

## Summary of North Felixstowe Citizens Panel – Workshop 4

Held on:  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### Present

Name	Inits.	Company	Inits.
Jeni Watts	JW	East Suffolk Council	ESC
Seb Burchell	SB	LDA Design	LDA
Tom Shopland	TS	LDA Design	LDA
Sue Downs	SD	Community Action Suffolk	CAS
Peter Corrie	PC	LDA Design	LDA
Patrick Ransom	PR	Avison Young	AY
Martyn Saunders	MS	Avison Young	AY
Andrea McMillan	AM	East Suffolk Council	ESC
Elliot Dawes	ED	East Suffolk Council	ESC
Citizens Panel	CP		

### Introduction to the citizen's panel:

On Monday the 20th May, LDA Design and East Suffolk Council hosted the fourth workshop of the North Felixstowe Citizens Panel. The focus of this workshop was to explore the citizens panels priorities regarding housing, land uses and community facilities. Several speakers were organised for the session, whilst members of East Suffolk's housing and planning policy also attended to answer the panel's questions about housing in relation to local council planning policy.

After some minor technical difficulties, the session began with the facilitator introducing the agenda for the session before handing over to Avison Young for the first presentation of the day. Avison Young, a global real estate advisor, has provided research into the housing and non-residential facility needs in Felixstowe based on the town's existing socio-economic data. This research has informed the masterplan and the types of homes and facilities that will be provided in the neighbourhood and potentially, the wider town. Their research has highlighted certain residential and non-residential opportunities such as the affordability of homes and the availability of commercial floorspace. Avison Young finished their presentation with examples of successful places and facilities that mirrored the opportunities they have uncovered through their research.

Following Avison Young's presentation Peter Corrie, Director of Urban Design at LDA Design spoke for 15 minutes about the evolution of the Masterplan from the initial concept. PC also outlined the proposed densities within the masterplan and briefly spoke about phasing towards the end of his presentation.

LDA began their presentation by explaining how the masterplan framework has developed from the both the green space and placemaking concept plan. Next, they ran through the five key 'land-use' moves of the masterplan.

- The first move outlined the proposed residential character areas in the wider neighbourhood.
- The second move focused on the 'leisure-hub', the area where a leisure-centre, and small convenience store would likely be located. Peter also mentioned that facilities such as a satellite GP, Cafe, Swimming Pool and 5g playing pitches were also likely to be found within the space.
- The third move outlined the proposed community hub, a collection of spaces and facilities that were located near the existing health centre and the Eastward Ho Playing pitches. The

spaces and facilities could include a community farm, and a mix of non-residential uses that are yet to be defined. It was proposed that the Eastward Ho playing pitches are to be moved slightly to the west of their existing location and improved to ensure they could be weather resilient.

- The fourth move highlighted the new schools that are proposed to be located within the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood and the existing Trelawny Place scheme.
- The fifth and final move alludes to the new employment and community land uses within the masterplan and how they connect with other parts of the proposal. Image 5 highlights how the leisure hub connects with the school and the new employment and community land uses within Trelawny Place. In the east of the site, he illustrated the strong relationship between the school, the neighbourhood hub, and the entrance to the neighbourhood at the Grove Road.

Following a brief overview of how the neighbourhood will comply with local housing policy, LDA provided some insight into the density of existing residential areas in Felixstowe, such as Western Avenue, Allenby Park and Laureate Fields. They then presented some examples on how certain densities can be achieved at various scales in Southwold, Cambridge and Saffron Walden, Essex. LDA also had shown the panel three images of how different densities can look when represented as a housing mix, see image 6 below.

