



Report of the Dunton Hills Design Review Workshop

Dunton Hills Garden Village

28th September 2019

Innovation and design guides workshop

Reference no.	1178
Date	6 th September 2019
Meeting location	70 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London, EC1M 6EJ
Panel members attending	Jane Briginshaw, Architecture, Housing Stephen Proctor, Architecture, Urban Design Sarah Wilkinson, Landscape Architecture, Innovation
Panel manager	Sogand Babol, Design South East
Presenting team	Jeff Nottage, Broadway Malyan Nick Norgate, Broadway Malyan David Barnes, Star Planning
Other attendees	Charlotte Robinson, CEG Amy Burbidge, Homes England Jonathan Alldis, Homes England Coby Tomlins, Brentwood Borough Council David Ubaka, Brentwood Borough Council Justin Booij, Brentwood Borough Council Phil Drane, Brentwood Borough Council Matthew Jericho, Essex County Council Peter Dawson, Essex County Council
Site location	Dunton Hills Golf Club House, Tilbury Road, West Horndon, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3LT
Local authority	Brentwood Borough Council
Site location	Dunton Hills Golf Club House, Tilbury Road, West Horndon, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3LT
Scope	As an independent design review panel, the scope of this review was not restricted.
Panel interests	Panel members did not indicate any conflicts of interest.
Confidentiality	This report is confidential as the scheme is not yet the subject of a detailed planning application. Full details of our confidentiality policy can be found at the end of this report.

Introduction

This is a report of the eighth design workshop facilitated by Design South East for Dunton Hills Garden Village between April and September 2019. Two design review meetings have been held, with a third planned for October 2019. The two-part workshop is structured around key questions set by the Council and Design South East.

The first session focused on innovation in the context of Garden Villages. We discussed new thinking on energy and zero-carbon, infrastructure, technology and delivery. The second session focussed on how the development of Dunton Hills will be supported through two design guides - one prepared by the applicant, and another by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. The working draft design guidelines prepared by the applicant were used as a starting point. The discussion was informed by the case study of Design for Ebbsfleet.

Background

Dunton Hills Garden Village is a proposal for a new settlement of between 2,700 to 4,000 homes within three neighbourhoods. The vision is for a self-sustaining productive landscape and supporting future technological advances for sustainable travel, including on-demand services and 'smart' facilities, alongside a walkable, polycentric community with a 'central heart' and market square as the primary destination for the village.

Detailed comments and recommendations

1 Innovation

- 1.1 The applicant's approach focussed on transport, social, and physical/built fabric innovations.
- 1.2 The scheme proposes to innovate through transport primarily by challenging conventional attitudes and promoting behaviour change, while supporting local living. Practically, this is to be achieved by providing the necessary infrastructure (for example to support demand-response autonomous vehicles), providing active travel corridors and a community concierge for cyclists and logistics.
- 1.3 Social innovation proposed includes supporting an online community, establishing referenda for community decision making, an events programme, a freecycle scheme and early community development through apprenticeships on-site for prospective residents, and prioritising co-working spaces.
- 1.4 Physical and built fabric innovations proposed include embedding capacities for 5G+, virtual connectivity of open spaces, and built-fabric innovations that respond to the need to reduce water and energy consumption, while managing waste responsibly.

2 Workshop feedback

What are the innovative new technologies and sustainability measures, infrastructures and approaches that should be embedded in Garden Villages, and how should they be implemented? e.g. MMC's, MMTI's, PV's. Consider the policy context.

- 2.1 We recommend the development of a firm social agenda, that is backed up spatially. Such an agenda is hinted at but could be much stronger. For example, lifelong and multi-generational living has significant potential for this site and could be the principal issue that is embodied in the development.

Spatial provisions to support social innovation would include increased opportunities for interaction between the elderly and young (for example at shared spaces like orchards, allotments, or community composts), abundant health facilities, walking routes, productive landscapes, and integration with the wider transport network with sustainable modes (to promote active travel). Internalised working patterns should be targeted, at levels of around 30-40% to support diverse demographic interactions.

Softer provisions to support social innovation would include free accommodation for students, engagement with the over 55's to encourage downsizing, or covenants on the affordable housing component to provide homes for residents working on-site only.

