to changes in the way people live and work. For

example, Victorian terraces in Cambridge are successful places to live both because of their location and the adaptability of the built form which has allowed people to extend their homes to the rear, while preserving the uniformity of the streetscape. There is good evidence that patterns of work are changing and that in the future flexible working and working from home will increase. How adaptable will Cambourne prove to be in terms of lifestyles and working patterns? As the number of children of primary school age falls in the future, one or other of the three primary schools may need to be adapted to other uses. People could work from home. The houses are quite large and there is room to extend to create a home office or even a workshop. On the face of it then, Cambourne may, in terms of adaptability, prove to be quite successful.

## Lessons

- 8.1 Although Cambourne was planned ten years ago, sustainability was the central aim of the Master Plan. However, apart from some of the social housing developed by Circle Anglia, the housing in Cambourne is unexceptional in terms of environmental design.
- 8.2 Private developers and social landlords are applying different environmental standards which means that some of the affordable housing is built to a greener agenda than the private housing. A level playing field for social and private housing would be helpful.
- 8.3 Using CABA's Building for Life checklist Cambourne performs best on design issues. Over 50% of stakeholders think that the 'Public space is well designed and managed', that Cambourne has a 'Distinctive character' and an 'Architectural quality'. Over 50% also think it offers a 'Range of community facilities'.
- 8.4 The two issues on which Cambourne really falls down are 'Integrates with its surroundings' and 'Buildings outperform statutory minima in terms of environmental design'. Only 13% of stakeholders believe Cambourne performs well on these issues.
- 8.5 Using CABA's Building for Life checklist Cambourne is about average compared with other housing schemes in the region and nationally. However, it is not clear whether the checklist was applied in the same way in Cambourne as by CABA.
- 8.6 For a community to be sustainable in the long-term the houses and buildings need to be capable of adaptation to changing circumstance and different patterns of living and working.

## 9 People and community

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A new settlement like Cambourne attracts certain kinds of people – young families wanting a better place for their children; people wanting to make a fresh start; people moving to the area with their work and needing somewhere convenient; people who bought into the vision of a new place in the country offering the best of both worlds.

But a new community needs time to get established. How is Cambourne doing?



### People

What kinds of people live in Cambourne?

They are get up and go types. They're fairly prosperous. But in a whole series of ways, they're seekers, aspirational, different. They're detached from their roots, miss-located people. Chasing a dream, seeking something that Cambourne doesn't necessarily deliver. A new village is not necessarily a recipe for happiness or a cure of unhappiness. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

In general, people are friendly and happy. It's also a very consumerist community that is very demanding. One of the social problems is the unsettled, restless nature of the new inhabitants. But a new town takes a long time to settle down and to develop a sense of belonging. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

We didn't realise the huge emotional need from people who had moved here. Children go through a term of grieving. They are often angry; they didn't want to uproot and come here. They want to be back with all their old friends in their old school. After a term they settle and begin to make friends and join in. The social problems really worry me. It's interesting how change affects people. It creates high levels of anxiety in both children and parents. Sometimes it hits people straight away, sometimes six months after they arrive. People can be lonely and anxious. Husbands are away a lot of the day. They leave at 6 and get back late. Women haven't got the support they need. An awful lot of things were set up to help them, but those on the fringe, those who for reasons of their own don't join in, lack support and contact. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

Some people came because they wanted a change. They might have been starting a family and wanted a new environment for their children. I talked to the mothers and some of them moved because they wanted a fresh start in a new place. This may have created problems because there weren't the usual support mechanisms and facilities. And a new community doesn't necessarily solve people's problems, in fact it may exacerbate them. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

There is a feeling that the first people to settle in Cambourne are different from the later arrivals.

The early marketing of [Great Cambourne] attracted people from the local region, but marketing of Lower Cambourne as-far-a-field as Essex and London attracted a different audience. The idea of selling your two-bed terrace in a grotty bit of London and buying a new five-bed home in the country with better schools attracted

people from a wide area. And after the pension crisis we saw a lot of buy-to-let. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council

Those who came early had a vision, a pioneering spirit, that inevitably has been diluted with later arrivals. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

**This difference between early and later arrivals can affect people's attitudes to change.**

The original people who moved here seven years ago seem more conservative, very defensive of the original Design Guide. I suspect that the newer people who arrived later are prepared to be more adventurous. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

## **Community**

**When people talk about the community as a whole there are more positive signs.**

There is a sense of being in a community – everyone knows what it's like to be new. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

It's great here. Everyone is new. When I arrived people shared their gardening tools and helped each other settle in. It brings people together. I met loads of people taking my grand-daughter to school. Ruth Poulton, Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council

There is a strong sense of community and if you want to join in, you can. It is happening more over time and will improve once two or three generations have lived here. There will be village elders who carry the history and traditions of the place. Some have been here since day one and in a sense see themselves as pioneers. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

Cambourne is a community with a lot going on. There are a whole host of things for young mums, children and older people. In general, people are friendly and happy. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

The Community Association is very successful. The majority of people from Great Cambourne are involved. You should build a community slowly. Sighting the first hundred or so families around the village green and then spread from there. Then community spirit develops. This was the pattern followed in Great Cambourne but Lower Cambourne didn't follow the same plan and it doesn't gel as a community. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council

Perhaps it is easier to get to know people in a new community like Cambourne. It is easier to get involved when things are getting started. The city can be overwhelming. There is a lot of communication. People feel that their needs are being listened to and addressed. Perhaps they feel more involved. At first it was difficult for people to connect. People transferring from the city feel isolated. But the early difficulties had a positive outcome. Residents came together to put pressure on the developers to get things to happen. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

Community works well. Like minded people get together and the pioneering spirit kicks in. There are lots of amenities. But if you have no reason to join a club or society then it can be difficult and lonely. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

**Other people also stress that living in Cambourne can be lonely.**

It can be a lonely place. Those coming from the city didn't realise how isolated it is here, how little infrastructure there is and things for children. Things they take for granted in the city, like holiday buses and play schemes. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

A lot of people feel quite isolated despite the bus links. Families in the social housing who were moved from Cambridge feel isolated from the social activities and amenities they enjoyed in the city. Lots of the clubs and societies only cater for a certain kind of person. There are few informal things/places for non-joiners to mix and meet people. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

Some people have lost all their networks. They might have been close to their mum or been able to walk to work. No wonder they feel isolated. They thought they'd won the lottery when they found out they'd got a house in Cambourne – homes with new kitchens and ensuite bathrooms. But when they got here they realised that the support they needed was no longer here. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

**People's impressions of Cambourne residents may of course be coloured by those individuals and families with problems that they come upon in their work. But are Cambourne residents more unsettled than new people in any new settlement of this size and aren't these problems to do with newness?**

Cambourne is new. It's only six or seven years old. So it is unreasonable to expect the richness of an established community. A new town takes a long time to settle down and to develop a sense of belonging. Older villages have this and people have been there a long time. If you are going to build a large settlement you need to create a community. We have tried to do this in Cambourne. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

Cambourne is untypical compared with somewhere with a long history. Everyone is keen to make friends, which means that it is less parochial than an established village. It will be comparable in size to Sawston, but Sawston is long established and has a whole high street of shops. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

**The high turnover of people is seen as a problem, but is it any higher than in Cambridge or South Cambs?**

We keep welcoming new families. There is a surprising turnover of people. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

The high turnover worries some people. They assume there is a plan to overcome problems, particularly mental health problems. But there is a lack of support and in some respects Cambourne is an alien social set-up. It needs an outside facilitator. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

This is a mixed population, which is a good thing. I counted fifteen different nationalities. It's becoming common for extended families to move here. In some cul-de-sacs parents buy a smaller house over the road from their children and grandchildren. Even amongst the larger houses there are some smaller units. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

## **Crime and safety**

**The local papers report problems with youths and anti-social behaviour. They report drugs, anomie and loneliness. And there are contradictory views about how safe Cambourne is. But how different is Cambourne from other parts of region?**

People complain about the youths hanging around. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

There was nothing for children to do, and children began hanging around. I would have far more activities for young people. There are times when as many as 100 kids gather together. Young people have rights, but there is under aged drinking and a few awful little vandals. Ruth Poulton, Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council

There was quite a bit of antisocial youth behaviour. It created a lot of negative press. But we have invested a lot of time to providing better youth provision. But you go to the developers and this is almost an alien issue.