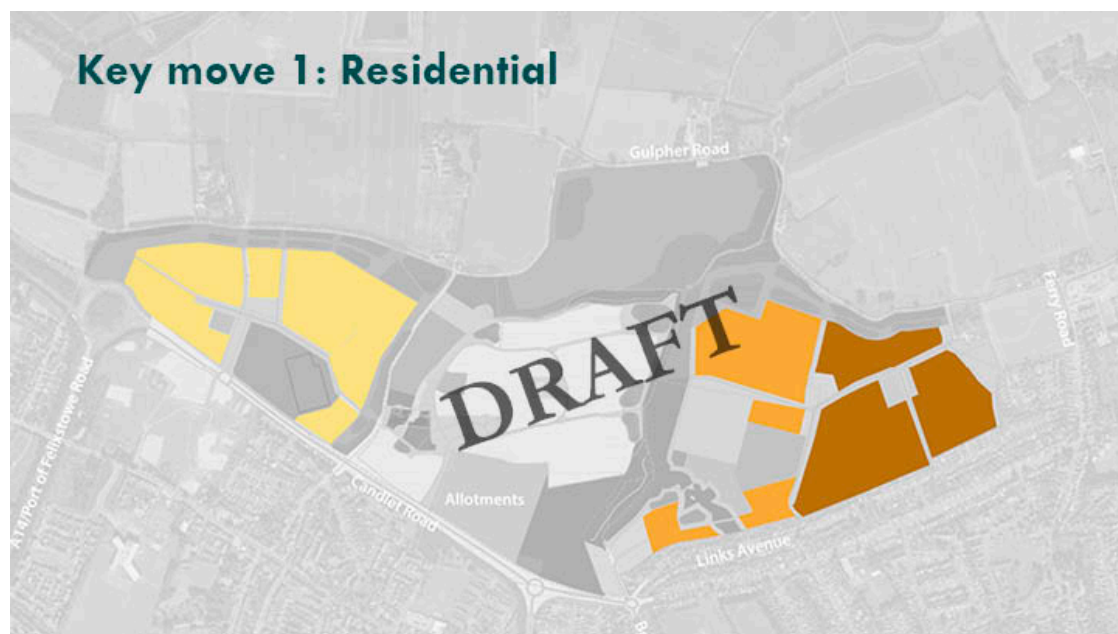
An early-stage density plan was presented to the Panel (image 7) and this demonstrated how density could be achieved throughout the neighbourhood. Lower density areas (up to 30 dwellings per hectare) have been introduced in the north of the site to complement the rural landscape, whilst higher densities (up to 45 dwellings per hectare) have been suggested for the areas that are closer to the existing town. Finally, Peter presented an early phasing strategy for the project.

The panel made a series of comments and asked several questions in relation to LDA's presentation. Some members of the expressed discontent towards the key moves plans, in particular the decision to reprovide the Eastward Ho playing pitches to allow for development. There was a suggestion that this has been done without consulting the public. Another member of the panel asked LDA why density could not be increased elsewhere in the site. LDA responded suggesting that the decision to include development on Eastward Ho was to ensure density could be spread evenly and appropriately throughout the rest of the site. LDA said the development proposed near the playing pitches is mostly for a school and this location remained to be the best place for a school, due its proximity to the town and the proposed road infrastructure. The school also must be of a certain size and the location proposed by the design team is the most appropriate when considering that factor.

A question about the housing supply was put to the speakers and a member of East Suffolk's planning team. It was unclear whether this question was answered, and we invite the panel to readdress the point via email or at the next session if they would like further clarity. The panel also asked a question about the mix of homes versus apartments in parts of the proposal that had been previously outlined as areas that could contain up to 40 dwelling per hectare. In response LDA had shown the panel the density plan of the neighbourhood and a diagram of how certain densities might look.

Sue Downs from Community Action Suffolk then spoke to the room for the next 15 minutes about the topic of Co-Housing and the work Community Action Suffolk have been doing to-date. The presentation began with a definition of Community-Led Housing and the various approaches of Community-Led Housing. Successful Community-Led Housing examples in the UK were then explained to the Panel. This included Marmalade Lane in Cambridge, and Almshouses in Streatham and Framlingham. Sue finished her presentation with a list of resources for the panel to explore in their own time. A member of the panel asked Sue the question – 'why this is the first time we've heard about Community-Led housing on the project?'. Sue and the facilitators were unable to

directly answer the question, however she highlighted the next steps both the council and the panel can take in progressing the Community-Led housing movement in Felixstowe.



