

# **Joint Framework to Supporting New Communities in Cambridgeshire**

## **1.0 Purpose of this document**

This document provides a unified vision and principles to support Cambridgeshire to deliver high quality growth and new communities.

It does not attempt to dictate specific actions but rather guide stakeholders and the community to support the development of high quality new communities. This document is intentionally short so it can be read without having to wade through a mass of guidance and research.

## **1.1 Links with the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter**

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth is a partnership document produced in 2009 by Cambridgeshire Horizons. The Quality Charter is designed to help people understand the big picture of housing growth in Cambridgeshire and sets out basic principles for achieving higher quality growth under four broad themes. The Quality Charter is built around the four Cs of community, connectivity, climate and character. These four Cs are still used by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel who are responsible for providing scrutiny of development proposals for the major growth sites in Cambridgeshire.

The Quality Charter goes some way in recognising the importance of building social capital, notably the principle of community which recognises the importance of the community taking an active role in the local democracy, management and consulting, ongoing community support and the importance of interim spaces to meet such as cafes.

However, as recognised in The New Housing Development and the Built Environment JSNA 2016, even with access to space and some community development support, new communities are still seeing some high needs. To prevent needs from escalating it will take a commitment from all stakeholders, including the community, to work together and support the development of community.

This joint framework does not replace the Quality Charter, but should be seen as an addendum to the charter to provide greater focus on supporting residents and community resilience.

Upon completion this document will provide a basis to

- Help communication with communities so they know what to expect when moving into new settlements
- Equip stakeholders with a common language and enabling them to demonstrate their commitment to achieving quality new communities
- Encourage the private sector to develop better understanding of what is required when they commit to building new communities
- Develop coordinated approaches to supporting new communities
- Secure investment to ensure effective support for all new communities.

## **2.0 Introduction**

A successful community is one where there is co-operation, neighbourliness and social networks; a community that has comparatively little intervention from public services but access to support where it is needed. Building a healthy new community takes more than just quality design and appropriate housing options, it requires the development of social capital, trust and participation.

Unlike most established towns, villages or cities that grow organically and develop over generations, new communities are built relatively quickly. The speed at which they are developed and expanded from their inception makes it difficult for an organic community to develop, there isn't a shared history or tradition and social networks do not yet exist.

In addition, the first few years of housing developments can be particularly isolating and frustrating for new residents. Sales marketing often promised a new life with a great lifestyle, upon moving the reality is quite the opposite. Often developments lack certain services (due to the number of residents being too small for service delivery), there are little opportunities near to home - not even a shop to walk to as a destination to get out of the house, the new school is only available for certain school years, and there is nowhere to meet with or make new friends. Add to this the stress and the financial commitments associated with moving then worries that people can usually withstand and recover from turn into anxiety and stress. So with no organic roots, few services and being surrounded by a building site it is not surprising that residents may find their new homes isolating and lonely.

The New Housing Development and the Built Environment JSNA 2016 recognises that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders and statutory agencies to contribute to helping to build resilient, empowered communities. Although infrastructure and design support the building of resilient communities, it alone cannot help to build communities; some additional support is required to facilitate the development of community. However, unplanned and uncoordinated support can result in frustration and is unlikely to achieve the outcomes it sets out to achieve.

## **3.0 Vision and Principles to Achieve High Quality New Communities**

Cambridgeshire vision for new communities is to support the creation of high quality, self-supporting, prosperous, resilient new communities by improving outcomes so people are less reliant on public services; but where people's needs are greater than can be met within community resources they are supported by the right services and helped back to independence.

To achieve the vision, this framework provides five principles which are underpinned by the research in the JSNA and local policies. It is envisioned that these principles will be used to help guide organisations to coordinate approaches to aid design and delivery of support and services.

### **1. Community resilience**

Taking an asset based, whole community approach will prevent people from becoming in need and will build a self-supporting healthy community.

- Asset based whole community approach. Understand the strengths, knowledge, interests and skills of those who move in and then empower them to form links.
- Shift focus from meeting need to increase emphasis on supporting the growth of resilient communities who can help themselves and each other
- Co-produce activities with existing and new communities
- Recognise that the community can solve problems and form an active community within the real or perceived constraints they may have

## 2. Partnership

To create vibrant, healthy and sustainable new communities, all stakeholders need to work together. Lessons learnt in previous new communities have shown that service and support can often appear disjointed and confusing to new residents.

- Work together from early in the planning of new communities to ensure all stakeholders are prepared and involved in the development.
- Reduce the chance for duplication or gaps in provision as all organisations communicate and share objectives.
- Joined up working to improve the quality and availability of support to residents and ensure best use of assets.
- Work together to ensure the most efficient use of limited resources

## 3. Co-location

Co-locating and integrating services and sharing facilities provides an opportunity to increase partnership working, share assets across partnerships and provides a local one stop shop of services for residents.

- Anchoring the space in a neutral service increases opportunities for the community to meet as everyone uses the space.
- Help improve financial sustainability with many partners involved
- Greater opportunity for integration across artificial service boundaries
- Does not necessarily need to be a large and expensive building as this can hinder the ability for a community to take on management of the building.
- Provides a focal point in the community which can be especially beneficial in a new community before other shops and services move in.

## 4. Timing

Timing delivery of services and support in new communities is very important, too late and needs are likely to exacerbate, too early and there is the potential to waste resource

- Involve the community and services in the early stages of planning through to delivery so that all services can work together to ensure appropriate and coordinated delivery
- Ensure that appropriate support is available for all residents especially the first residents so they are not left unsupported and vulnerable

- Ensure that all services and support are sustainable so that they do not end when they are still needed
- Involve all stakeholders in the discussion around design of community infrastructure so that it is appropriate for a wide variety of stakeholders to use.

## 5. Innovation

New communities should be seen as an opportunity to look at new approaches and social innovation as they are less constrained by existing mechanisms.

- Does not need to be large scale change, small scale changes in approach can have huge benefit
- Digital first approach
- Co-produce services with the community

### 4.0 Making it happen

This joint framework has been developed after responses from partners and members during the sharing of the CCC Supporting New Communities Strategy and in light of the New Housing Developments and the Built Environment JSNA 2015/16. It is envisioned that these principles will form the basis of people centred support working groups that are a key finding of the JSNA.

In addition, it is hoped that the local planning authorities will use this as consideration in their decision making, especially in determining planning applications and urge other organisations to support this approach as a sign of their commitment to raising standards.

### 5.0 Next steps

The plan is for the joint framework to be discussed at stakeholder meetings to seek endorsement of the principles. If endorsed it is then hoped that the stakeholders can come together to form working groups (if they do not already exist) so a co-ordinated approach is taken in new communities to ensure people are well supported to help establish sustainable communities where people want to live.