But it would pay them to tackle this earlier. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

Swans that had been reared on the business park lakes have been hurt, and young people, perhaps wrongly, have been blamed. Sue Young, Workers' Educational Association

People don't feel safe. We have trouble getting people to come to the youth club in the winter because of the dark. Young people feel alienated. Cambourne has been labelled, maybe unjustifiably; there are problems in all villages. But the Cambridge Evening News loves to publish stories about problems in Cambourne. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

There is a lot of drug activity. People say they never found it as easy to buy cocaine and heroin elsewhere. The suppliers intimidate their customers. They call round people's homes. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

Initially this was an ideal community. Then people were moved from the city and some decided to carry on their old life style – create havoc, drug dealing. About 50 youths cause problems. Cambourne also attracts youths from outside the area. There isn't the budget for proper policing. We are talking about sponsoring a patrol car. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

### People also say very positive things about Cambourne and the social environment it provides for children and young people.

Parents are likely to know where their children are. It's probably safer. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

It's very safe. The way primary school children can cycle and walk to school and go to the play areas on their own is a huge plus. The parents say they feel very safe. A lot of them let their children play out until dusk and let them walk to school on their own. This is very healthy and allows children to develop independence. Our recent OFSTED commented that our children have a good understanding of what a healthy lifestyle means in terms of exercise and sports. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

The behaviour that people refer to of young people hanging around in groups seems to be a relatively new and wide-spread phenomenon in Britain. It is tempting to think this indicates that they have nothing better to do. But they are out in the open, socialising with their peers, and as long as they don't commit a crime they are entitled to congregate.

The Cambourne Survey of Youth Behaviour (2006) found that 30% of respondents said that youth behaviour was one of the worst things about Cambourne. However, as the authors of the survey point out, across South Cambridgeshire 33% of respondents to the Quality of Life survey in 2006 said teenagers hanging around was the biggest problem for residents. Nationally, the British Crime Survey 2003-4 found that 27% of respondents nationally see teenagers as one of the top three problems. Are we developing into a society that is afraid of its own children? Clearly we live in a time when teenager behaviour is an issue, but Cambourne is no worse than anywhere else in this respect.

### **Community work**

People anticipated the social problems that the new settlement would produce and the level of support needed.

Community support workers are excellent and the Family Welfare Association is a good model we built in from the beginning. But our funding changed in 2003 and we have lost this post when we most need it. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

The level of support needed for a new community has to be realistic. There have been some problems with youths, but any new development has these issues. It's a mobile population. It will take a long time to develop a feeling of neighbourhood and community. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

People are so glad to have somewhere to come and meet other young mums. The church and school play an important role in providing a place for people to get together. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

Having community development workers from the social housing consortium and South Cambs was very important. Without these two posts things would have been more of a problem. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

A number of families moved from Arbury at the same time. It's a lovely place for young mothers. Two self-confidence courses have been organised at the surgery. Sue Young, Workers' Educational Association

### **The range of social problems in a new settlement means that professionals are stretched.**

The community development workers were crucial. A great deal more is needed. It's taking time and the demand has swamped the church and the surgery. Our costs are double those of an average surgery of this size. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

This is my fourth headship. I'm very experienced but have never had to deal with this range of social issues. I have a non-teaching deputy whose support is vital. We now have a councillor and a parent support advisor in the school who work closely with families and children which is very positive for the school and the wider community. I'd recommend that all schools in new communities had this type of professional in place from the day they open. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

### **Coordination was important.**

There are many professional and voluntary groups working together to make it happen. It is a big investment in community development. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

The service providers, co-ordinated by South Cambs, have worked together well. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

The co-ordinated response of service providers, hosted by South Cambs, was very helpful. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

The network of providers works well together. The library is in partnership with health provision. We share a building in Sackville House. It's a lovely open space in which circulation and movement through works well. Since the library opened we have continued to offer baby rhyme times, storytimes for under fives and opportunities for class visits in order to promote our services. We worked hard from the start to forge a partnership with other service providers and we got it right. We established good contacts with children's groups and were swamped on opening day. The main lesson for Northstowe is to be prepared to meet new residents as they arrive. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

## **Lessons**

- 9.1 Some stakeholders think Cambourne is a lonely place, and, on weekdays it does seem deserted. But others suggest that since everyone is in the same boat in a new place they are more ready to make friends. Clearly a new settlement like Cambourne suits some people and not others.
- 9.2 For people who don't readily mix, Cambourne may seem unfriendly, while for others it provides a milieu of like-minded people. Is this pattern much different from other established villages or parts of Cambridge?

- 9.3 For some, clearly a new settlement like Cambourne can be a very lonely place and new residents need considerable support in helping to settle. In particular key services must be in place from the beginning before people arrive.
- 9.4 Various agencies need to meet regularly to co-ordinate their efforts in providing this help. This coordinated effort was one of the key success stories in Cambourne and will need to be applied in other big developments like Northstowe.
- 9.5 The doctor's surgery, the primary school, the library and the church become key meeting places and providers of the social framework that helps knit the new community together. The people in charge of these services are enthusiastic and positive about Cambourne and seem to make a big contribution to its success.
- 9.6 A new settlement like Cambourne needs a place, like a community hall, for people to meet from very early on. And, importantly, it also needs more informal meeting places that can be accessed by non-joiners that are status and stigma free.
- 9.7 A sense of community is growing but will take time to fully develop. We need to be realistic about time scales and perhaps wait twenty years or so to judge Cambourne in terms of community well-being.
- 9.8 There is a high turnover of people. Is this because people discover it doesn't suit them or because they never intended to stay and are treating the place as a kind of staging post? And how significant is it in preventing the community from settling? Some parts of Cambridge life have a high turnover, but the group of people who are long-term provide continuity.

## 10 Social mix and social housing

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In 2006 55% of the homes in Cambourne were affordable. Just over half (52%) of these were Rented Social Landlord (RSL) and the rest were intermediate tenure. Current planning policies demand a higher proportion of affordable housing so the housing still to be built is likely to increase the proportion of affordable housing. There has been an attempt to create small clusters of 20-30 units, and there is one larger cluster of 71 dwellings north of the shopping centre.



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### Government policy

One of the key requirements of Government plans for managing growth in the South East is for “*a well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures*”, Sustainable Communities – Building for the Future (Feb 2003). “*The Government believes that it is important to help create mixed and inclusive communities which offer a choice of housing and lifestyle. It does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours. Local planning authorities should encourage the development of mixed and balanced communities. They should ensure that new housing developments help to secure a better social mix by avoiding the creation of large areas of housing with similar characteristics.*” Planning Policy Guidance Note, No. 3, Para 10 3.3.

Policy P9/1 in the recently adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Structure Plan Review 1999–2016 states: “*40% or more of the new housing in the Cambridge Sub-Region will be affordable*”. Emerging local plan/local development framework documents published by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council declare an intention to seek to negotiate 50% affordable housing.

### Research findings

A report for Cambridgeshire Horizons entitled *Balanced and Mixed Communities* (2005) included Cambourne in its set of case studies. The report lists four different ways of mixing social housing: pepper-potting, buffering, clustering and separate sites and suggests that, depending on circumstance, all may be used with equal success. However, the authors caution that the creation of ‘ghettos’ of affordable housing is best avoided.

They also caution against adopting innovative built forms for affordable housing but not market housing since this can aggravate ‘ghettoisation’. This is relevant in Cambourne where some of the social rented housing is timber clad, incorporates a range of renewable energy technologies and consequently looks quite different from the private housing.

The report recommends that it is desirable to provide housing for a range of household types and age groups that allow people to mature and grow old within the same localities should they choose, as well as offering accommodation for a range of households, including offspring from the same family, should they wish to live in the same community. This is

also relevant in Cambourne. People complained about the mix of housing not catering for a wide enough section of the population.

Where people dislike their neighbours, different behavioural patterns appear to be the major trigger for lack of mutual tolerance, and where owner-occupiers had not been told that they would be living close to social renters this had produced ill-feeling. This is relevant in Cambourne. People mentioned that they had been unaware of the scale of affordable housing when they bought their house. This does seem naïve when one considers that all new development in the UK has a large proportion of affordable housing and solicitors and others advising purchasers are aware of this.

In mixed tenure developments where it was made clear to prospective purchasers that the housing was of mixed tenure, the authors claim that ill-feeling seems to have been avoided. They therefore recommend “*that house builders be required to indicate the tenure of affordable units in their marketing literature*”. In Cambourne the private housing was built two years before the rented social housing appeared and people interviewed suggest that this caused problems.

Recent research on mixed tenure communities has focused on whether it reduced the marketability of the private sector housing.