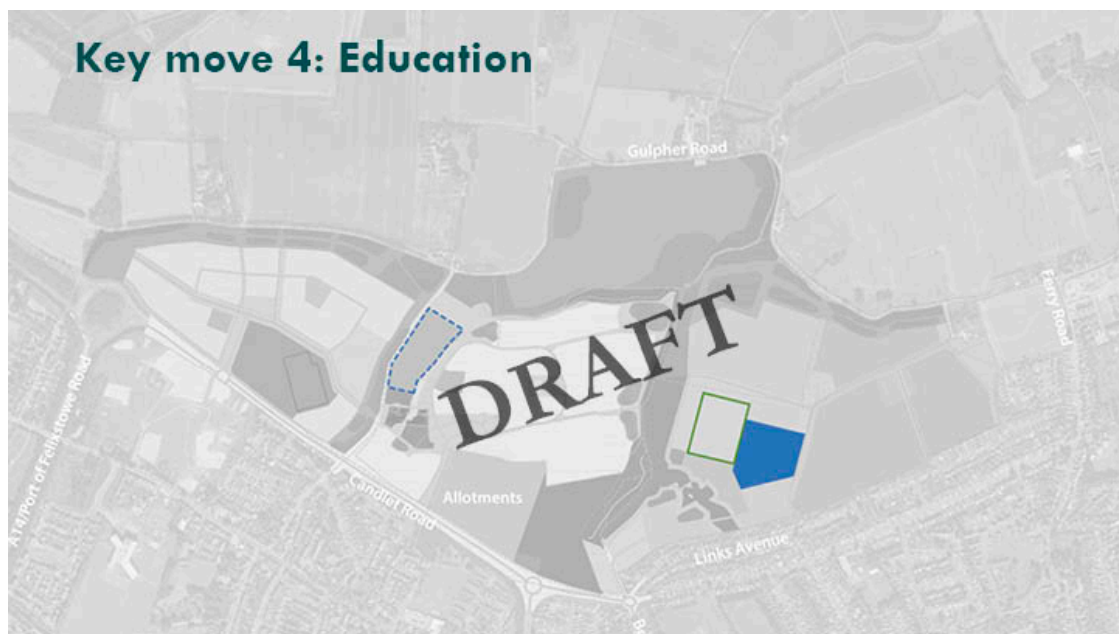
*1. Key move one - proposed residential character areas. Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.*



*2. Key move two - leisure-hub with leisure centre and non-residential facilities. Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.*



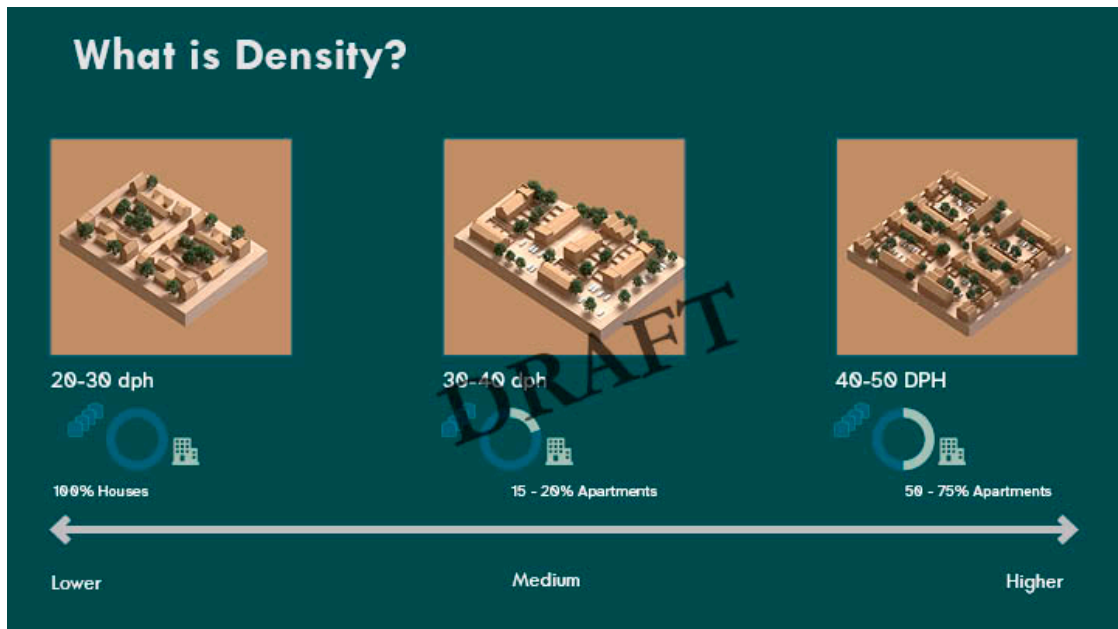
**3.** Key move three - Community Hub (with proposed community farm and reprovided playing pitches). Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.



**4.** Key move four - Education (with proposed schools and playing pitches highlighted). Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.



5. Key move five – Employment and community facilities (with proposed connections between each). Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.



6. Density examples – Image shows three varying densities (dwelling per hectares – ‘dph’) and their mix of house types. The 3D models in this image are not places within the neighbourhood and these models were not created for this purpose of this presentation or project.