- 2.2 A zero-carbon, or carbon neutral development should be part of the commitment for Dunton Hills. Low-carbon energy sources should certainly be viable for this site, from Phase 1. If this is not deemed possible, all homes developed that use gas should be futureproofed for ease of conversion at a later date.
- 2.3 Centralised refuse systems are recommended, which would need to be embedded in the business case at an early stage.
- 2.4 Achieving behaviour change will require whole systems thinking and establishing a spatial framework to make it easy for people to be more sustainable. The potential for 'blueways' and 'greenways' would be one component of this.

What are the challenges to innovation on Dunton Hills? How can these be avoided to ensure successful implementation?

- 2.5 Perceptions and attitudes are a key obstacle. The team will need to engage the community, members, and agents to accept and even promote innovating proposals. Concerns will need to be alleviated, collective knowledge developed, and presumptions challenged to ensure that these commitments are deliverable in the long-term.
- 2.6 It is acknowledged that flexibility is needed for provisions that can adapt with the scheme as it progresses, however there is a need for firm innovations that are integrated spatially from the outset.
- 2.7 The capital cost and service charges of all these measures is a key consideration and should be resolved as early as possible to ensure their viability.

3 Design guides

- 3.1 The applicant has developed a Masterplan Framework that will be submitted with the application. This document will summarise the context analysis, the vision and evolution of the masterplan concepts, the masterplan framework, and the landscape strategy in a linear progression. The masterplan framework will contain guidance on the masterplan drivers, land use, tenure and mix, access and movement, and phasing.

4 Workshop feedback

Looking at the draft CEG Masterplan Framework, is this how a Design Guide should broadly be structured? What should it contain, or not, and why?

Where do you draw the line between the Council's and CEG's guidance?

What level of detail is required for CEG's Masterplan Framework vs. the Council's Detailed Design SPD?

- 4.1 The applicant's Masterplan Framework should be seen as an opportunity to carry out fundamental place analysis, hinting at the urban structure, which is then elaborated on and refined through the Council's Masterplan Framework SPD. It should be a crucial

resource to lead and frame the eventual design team's process to the point of delivering a design. A deep analysis and understanding of the context should be prevalent throughout.

Detailed advice on the applicant's Masterplan Framework

- 4.2 The document should start with a short statement setting out the vision of CEG, as master developer.
- 4.3 It should be detailed to the comparable level of an outline application only. It should not contain details on materiality and appearance but focus on strategic design and development controls that are clear but offer some flexibility for interpretation.
- 4.4 With the understanding that Brentwood is perceived as 'a borough of villages' by members and the community, it is important to explicitly capture the characteristics of a Brentwood village and relate this preceding analysis tightly to the design principles. It may be that some of this analytical work has already been carried out through the Village Study, however, more analysis is needed, containing both urban analysis and reflections on architecture qualities. The strengthened analysis should be clearly linked to the Masterplan Framework principles, i.e. on the same page, to ensure the links are easily comprehensible to all as the project progresses.
- 4.5 The two-tiered structure including 'overarching principles' and 'guiding principles' should be reviewed. The team should propose one set of principles, to avoid confusion of status with the eventual SPD guidance.
- 4.6 The level of detail in the landscape section will need to be curtailed, with requirements at a strategic level only.
- 4.7 Clear guidance should be provided on the overall neighbourhood structure, with 'core areas' identified. Explanatory notes on the decision-making process behind the structure should accompany such diagrams.

Detailed advice on the Council's Masterplan Framework and Design Guidelines

- 4.8 Mandatory requirements should be identified.
- 4.9 It should be explained that new interpretations are acceptable, if explained and justified.
- 4.10 The strategic diagrams of the applicant's Masterplan Framework should be used as the basis for additional detail.

Confidentiality

Since the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the panel, this report is offered in confidence to those who attended the review meeting. There is no objection to the report being shared within the recipients' organisations. Design South East reserves the right to make the contents of this report known should the views contained in this report be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). Unless previously agreed to remain confidential, this report will be publicly available if the scheme becomes the subject of a planning application or public inquiry. Design South East also reserves the right to make this report available to another design review panel should the scheme go before them. If you do not require this report to be kept confidential, please inform us.



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