A recent report by Chris Holmes for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2006) summarises the findings from seven studies in JRF’s mixed income community programme. He concludes that the mixed income communities studied were overwhelmingly judged successful, that mixed tenure is a non-issue for most residents and that developers engaged in mixing tenures had no major problems. He writes: “*There was no evidence that mixed communities lowered the prices of houses for sale or put off potential purchasers. Design, location and quality were seen as the key factors affecting sales and price level*”.

A report by Rob Rowlands, Alan Murie and Andrew Tice for JRF entitled *More than tenure mix: Developer and purchaser attitudes to new housing estates* (2006) finds that “*introducing tenure mix into new developments does not itself reduce the value and affect the saleability of these developments and ensuring the quality of other aspects of the development can eliminate the risk that mixed tenure estates are difficult to sell or affect property values*”. They also suggest that developers will increase density to make mixed tenure developments work but point out that high density developments may include fewer opportunities to house families with children.

Support for the notion that factors other than the social differences play an important role in determining the success of mixed tenure is provided by David Fisk, formerly Chief Scientist at the DTI and now Professor of Engineering for Sustainable Development at Imperial College. Fisk suggests that the critical factor in resident satisfaction with new housing is that of neighbourliness. Successful housing developments are those in which the design reduces the potential for conflict between neighbours. Those where the design encourages or creates disputes between neighbours are much less popular.

Earlier research on mixed tenure communities was much more concerned with the question of whether mixing housing tenures results in greater social interaction and greater social mobility. Research cast doubt on this proposition and this form of social engineering was discredited.

Atkinson and Kintrea in their paper *Neighbourhoods and social exclusion*, Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow (2001) suggest that owner-occupiers and social

renters in Scotland live in “*largely different social worlds ... with little evidence of inter-tenure socialising*” And Rosemary Hiscock in her paper *Are mixed tenure estates likely to enhance the social capital of their residents?* (School of Geography, University of St Andrews, 2001), says cross-tenure social networks are not common and that research on whether mixed tenure has beneficial effects “*has not produced overwhelmingly positive results*”. She says, “*Owners tended to see their house in a mixed tenure estate as a stepping stone to a house in a more desirable area and thus often did not invest emotionally in mixed tenure areas*”.

These studies are fairly pessimistic about the social benefits of tenure mix. But there is evidence from research with children that children from mixed tenure who attend the same school do in fact mix more. A survey of 600 children aged 10-11 in seventeen schools in and around Cambridge in 1977 showed the proportion of friends living in homes of different tenure varied directly with the tenure mix of the catchment area of the school. Platt (1983). A recent study of 600 children living in five contrasting areas by Susie Weeler and Irene Bruegel found that children play a key role in strengthening local communities by helping forge relationships and connections for their parents. Taken together the two studies suggest that friendships formed at school between primary school aged children can increase social interaction between parents from different tenure homes.

### **Go-East case study of Cambourne**

A case study by Go-East identified a number of factors affecting the development of the social housing in Cambourne.

([www.go-east.gov.uk/goee/docs/192869/192874/195009/233413/Cambourne\\_case\\_study\\_17\\_02\\_1.doc](http://www.go-east.gov.uk/goee/docs/192869/192874/195009/233413/Cambourne_case_study_17_02_1.doc))

- 1 The Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) were not party to the Section 106 Agreement and were not involved in the Master Plan or Design Guide. But the Developers Consortium had approval over the built form of RSL development. This meant that the RSLs had to get development approval from both the planning authority and the developers.
- 2 Compliance with the Design Guide and getting approval from both parties, it is claimed, also meant higher costs. On typical social housing estates the cost of the external envelope is 18% of the total. In Cambourne this figure is 40%. The RSL development took longer than normal to design and build. The Consortium’s time predictability performance indicators (KPIs) were considerably above industry average figures.
- 3 Perhaps most significantly the phased release of land for RSLs to develop was dependent on the developers’ programme.
- 4 Three RSLs were selected to deliver a 10-year programme of 650 homes. They then formed a consortium. The authors of the case study question how cost effective it was for three separate RSLs to deliver a relatively small number of 650 homes when each of the RSLs had to invest time and resources in the partnering process and community development work.

The developers comment on this assessment.

The above gives the impression that the RSL’s were totally dependent on the developers. But in fact their own programmes were slow compared to the private housing. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

## Stakeholder views

A number of issues were raised by stakeholders. There is concern about increasing the proportion of social housing. The Section 106 requirement for affordable housing in Cambourne is currently 30%.

They now demand 40% affordable. The first part of Cambourne was 20%. I don't know if they can make this work. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council

**The later arrival of the social housing gets a lot of criticism from stakeholders.**

The private home owners moved in before the housing association people which made it difficult for our residents to integrate. It was an established community and there was stigma attached to being in socially rented accommodation. It was aggravated by the way the village was sold to prospective purchasers. Shared ownership and key worker housing was mentioned but the social housing element should have been made clear from the start. We had disgruntled private home owners who feel they have been misled and that the value of their property is undermined. If the social housing had come on earlier it would have been much better. Maybe it's inevitable that it comes late, but people need to have the full picture and it was wrong for the developers to market the homes in the way they did. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

The affordable housing came two years later than the market housing which created problems. At Arbury Park we have taken the land parcels early on and got the grant allocation organised so that the affordable housing, at least the intermediate tenure homes, will be available at the same time as the volume house builders market housing. Sarah Lyons, Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire DC

You need to ensure that social housing arrives at the same time as the private housing. Community harmony demands the involvement of all groups from the beginning. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

**This issue of timing had an impact on the difficulties children from social rented homes experienced integrating into new schools.**

The provision of social housing came late. Integration would have been easier if both the private and social housing had arrived together. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

**South Cambridgeshire DC and Cambridge CC each have 50% nomination rights on all affordable housing. Their allocations policy is based on need. This necessarily means that a small proportion of social rented tenants will be what is euphemistically called 'problem families'.**

The LA's assign the homes to the most needy families, who arrive at one week's notice. A few are neighbours from hell. They create problems at school and for the surgery. You cannot populate a new settlement with the most difficult families. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

Some of the families have criminal records. A small minority give the rest a bad name. There have been police raids. It's very easy to get drugs in Cambourne and drug use is rife. Generally speaking the housing association tenants are very good, but one or two families are a real problem. And you can't expect single mothers to keep their gardens as tidy as others. But this is a minor difficulty. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

**People thought that the social rented housing could have been arranged better.**

The intention was to create a regional to local gradient as you move through the site from north to south. Siting a large lump of social housing north of the civic centre was a bad idea. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

In Greater Cambourne running down from Morrison's there is a large site of 71 homes where the eco-houses are surrounded by high density. It is distinctively housing association design – it's like living in a ghetto. But generally people like Cambourne. HA residents often come from poor housing. They like the schools, which are good. What seems to work well is pepper-potting and the social housing in Lower Cambourne feels much more integrated. We are now working towards smaller sites. Groups of about 20-30 houses which, because of their similar design, merge in with the private housing. It may have cost implications for development, housing management and maintenance, but it causes much fewer social problems. The important thing is that the tenure is not visually obvious. The general needs residents feel happier, they feel they're part of the community and not stigmatised. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

We would like to see more pepper-potting. We don't want more than 10-25 affordable houses on the same plot. We would ideally like to take built units from the volume house builders if they would only raise their standards. Sarah Lyons, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

There is a lot of social housing in one area and should have been more dispersed. Sue Young, Workers' Educational Association

We need to make sure the affordable housing is pepper potted rather than concentrated. The new Local Development Framework for Cambourne demands 50% affordable housing but there are no details yet on how these new homes will be laid out. How the affordable housing works is a tightrope walk for new places like Northstowe. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

#### **Another stakeholder sounds a note of caution.**

My reading suggests that trying to socially engineer new settlements by mixing the housing is difficult and we need to find ways of breaking down barriers. Primary schools are one of the main mechanisms for encouraging social interaction. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

#### **Another aspect of integration is the appearance of social housing and again stakeholders are critical.**

The quality and design of the social and private housing are different. The developer's preference at the time was to give us the land parcels rather than to provide built units. Many developers would prefer to just comply with Building Regs. than to provide housing of a higher quality. The Housing Corporation in allocating public funds insists on higher scheme development standards – sizes of bedrooms, wheelchair access, lifetime home standards, and a sustainability code and moving towards zero carbon. It would be fine if Building Regs were raised and there was a level playing field. Sarah Lyons, Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire DC