*7. Density – This image shows how densities may vary across the neighbourhood. Please note all drawings are work in progress and are subject to change.*

### Activity

In the second half of the session the panel were asked to split off into groups to identify their preferences (as a town) for housing. A few optional prompts were also provided relating to design, affordability, and co-housing. The groups insights were as follows:

#### Group 1

- There was an enthusiasm for Co-operative and Community-Led housing amongst the groups and they wanted to know how to tackle the next steps, whether that be galvanising interest or creating and attending meetings on the topic.
- Shared energy provision and shared charging points (preferably in clusters) were also identified as a preference.
- A preference for individualistic houses and Almshouses (perhaps for the dock workers), and properties that deviated from the standard housebuilder like at Trelawny Place.
- Sustainable and low maintenance properties were also priorities amongst the group.
- There was a question about how developers could be held to account for certain sustainability standards. East Suffolk Planning Policy team highlighted how developers should align with the accessibility and sustainability housing standards as specified within the Local Plan.
- The importance of community-led housing was reiterated once again and how the Citizens Panel can propose and agree next steps.
- They finally stated that they must not miss the opportunity in the early planning stages.

#### Group 2

- Community-led housing was again identified as a key priority for this group.
- Places for effective off-street parking to ensure the roads were clear (and so anti-social parking was discouraged).
- More parking - this includes an adequate supply of cars per houses.
- Ensuring there is an effective build quality, and that this echoed throughout the peninsula.
- External quality assessment such as the Suffolk Design Review panel for all proposals in the district, that is independent of developers.
- Quality led housing.
- Transparency and clarity over the management of affordable housing.
- One individual from the group suggested that all homes in the neighbourhood should avoid the use of gas boilers, like the current situation in Trelawny Place. The planning policy manager reinforced the importance of aligning development with Local Plan policy, and that the Local Plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure points such as the suggestion from the panel can be included if deemed appropriate.
  - There appeared to be some confusion around the ease at which the Local Plan could be amended.
- An individual from the group questioned whether there was a way that the neighbourhood could avoid certain type of leaseholds and ensure all homes within the neighbourhood was a freehold.
- The group reinforced the need to publicise the topic and appetite for community-led housing.

### Group 3

- The third group expressed a preference to 1/2/3 beds (not in blocks of flats) rather than larger 4 and 5 bed properties.
- They suggested that integrated parking solutions - such as balconies/terraces over garages should be included to ensure there was an effective amount of external amenity space and neat parking solutions.
- Group 3 highlighted the importance of environmentally friendly homes that required low amounts of energy, and that would have features such as solar panels built on them from the outset.
- East Suffolk Council should look towards Marmalade Lane in Cambridge for inspiration for affordable housing. They recommended that the council should appoint a Project Manager who would be responsible for the community-led, social, and affordable housing within the project.
- An appropriate housing mix was also identified, for example flats not being separated.
- Community-led housing was also highlighted as a key priority. The group explained that this would encourage younger people to live in the neighbourhood, and to allow people to downsize.
  - They suggested a survey was appropriate to reiterate the appetite for community-led housing.
- Social and affordable housing should be of high-quality and not too small.
- Concerning the materials used they suggested that homes should not contain composite cladding, too much brown, or resemble 'toy-town' referring to the standard house-type builder.
- More communal gardens instead of private gardens were also identified as a preference. They believed that some people would prefer smaller or communal gardens as they can be too much of a responsibility and not a priority for some.

## Group 4

- This group focused on the need to inform the relevant demographics of how certain options could be made available with regards to housing and community-led housing.
- They recommended that community-led housing should be communicated/advertised more from the council and a survey would be important in identifying the appetite for such a movement.
- A survey would also establish the kind of things people are looking for when it comes to housing and things like community-led housing.
- Design preferences focused on avoiding little boxes - referring to the standard house developers.
- They further recommend that developers should be enforced to abide by environmental and design obligations outlined at the beginning of the design process.
- They reiterated the need to survey the relevant demographics to understand the communities housing design choices.
- This sentiment (surveying the wider town) was also echoed in relation to understanding whether there was an appetite for community-led housing.

A written comment was made by one of the groups stating that the district/town council needs to instigate a survey by Community Action Suffolk (Sue Downs' group). This survey would ensure housing needs were better understood and then the council could publicise self-build, and community build options more effectively.

The session finished with the lead facilitator giving a brief overview of the fifth and final session. The focus of the session will be to review the key priorities from the previous Citizen Panel session and to identify the next steps that the community can take in making positive change towards the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood project.

We have decided to extend the final session by 1 hour, therefore the fifth Citizens Panel will now run from 11.30am to 3pm - lunch will be included. The reason to extend this is because we would like to ensure there is enough time to explore both Meanwhile Uses - a topic that we did not have time for in the previous session - and the key priorities of the panel and their next steps.