The mix of social and private housing is not that easy to solve. The social housing is too distinct. It's mixed but not in the right way. There are small pockets of social housing forming distinctive developments. Unfortunately one particular area is quite a problem. It was bounced onto the private housing. It has reduced housing value and made life hell for the residents. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

#### **One stakeholder argues the case for changing the way we provide housing for people who can't afford to buy.**

I believe everyone should have the chance to buy their own home. The biggest cost is the land. We give it to the social landlords to build, so why not just give it to individuals to build their own home. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

There are two areas where the social rented housing stands out and this is unfortunate. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

## Lessons

- 10.1 In Cambourne there were two specific problems with the provision of the social housing – the size of some of the development and its timing.
- 10.2 It is most important in new settlements to avoid creating ghettos of affordable housing.
- 10.3 It is important to inform all prospective residents of the scale and disposition of the social rented housing before they decide to move in.
- 10.4 In Lower Cambourne the social housing was integrated in small parcels, but in Great Cambourne there was a concentration of social housing on a large parcel of land to the north of the shopping centre. Some people think that this has resulted in the creation of a ghetto of social housing with a stigmatised reputation. But there is also a small parcel of social housing in Lower Cambourne with a similar reputation. So size may not be the issue.
- 10.5 The social housing, for various reasons, arrived later than the private housing and this caused resentment. Wherever possible it would be sensible to phase the development of the private and social housing in tandem.
- 10.6 There is research evidence that one of the key mechanisms of social integration is through children making friends at school. In Cambourne there were problems because children in social rented homes arrived later than children living in the owner occupied private houses and then had difficulty integrating. This may only have been a temporary problem and the difficulties may have been exaggerated.
- 10.7 There is concern about the practicability of increasing the proportion of social housing in the upcoming phases of Cambourne to 40%. There was talk of 50% affordable. The Planning Inspectorate have now imposed a level of 40% plus affordable homes on the S.Cambs Area Action Plan for Northstowe. Can this level of social rented/affordable housing be applied successfully in Northstowe? Exactly how should this mix of social and private housing best be arranged? Is it reasonable to try to pepper-pot on this scale of development as some recommend?
- 10.8 It would be helpful if Building Regs were enhanced so that the standards of social housing were applied by private development. And if volume house builders were able to provide both social and private housing there might be less chance of stigmatisation because homes would be less differentiated.
- 10.9 Self-build and co-operative housing does not seem to feature in the planning of new settlements like Cambourne and Northstowe. This is unfortunate since self-build has many economic and social benefits over and above the provision of housing.

## 11 Schools and services

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Once finished, Cambourne will offer a much wider range of facilities than other villages. The schools have very good reputations, there is an excellent combined medical centre and library, and a wide range of sports facilities. But the shops, places to meet and things for young people come later than the houses and this can cause frustration and resentment. And the demand for primary school places was miscalculated so the siting of the schools may not be ideal.



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Once finished, Cambourne will offer a wide range of facilities. As well as the main things like primary schools, a supermarket, a medical centre, a library, allotments and many sports facilities, Cambourne also has a pre-school nursery, dental and veterinary surgeries, a pharmacy, a dry-cleaners, a betting shop, a hotel, pub, restaurant and fish-and-chip shop.

Cambourne has the facilities of a larger place – attractions that even a large village wouldn't have. There is probably increased community involvement. There are no villages like this. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

A number of facilities remain to be provided later in the development programme. But provision will improve with time and completion of the new settlement. The developers are not dragging their feet on this. We are desperate to get the facilities in. But we face commercial realities. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

There are loads of things on offer for young people and mothers and young children including keep fit and sports. And there are a lot of community group meetings. People really like it here. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

**But many stakeholders voiced concern about delays in the provision of essential services.**

I know from talking to residents and from the local newsletter that there are issues about the speed of provision of some facilities. Ann Worthington, Cambridgeshire CC Library Services

The provision of certain key services like shops has been slow. The residential developers don't seem to have the same urgency with the commercial facilities as with building the homes. However, shops and pubs etc need a certain level of population before they can operate commercially. They would probably have required a rent incentive to move in sooner. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

A lot of community facilities were not available early on and this has had a knock on effect in terms of people's attitude to the developers. The developers could have been encouraged by S.Cambs to put in infrastructure earlier. Planning permission could have been applied for well before trigger points were reached. They build 250-300 homes a year. For example, the community centre was supposed to be triggered at 1,000 homes but there was an 18 month delay and there were 1,700 homes by the time it was ready. The sports centre was supposed to be triggered by 2,000 homes and there will probably be nearer 3,000 when it's finished. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council

These opinions about the delay in the provision of services are supported in a study by the Sustainable Development Commission (2007). Four residents were interviewed in Cambourne. Their main complaint was the lack of shops and amenities, although they also *‘welcomed the schools in the area, local doctors and health services. The many walks and green spaces in Cambourne were also appreciated by householders’*.

## Primary schools

Planners miscalculated the number of primary school places needed.

We opened a year earlier than planned to meet demand. Monkfield School was built for 420 but its numbers reached over 500. We already need the third school but it won't be ready in time. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

This miscalculation means that schools are not well sited.

The location of the three primary schools is strange. There should have been one in each settlement. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

The first primary school, Monkfield Park, was sited between Great and Lower Cambourne. But it soon filled and a second, church school, was built in the middle of nowhere, a 20-minute walk across open fields. It was fast tracked and began in Portacabins with a hall. A third phase of development is planned. We are now talking about a third school sited between the first two. Lower Cambourne has no school, is fully developed and there is no remaining land to build on. With hindsight it would have seemed more logical to put a school in each village. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

This apparent mistake in the siting of the primary schools may have unanticipated benefits. All children in Cambourne will still live within walking distance of all three schools and children from different parts of the settlement will get to know each other rather than only meeting children from their own neighbourhood.

## Secondary schools

Cambourne is too small to support a secondary school so children go to Comberton.

There are a lot of people with young families. The schools are very good. But not having a senior school and having to bus older children to Comberton isn't satisfactory. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

It would be a lot easier with a secondary school. The County Council has said no and that it wouldn't be triggered until 6-7,000 homes. So children go to Comberton. Places are sought after and it's difficult to get in. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

One regret is that it is not big enough for a secondary school. They will need 30 school buses a day to Comberton. Children have difficulty attending after school clubs. It would be more sustainable if we had a secondary school. There is no sixth form, so older children have to travel in to Cambridge. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council

Children comment that they don't like having to stay on after school for out-of-school activities and then travel back. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School



If we extend the catchment area to include surrounding villages we could justify a new secondary school. When Cambourne reaches 4-5,000 homes it will have a very severe impact on Comberton School. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

With extra housing we'll need a secondary school. A good location would be in what was to be the industrial area next to the business park. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

**Comberton Village College has a very good reputation and this has been a strong selling point.**

The link with Comberton School is a wonderful selling point. It ranks high and parents from up to 20-30 miles around try and get their children into Comberton. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

## **Shops**

The huge supermarket at Bar Hill killed the prospect of any other shops. People want a pop-in, but it is difficult to make it viable. Small businesses can't afford the rents. It needs a rent taper in line with the population. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

The planners wanted to restrict the size of the supermarket to 15,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, half its current size. But it was good getting one this big. But now we are resisting plans to extend over 60 places in the car-park. We don't want to attract more people from outside like Bar Hill. The plan for a market square has gone. The land was sold to Morrisons and the last thing they want is a market outside their doors. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council



There is a poor selection of shops. People want a convenience store in Lower Cambourne, somewhere they can buy a paper and get milk and bread, but that now seems most unlikely. Residents are disappointed. They would also like a post office and don't see why they can't have one. And they'd like a cafe that provides an informal place to meet. The only community facility in Lower Cambourne is the cricket pavilion. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

The shops should have come in earlier. The layout is good and hasn't changed much. Lower Cambourne has a nice village feel but lacks shops and a pub. Zero business rate for the first year or so would help pump-prime shops and businesses and provide an incentive to get businesses in earlier. We have only got Morrisons, a betting shop and estate agents. There is no post office (only triggered by a population of 10,000). John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council



## **Medical centre and library**

**The medical centre and library share the same building, Sackville House on the corner of the High Street.**

Our surgery is very successful. It is the best place I've ever worked. It was designed by West Hart Partnership from Tamworth. They have a very fluid style. They worked with us for months. The common entrance with the library is non stigmatising. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

## Church

Cambourne Church began as a house church. It serves Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists and Roman Catholics. The Ark was used as a temporary church. Provision for faith groups doesn't seem to be favoured politically. But the church has done a huge amount and needs our support. The church now meets in the Community Centre but it is difficult to share the space with the parish council and all the other groups that use it. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

We have half the money for a new church centre which will be a seven day a week building and will provide a large community hall. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

## Places to meet

Facilities were a long time coming and the pub is only six months old. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

The Ark and the Hub are very well used. But there should be a public building first and the housing should be built around this. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

Put in the essential infrastructure first, like a community centre as a place to congregate and run activities. This was one of the biggest issues for those coming here early on. Sarah Lyons, Development Officer, South Cambridgeshire DC

The community centre should have been there from day one. What it offers is a place for people to meet. The shared building of doctors/library in Sackville House is a great idea. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

The community centre was much too late. There were 35 groups trying to use the Ark, the temporary Portacabin. It took the residents' 'Premises, not Promises' campaign and S.Cambs' embargo on new development to get it in place. The developers should deliver at agreed trigger points not months after. The Community Centre is good but could have been better designed. It's not servicing the need for an informal place to meet, a pop-in centre for the community. It's good for groups wanting to rent space, but people not in groups want somewhere to meet and a community cafe would have been nice. Lessons can be learnt for other places. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

The pub was needed desperately. We had to market it three times before we succeeded in letting it. The trigger point for the community centre should have been earlier – at 200 homes. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

Some community facilities can be places to meet, but not the schools.

The library and surgery is a wonderful building and provides a centre and meeting place. But everything is in Great Cambourne, it's too focused. Debbie Higham, Head, Vine School

The primary school belongs to the CC so it's not under the control of the developers or the district council. There are problems of insurance and difficulty with access. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

## Children and young people

There is a variety of different play places for younger children, ranging from well equipped neighbourhood play areas to open areas of grass and woodland. But the small local



areas for play seems less successful or inviting. People suggest that there is less provision for older children.

Youth provision was initially poor. The developers provided an open metal shelter in a field. It sent out the wrong negative message from the beginning. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

The skateboard park is not lit so feels unsafe in the winter. Developers need to look at things for young people, and provide them early on. They needed a centre for a youth club with a cafe near the skateboard park. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

You can never lay on enough to satisfy young people. Whatever you provide it goes out of fashion the following week. And Cambourne as a new settlement attracts youths from outside. There are meeting places, but they hang out where they want and people feel threatened. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

We were advised not to put lighting in the skate park because it can create dangerous shadows. But we did light the path leading to the skate park. We have done a lot to provide for the youth of Cambourne, including a hang-out area and a youth centre. But some young people don't want to be organised and that's their right of course. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

## Sports

The sports facilities are good, a great success. But they should have been there from the beginning. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

Cambourne is well provided for in terms of sports facilities. There are going to be 3 sports pavilions; 2 allotments; 2 cricket pitches and 12 ball pitches – 1 rugby, 2 football; 4 junior multi-use games areas; and a skateboard park. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council

We are very lucky now in terms of sports facilities. We have the best sports fields in the area. The tennis club and rugby clubs are thriving. We have six cricket teams and this week we got a new pavilion.

There are two football clubs with thirteen teams between them. And the uniformed groups are very popular – the brownies, cubs and guides. Ruth Poulton, Chairman, Cambourne Parish Council



## Lessons

- 11.1 Once finished Cambourne will offer a wide range of facilities. It should be big enough to support many activities it doesn't yet have, such as a cinema. Clearly there is less happening than in Cambridge, but on the other hand there are more facilities and social activities than in most villages. And, of course, Cambridge is a totally exceptional city with facilities and a social life way beyond what would expect in a settlement of its size.
- 11.2 Some facilities in Cambourne arrived late, after the trigger point of number of homes had been reached, and this has caused considerable frustration and resentment amongst residents.

- 11.3 The demand for primary school places was miscalculated so that the three primary schools are not ideally sited, but this may not be as important as some people interviewed suggest. What is important is that they are all within safe and pleasant walking distance of where the children attending them live.
- 11.4 Cambourne is not big enough to warrant its own secondary school so children go to Comberton Village College. This school has a very good reputation and this has been a strong selling point for Cambourne. But Comberton may be unable to accommodate the proposed increase in size of Cambourne. All the money from Section 106 agreements has been spent in improving Comberton. So it is not clear how a new secondary school in Cambourne would be funded.
- 11.5 Different kinds of people have different needs and wants and to some extent Cambourne delivers. Cambourne is a good place for young children to play and for young families to live.
- 11.6 Some people say that it is easy to make friends in a new community. Others say that it can be lonely and isolating. Are both right, and are they just talking about different kinds of people? Certainly new settlements like Cambourne have less of the 'us and them' attitude that is sometimes seen in established villages where long-term inhabitants can be hostile to new arrivals.
- 11.7 There are lots of clubs and societies. So, for those joiners that like regular social activities, Cambourne seems to offer a lot. But until recently when the pub opened, there was nowhere to meet informally. Cambourne badly lacks a church and a choice of places to meet informally.
- 11.8 What has been most important in Cambourne's success, and it is successful in many ways, is the quality of the people in charge of key services – the original master planners and the master planners and landscape architects who took over and such a fine job of the open space; the head teachers, doctor and vicar; the community workers, local councillors and planning officers. These people were interviewed as part of this study and impressed with their energy, enthusiasm and knowledge.

## 12 Employment and transport

As yet there are too few jobs in Cambourne and most people work away. But the business park and shopping centre are less than half finished and local employment opportunities will increase. There is a regular bus service to Cambridge and a train service from St Neots for people commuting to London. Car ownership and car use is high and secondary school children have to travel to Comberton or Cambridge. However, walking and cycling is pleasant within Cambourne and most primary school children walk or cycle to school.



### Employment

People identify the lack of local employment opportunities and the need to travel to work by car as the key issues in Cambourne's failure to be 'sustainable'.

The key issue is the lack of local employment opportunities. The idea was that people wouldn't need their car to get to work. We are far from this. David Morgan, Councillor

But it is important to remember that the business park and high street are only half finished and that they will provide much more employment in the future.

The majority of employed Cambourne residents (71%) work in managerial, professional or technical occupations. Most people (71%) travel less than 12 miles to work and only 8% travel more than 24 miles. This pattern is similar to that in the rest of S.Camb and like many other villages in the region, Cambourne might be considered a dormitory suburb of Cambridge. Nowadays the work force throughout the country is highly mobile and most people live further from their place of employment than is possible to walk.

There are a number of live-work units on Broad Street. These are attractive, but suffer two defects – they are expensive for small start up businesses and lack potential for adaptation and expansion. They are small, have no land to extend onto and the planners are reluctant to grant change of use from residential to business for the living part of the units. Is it any wonder that people live in Cambourne, with its new homes and good schools, and work elsewhere?

Potentially Cambourne could be much more sustainable. There is a strong aspiration amongst residents to work on site. We have a business centre and local employment opportunities are growing. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice



The business park is too isolated. It doesn't do much for the settlement. It could have been integrated into the village centre in the form of smaller business units. We need to look for greater density and a more closed community in new developments like Cambourne. A tighter development with a mix of uses and no separate business park would be much better. This would generate local employment and business opportunities integrated with the housing. Brian Human, Head of Policy and Projects, Cambridge CC

We can learn lessons here for the development of other new settlements like Northstowe. As has been suggested, it makes sense to integrate jobs and homes in mixed use development. But starter businesses need low rents and unless there are financial incentives in the new developments it may be difficult to attract employers if it is possible to find much cheaper accommodation in neighbouring villages.

Yet is it realistic in today's mobile labour market to expect people to live and work in the same place? At first sight it would seem sensible to locate all new settlements near main-line railway stations, but only a small proportion of working residents travel to work in London. Will Northstowe, with its proposed guided bus link to Cambridge, perform any better with respect to car use?

In summary, as yet there are too few jobs in Cambourne and most people work outside the village in Cambridge or elsewhere in S.Cambs. But the business park and shopping centre are less than half finished and local employment opportunities will increase with time as the settlement grows.

### **Motor vehicle use**

Stakeholders lament Cambourne's car dependency.

Compared with Cambridge there is obviously much less choice. In Cambridge there is so much within cycling or walking distance. Despite our good intentions, Cambourne is very car dependent. There are also detailed design faults that encourage more car use than might have been necessary. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

One of the main issues is the lack of accessibility. In Cambridge you can walk to most facilities, in Cambourne people use their car. Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School.

It was built for cars, like Milton Keynes, and you have to travel everywhere. Diana Cook, Community Learning, Comberton Village College

The majority of people living here work outside Cambourne. Many get the 7:30 train to London from St Neots. From early morning the traffic streams out and during the week the village is empty. But at the weekend it's a job to get around. Today many teenagers want a car of their own. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

It is true that people use their cars. But is not necessarily because of a lack of accessibility or poor pedestrian access. They just choose to drive. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

### **Public transport**

The new bus route has helped. But you can't just pop down the road like you can in Cambridge. People mention that you have to add a lot more time to the journey. The bus goes through all the villages. It would be nice if there was an express service to Cambridge and St Neots. But a lot of families have cars. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

We have a regular bus service, but once the developer moves on in five years it's down to market forces. Sustainability is hopeless. They are only now widening the road to Cambridge. Roger Hume, Councillor, Cambourne Parish Council



The Cambridge bus is fairly well used. It used to take 20 minutes, but they have added an extra loop so it now takes twice as long. The place needs more life and less commuting. People go to Cambridge for culture. Cambourne needs to be settled enough not to have to jump in the car for everything. Pam Thornton, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

The bus is getting better used. But it doesn't coincide well with London trains from St Neots and it doesn't stop at the station. We are in the hands of the bus companies. They have a big financial outlay on new buses for the new guided bus way or they lose grants. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council

It needs better public transport links, especially to St Neots. Some people from Bourn and Caxton use the village. Jenny Mackay, Wildlife Trust

In the early days it was frustrating working on the green travel plan when there was no real alternative to using the car. Initially the bus services were unreliable and once people have been let down a couple of times by public transport they go and buy a second car. Some of the combined cycle/footpaths can cause problems. They missed the opportunity, working with a clean sheet in Cambourne, to get this right by making separate footpaths and cycleways. The A428 widening will ultimately make things better for cyclists travelling to Cambridge as the old road will be retained for cycling. Northstowe will have the advantage of being on the guided bus route. In Cambourne it would help if the local bus connected to the train station at St Neots. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

The bus service improved recently as the population increased. We now have a 20 minute service at peak times with the possibility of a 15 minutes service in due course. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

## Walking and Cycling

Within Cambourne walking and cycling are easy and pleasant. The roads seem safe, there are wide footpaths and there are footpaths through the green spaces and around the periphery. But beyond Cambourne insufficient attempt has been made to link Cambourne to longer distance footpaths or to create cycleways. This may improve with time as signage gets better and the old A428 is freed of traffic.

There is no cycle route to Comberton. But would young people cycle that distance anyway? Young ladies wouldn't want to arrive with their hair soaking wet. And all the stuff they have to carry nowadays. Some people enjoy cycling to work in Cambridge. Hopefully once the dual carriageway is finished the old road will be a quiet cycle way. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC



## Parking

The houses were designed for 1.5 cars per household. We should have specified one car per bedroom. Most people don't put the car in the garage. They couldn't get it in as it's used as a store. So people park on the road. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

Road adoption needs to be quicker. There are all sorts of problems of speeding and bad parking. The level of off street parking provision is 1.5 per house. But there are a lot of professional people and many have more than 2 cars per family. So parking provision isn't up to what it could be. Roads are narrow and bendy and people have to park on the road. John Vickery, Clerk, Cambourne Parish Council

The roads can be too busy and we can't enforce the speed limits yet because the roads are unadopted.  
Lynne Anderson, Head, Monkfield Park School

## Lessons

- 12.1 People identify the need the lack of local employment opportunities and the need to travel to work by car as the key issues in Cambourne's failure to be 'sustainable'. But the business park and shopping centre are less than half finished and local employment opportunities will increase with time as the settlement grows.
- 12.2 At first sight it would seem sensible to locate all new settlements near main-line railway stations. But only a small proportion of working residents travel to work in London and most people may prefer to travel by car.
- 12.3 In today's highly mobile labour market, it may be unrealistic to plan for most people to work where they live even if there are local jobs available.
- 12.4 Live-work and business starter units may need subsidising to woo new businesses from cheaper accommodation in neighbouring villages. The units in Cambourne also lack scope for adaptation and expansion and planners may need to be more flexible in granting change of use in Northstowe and elsewhere.
- 12.5 A regular bus service to Cambridge has been established but it is not that convenient and many people prefer to use their cars and park at the Park and Ride.
- 12.6 Cycle routes and footpaths out of Cambourne are not well provided. However, once work on the new A428 is finished the old road may provide a safe cycle way and fast bus lane to Cambridge.
- 12.7 Insufficient attention has been paid to disabled access and there are problems of accessibility for disabled people and parents with buggies getting around the pavements, using the allotments and accessing the sitting places near the Cambourne lakes.
- 12.8 Parking provision underestimated the level of car ownership and this is creating parking problems. But these are nowhere as severe of course as those suffered in Cambridge.

## 13 Planning and development process

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Compared to the development corporation model used to develop new towns in the sixties, there is now a rather cumbersome process for developing new settlements in which developers provide land and pay for community facilities through Section 106 agreements with the planners. There are some benefits in this approach but the original vision of the Master Plan may get diluted and delays can occur in the provision of facilities. How can the process best be improved?



### Planning framework

It is important to put the development of Cambourne and other new settlements like Northstowe in the context of the current planning guidance and regional planning policy.

The Government believes that the planning system is key to achieving sustainable development. The new planning policy statement ‘Delivering Sustainable Development’ (PPS1) puts sustainable development at the heart of the planning system. Regional plans, called Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), are drawn up by Regional Assemblies. This regional plan incorporates a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and provides the framework for Local Development Framework documents (LDFs) and Local Transport Plans (LTPs). The development of a new settlement like Cambourne is guided by one of these Local Development Framework documents.

A recent report by the East of England Sustainable Construction Task Group (2006) describes the ‘*bewildering array of regionally delivered strategies for implementing government policy imperatives on sustainable development.*’ It also identifies the key players responsible for driving these agendas forward in the region: the Regional Assembly, the Regional Development Agency, the Government Office for the Eastern Region, Inspire East, Cambridgeshire Horizons, the local authorities, like South Cambridgeshire District Council, area and neighbourhood partnerships, land owners, developers, registered social landlords and a host of and community and voluntary organisations. Delivering new settlements like Cambourne is an immensely complex operation.

### New Towns

At different times, new towns in Britain have been founded using different delivery mechanisms. The most interesting of these, from the point of view of judging the process of delivering today’s new settlements, is the New Town movement. The lessons provided by the New Towns are being reassessed in attempts to deliver the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan.

Twenty-eight new towns were developed in Britain under the 1946 New Towns Act. Two forerunners of the programme, Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, were conceived in the nineteenth century. Milton Keynes, one of the last towns in the programme, and perhaps the most well known, was designated in 1967. A review by Champion et al (1977)

argues that as a whole it has been a great success. The new towns met high standards of design, they experimented with building types, community organisation and transport systems, and achieved many of their original goals. The key thing about them is they were developed using a quite different planning and development process than that used for Cambourne and other new settlements today. Essentially they were planned and developed by Development Corporations. The defining characteristic of development corporations was that they were public bodies that had comprehensive control.

Financing in the development corporation's model was quite creative. Land was acquired at agricultural use value and funds for infrastructure and building were borrowed on 60-year terms from the UK Treasury. It was expected that the growth in land values would allow the loans to be repaid but high interest rates in the 1970s and 80s meant that substantial parts of the loans had to be written off. The Thatcher Government saw the new towns as a socialist experiment. All the development corporations were dissolved by 1990, and the assets of the Commission for the New Towns were transferred to English Partnerships.

### **Current development process**

In Cambourne, and other new settlements, the mechanism for delivery today is a negotiated Section 106 Agreement between the planning authority and the developers. The developer provides land and pays for community facilities in return for the increase in land value resulting from the change of use. In some ways the Section 106 mechanism seems cumbersome, and it was criticised by Kate Barker (2004) in her review of housing supply. She suggested a tax or levy on land value increase. Others suggest that we need a new kind of public/private partnership with a shared agenda. A range of collaborative initiatives between local authorities and other stakeholders are being tried such as the Millennium Communities Programme, Urban Regeneration Companies, the Town Centre Renewal Programme and sustainable urban extensions.

But maybe the current Section 106 system can be made to work effectively. In the planning and development of Northstowe a new form of public/private partnership is emerging. Cambridgeshire Horizons, a non-profit making company set up to steer major development, has been hosting dialogue between the various stakeholders. These include the landowners and developers, English Partnerships and Gallagher Estates, and the planners from South Cambs, the County Council and Cambridge City. Clearly these negotiations are politically sensitive and commercially confidential. But this emergent process of co-operation needs documenting and someone should be reflecting on how this new delivery mechanism can be made to work most effectively.

There is also the question of who runs Northstowe once built. A recent report entitled *Who runs this place?* by Urbed and Marilyn Taylor Associates (2006) assessed a variety of local management options for managing Northstowe from parish, district or county council; a private management company; a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or a new kind of community-based organisation such as a development trust, community interest company or commonhold association. Clearly people are thinking about different options even if they decide to stick with the familiar.

Stakeholders have thoughts about the current development process and ideas for improvements.

Private developer led development isn't like the old new town development corporations. Private developers can't offer as many fringe benefits until they've sold the houses. This issue came up last week at the public consultation. A new settlement needs a meeting point early on in the centre of the new development. The sales centre could be in what becomes the village hall. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

There was a lack of continuity of design strategy from master plan to execution. There needs to be a continuing facilitator role, either in the form of a mini development corporation or independent architects employed by developers. The planning system, using 106, is a very blunt instrument to guide design quality. Gary Young, Urban Design Consultant, Terry Farrell & Partners

Half the original project team are still in place today, including the landscape planners and engineers. And we have consistently followed the Master Plan and Design Guide. David Chare, Project Director, Chare Associates

We need to manage the development through a development corporation rather than a Section 106 Agreement system in which the developers are in control. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

#### **At different times there may have been a lack of oversight.**

Some of the housing areas don't work as well as they could and there is too harsh a contrast between adjacent areas. You need to make sure there is control over the design to get more continuity. At some periods the control was less effective than it needed to be. There were also technical issues to do with access where adjacent parcels straggled a spine road and it wasn't clear who should pay for it. And issues about haulage roads which were not planned in enough detail. Dick Longdin, Master Planner, Randall Thorp

#### **Stakeholders question the priorities and influence of the developers.**

At a recent consultation day to discuss the 106 agreements for Upper Cambourne the developers were happy to mount an exhibition but reluctant to attend. They were totally out of their comfort zone having to listen to residents. But for new developments of this size it needs the developers to take time to listen and assess needs. Kevan Crane, Community Worker, Housing Associations Consortium

I wouldn't allow developers to design the houses. I'd set up an independent design team to plan the community. Developers are only interested in building as many houses as possible for the most profit. Too much money is involved. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

#### **The developers are an easy target for this kind of criticism and disagree that they are reluctant to engage with residents at public exhibitions.**

#### **Stakeholders also comment on minor issues that could be improved.**

Houses were used as sales centres. They are now going back to build single and pairs of houses on what were the car parks for these show homes. So the neighbours, who were looking over open country since they moved in some years ago, are now overlooking a building site, with the attendant noise, lorries, dust and earth moving. This causes resentment. We need to impose more controls on these sales areas. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

The roads haven't been adopted yet. This can cause problems with speeding and parking as the police have no powers on unadopted roads. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

Cambourne was designed many years ago by a company with offices in the middle of Manchester. In one area near Lambs Drove there are over a hundred houses with only one road exit. Ted Pateman, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

It is difficult to apply lessons to anywhere else. Northstowe will be quite different. David Morgan, Councillor, South Cambridgeshire DC

The housing is very successful. It sold without any problems. Waiting for the results of the planning appeal Cambourne Enhanced did seem to slow down the speed of the build programme. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

Some aspects of governance and management are improving.

The Parish Council has had to learn a lot as it goes along – for example what a Parish Council can and can't do and what the regulations say. Individual parish councillors have to learn to speak for the community rather than for their own personal agenda. Things are improving fast. Having a good parish clerk has helped enormously. Kate Wood, Planner, South Cambridgeshire DC

One of the key issues, however, is the lack of correspondence between vision and reality in the design and development of a new settlement like Cambourne.

When the project started with McAlpine's there was interest and talk about building a community. I am unsure if this vision has been passed on to the new house builders. Peter Wood, Vicar, Churches Together in Cambourne

A lot of people have raised expectations. They are buying into the lifestyle of a self-contained rural community in the heart of Cambridgeshire. They perhaps thought it would all happen straightaway. Reality hasn't lived up to this. People need to be more realistic about the time frame involved in creating a new settlement. Lesley Scobell, Cambourne Business Park

Northstowe shouldn't be marketed as Utopia like Cambourne was. Peter Bailey, GP, Monkfield Medical Practice

## Consultation

There has been considerable public consultation during the development process in Cambourne. A recent workshop in March 2007 organised by staff from S.Cambs DC found that *“people care about sustainability and are prepared to pay to have sustainable features incorporated into their homes. Participants appreciated the value of green spaces and sustainable communities. They were also keen to live more sustainably”*. One of the key action points from the workshop was that *“more work was needed to investigate grants for retro-fitting renewable energy generation to existing homes”*. Encouraging more shops is also a priority emerging from the workshop.

## Social housing

The review by housing associations involved in the development of the social rented housing at Cambourne identify time predictability as a major problem at Cambourne. Their review suggests that time predictability on projects in Cambourne is, on average, 200% above industry average.

A report by the Cambourne Consortium of Housing Associations entitled *Cambourne: a case study* (2006) outlined problems in the way RSL's were involved in decision making and the additional costs and delays involved in a new settlement like Cambourne. In particular they suggest the following factors cause difficulty: the RSLs are not party to the S106 Agreement; the [private] developer retains approval over the built form for all RSL developments; the phased release of land for the RSLs to develop is dependent upon the developer's programme and the RSLs have little total control over their own development programme; the RSLs were not consulted with regard to the Design Guide; the lack of a strategic framework document and policy change at regional and central government level; and the commissioning process for social rented housing.

The key learning points from this case study were to involve RSLs at the early planning stage; to ensure they are party to the Section 106 Agreement; to reconsider the appropriateness of a consortium of RSLs on relatively small schemes like Cambourne; to agree a new process of approval between developers and RSLs that will improve time predictability and above all to develop a more flexible partnering framework between the various parties involved in delivering a new settlement.

### InspireEast's Excellence Framework

The stakeholder survey used InspireEast's Excellence Criteria (2007) to assess Cambourne. The Framework, devised in conjunction with the Building Research Establishment, is based on the eight components of a sustainable community proposed by Egan. Its purpose is to assess the quality of a whole range of sustainable communities projects – urban and rural, the built environment and community regeneration. The standard is aimed at improving both processes and finished projects.



InspireEast's Excellence Criteria	met	partially met	unmet
<b>Equity</b> Fair for everyone, caters for a wide mix of tenure and household types	58%	27%	15%
<b>Housing and built environment</b> Attractive, well designed and built houses, buildings and landscaping	57%	30%	13%
<b>Environment</b> Providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment	52%	31%	17%
<b>Social and cultural</b> Vibrant community with a strong local culture; active community life; children's play; youth/adult recreation	46%	32%	22%
<b>Services</b> Well served, with accessible services and facilities	48%	26%	26%
<b>Transport and connectivity</b> Well connected, good public transport links to jobs, schools, health and shops	43%	21%	36%
<b>Governance</b> Well run, with effective leadership and inclusive participation	37%	33%	30%
<b>Economic</b> Thriving, with a flourishing and diverse local economy	21%	36%	43%

Table 4: InspireEast's Excellence Criteria – Stakeholder views from the paper survey (responses = 34)

In Table 4 the Excellence Criteria are listed in order of how well stakeholders believe Cambourne performs. Cambourne does best in terms of three criteria: Equity, Housing and built environment, and Environment. In the opinion of stakeholders Cambourne does

particularly badly in terms of Economic criteria. People think that the lack of local jobs and a thriving local economy are Cambourne's main shortcomings. As Cambourne's economy develops there will be many more jobs.

## Lessons

- 13.1 The process of procuring new settlements like Cambourne using Section 106 agreements seems cumbersome when compared with the New Town development corporations.
- 13.2 But planners and developers have made it work in Cambourne and there are indications that, with the mediation of Cambridgeshire Horizons, dialogue and negotiation can deliver successful communities at Northstowe and elsewhere.
- 13.3 There is a case for retaining architects to oversee the design and procurement process and to try to ensure higher quality design of civic buildings than has been achieved in Cambourne.
- 13.4 However, the appointment of landscape master planners delivered a very high quality green environment that many appreciate.
- 13.5 A new settlement takes a long time to build and much longer for a sense of community to gel. Developers need to be more careful in raising expectations in their marketing literature.
- 13.6 A review by the Consortium of Housing Associations at Cambourne makes a strong case for the early involvement of RSLs in planning and negotiation.
- 13.7 The move to form the parish council is an important step in local democracy. A good parish clerk is important and parish councillors may need training to get up to speed quickly.
- 13.8 Using InspireEast's Excellence Criteria, Cambourne does best in terms of three criteria: Equity, Housing and Environment. Cambourne does badly at present in terms of Economic criteria. People think that the lack of local jobs and a thriving local economy are currently Cambourne's main shortcomings.

## 14 Conclusions

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Peter Bishop, Director of Design for London, at a CityScape Conference in 2007 said that successful communities are beautiful, sustainable, prosperous and well-connected. How does Cambourne measure up against Bishop's simple criteria and are there other issues that are important in judging a new settlement? Overall, in the opinion of most of the stakeholders, Cambourne, both physically and socially, is a success. Nevertheless there are problems which are being addressed and lessons for other new settlements.



### Positive things about Cambourne

Cambourne is in some ways a unique type of settlement. The vision of the master planners was to create a village environment with the facilities of a small town. The aim, like that of the planners of the garden cities and suburbs, was to provide the best of both worlds – the rural and the urban. And in many ways Cambourne delivers this promise. You can get to the city fairly easily and you have nice countryside within walking distance. You are relatively close to main line railway stations at St Neots and Cambridge.

Cambourne is less congested than Cambridge and there is less pollution and better air-quality than in the city. It is quieter. There is a better sense of community. Despite the bad press, there is less crime and less antisocial behaviour. It is perceived as a safe place to bring up a family and young children seem to be given more freedom and independence than in Cambridge or established villages. Houses are cheaper, there is more choice and the houses are new. Above all people really appreciate the green space and lakes that have been incorporated into the built form.

### Negative things about Cambourne

But Cambourne can feel isolated, especially for those without children who have less opportunity to make friends or for those who find mixing more difficult. There is an obvious lack of history, a continuity of generations and a sense of belonging. There is less reason for civic pride, compared with Cambridge and some villages. There is less choice of shops, fewer public transport options and facilities were late in arriving. Schools are not sited ideally, but they have a very good reputation and this attracts new families.

The key issue in creating new settlements like Cambourne is the lack of local employment opportunities. But it maybe unrealistic to expect people to work where they live, even if there are more local employment opportunities.

The design vision of the master planners gets watered down and the original aim of creating a community can be lost. There is also huge pressure from developers to increase the size of the development.

## **Comparison with Bar Hill**

If we compare Cambourne with Bar Hill, the other new settlement in the region built in the late sixties, the first thing that strikes the visitor is that the design is better in Cambourne. The design of the houses, the architecture of the business park, the road layout and green areas are much better in Cambourne than in Bar Hill.

Bar Hill has, however, got time on its side and there is a strong sense of community. It's had time to establish a social network. People like living there and it no longer has a critical spotlight turned on it. In time Cambourne will settle in a similar way and it is likely to be a popular place to live.

## **Comparison with other new developments**

There has been considerable new development in the existing built-up area of Cambridge, notably along the railway corridor, on Riverside and at Brooklands Avenue. These developments all fall within the densification strategy option. There are also large developments on the periphery in Arbury Park, Trumpington and Huntingdon Road. In addition a massive development is proposed for Marshall's airport site.

It hasn't been possible within the limited scope of this study to compare Cambourne with other new housing developments in the region other than to visit these new developments, take photographs and to form a preliminary view.

The main difference between Cambourne and all of these existing and proposed developments is location. The housing in Cambridge will be nearer jobs and services than housing in Cambourne can be. But whether the actual houses will incorporate better environmental design or renewable energy production is open to question.

Perhaps most interestingly we need to ask whether the development proposed for Northstowe will be any more sustainable. If many people use the guided bus to get to work rather than cars, and if Northstowe, because of its larger size, provides a much better range of shops and services than Cambourne, then it might be. But Cambourne has significantly enhanced the ecology and biodiversity of the site, there is local food production in the two allotments and being an exposed and windy site there is the potential of local power generation. What is clear is that Cambourne is no less sustainable in terms of life styles and transport than most of the rest of South Cambridgeshire. The houses, which are all built to current Building Regulations or better, are much more energy efficient than nearly all homes in established villages.

## **Final thoughts**

New settlements, like Bourneville and Port Sunlight, had a clear ethical underpinning. Civic duty and co-operative effort provided the resources for communal facilities. Today the planning and development process involves bringing together conflicting interest groups and may lack this ethical framework and altruistic drive. How can we foster this altruism and civic pride in new settlements like Northstowe? How can we give them an identity and purpose that will act as a motor to develop a sense of place and community?

In Cambourne, sustainability was imagined by the master planners as the big idea that would provide this sense of purpose. And the traditional character of the English village, it was imagined, would give the settlement its image and identity. But Cambourne is no more sustainable, in any real sense, than other parts of the region and Cambourne is an

urban community divorced from its surrounding countryside. Nevertheless, the landscaping is sensitive and imaginative and the houses are, in the main, well built and pleasing. The people running the key services are good and they have co-ordinated effectively. And there is enthusiasm and energy amongst many new residents that is giving Cambourne an identity and sense of community. All this makes it an attractive and popular place to live.

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## Appendix: Survey forms

# CAMBOURNE EVALUATION

## STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

This evaluation of Cambourne is in three parts.

1 **Master Plan objectives**

To what extent will Cambourne meet the objectives outlined in the 1996 Master Plan.

2 **CABE's Building for Life Questions**

How does Cambourne measure up against CABE's 20 Building for Life Questions.

3 **InspireEast's Excellence Framework**

How does Cambourne measure up against InspireEast's new Excellence Framework.

We would really appreciate any comments you have - we have provided a comments box for each question. If you have anything else you would like to add please use the comments box on this page.



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Your Name
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Comment
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# MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES

The primary aim for the development of Cambourne Master Plan is sustainability.

How far do you think these objectives are being met at Cambourne? Please tick. If you think this may change as Cambourne grows, either allow for this in you assessment or include a comment.



## Village character

Comment

Settlement will respect the traditional character and settlement patterns of English of villages and market towns, particularly those in South Cambridgeshire.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## Community

Village life centred around activities and buildings that contribute to social and community well-being. Respect for existing communities in area.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## Rural character

Attractive rural landscape of parkland, woodland and intimate open space integrated harmoniously into wider expanse of South Camb.s arable farmland.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## Ecology

Protection of existing habitats and species. Enhanced biodiversity. Creation of new habitats characteristic of area.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## Transport

Services and facilities within walking or cycling range. Attractive cycle ways and walks. Good public transport to wider area. Motor vehicles not dominant.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## Energy

Low energy buildings; energy efficient homes, renewable energy supplies. Rain harvesting. Composting. Recycling of fullest range of waste materials.

1  2  3  4  !

unmet

met

## CABE – BUILDING FOR LIFE

CABE has developed the following 20 questions for evaluating new housing schemes. Please tick if you think the answer for Cambourne is Yes.



Tick if Yes

### Character

- 1 Does the scheme feel like a place with a distinctive character?
- 2 Do buildings exhibit architectural quality?
- 3 Are streets defined by a well-structured building layout?
- 4 Do the buildings and layout make it easy to find your way around?
- 5 Does the scheme exploit existing buildings, Landscape or topography?

### Roads, parking and pedestrianisation

- 6 Does the building layout take priority over the roads and car parking, so that the highways do not dominate?
- 7 Are the streets pedestrian, cycle and vehicle friendly?
- 8 Is the car parking well integrated and situated so it supports the street scene
- 9 Does the scheme integrate with existing roads, paths and surrounding development?
- 10 Are public spaces and pedestrian routes overlooked and do they feel safe?

### Design and Construction

- 11 Is the design specific to the scheme?
- 12 Is public space well designed and does it have suitable management arrangements in place?
- 13 Do buildings or spaces outperform statutory minima, such as Building Regulations?
- 14 Has the scheme made use of advances in construction or technology that enhance its performance, quality and attractiveness?
- 15 Do internal spaces and layout allow for adaptation, conversion or extension?

### Environment and community

- 16 Does the development have easy access to public transport?
- 17 Does the development have any features that reduce its environmental impact?
- 18 Is there a tenure mix that reflects the needs of the local community?
- 19 Is there an accommodation mix that reflects the needs and aspirations of the local community?
- 20 Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as a school, parks, play areas, shops, pubs or cafés?

