

NORTHSTOWE

Frequently Asked Questions



Homes
England



About

This document has been prepared by the Northstowe Project Team at Homes England with input from partners, contractors and consultants.

It provides answers to general and specific questions received in relation to the Northstowe development.

The document will be updated as necessary in response to queries received.

Northstowe FAQs

Q. Who is bringing Northstowe forward ?

A. As master developers, L&Q and Homes England are responsible for providing strategic infrastructure at Northstowe, including primary roads, footways, cycleways, busway, drainage channels, connection of services, open space (water parks, play areas and greenways) and preparation of school sites. SISK are delivering this strategic infrastructure for Homes England.

The master developers will then bring housebuilders on board to build out each development parcel.

As is usual for new towns, Northstowe is being built in a number of phases. L&Q (formerly Gallagher) is the master developer for phase 1 (1500 homes), while Homes England is the master developer for phases 2, 3A and 3B (8,500 homes and town centre).

Homes are being built by:

- Bloor Homes (Phase 1)
- Barratts (Phase 1)
- Bovis (Phase 1)
- Linden (Phase 1)
- David Wilson Homes (Phase 1)
- Taylor Wimpey (Phase 1)

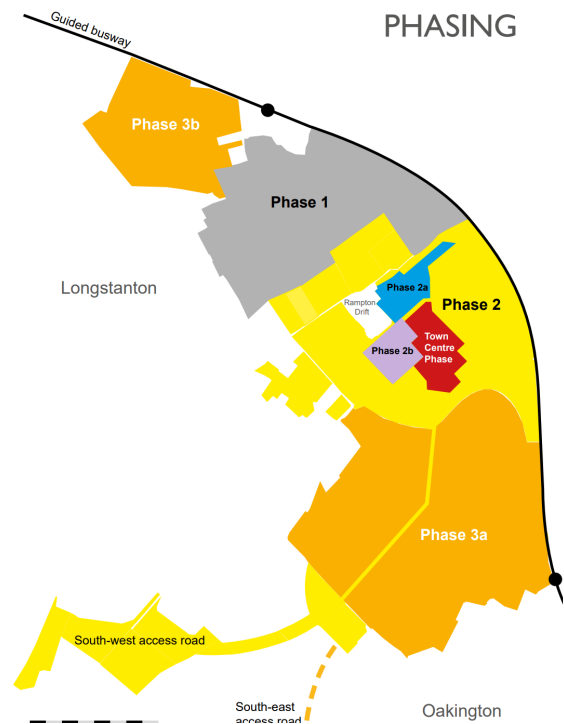
House by Urban Splash is building Phase 2a. Keepmoat will be building Phase 2b. Homes England will continue to bring forward development parcels, marketed to a range of large and small developers, for the remainder of Phase 2 and then Phase 3a and 3b.

Homes are available for purchase and rent. A proportion of homes are 'affordable homes' available at reduced cost for those unable to access housing on the open market.

There are a huge range of other partners collaborating to bring forward Northstowe. These include;

- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Northstowe Town Council
- Anglian Water
- Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association

Not to mention lots of local community groups, businesses and residents all contributing to making Northstowe a wonderful place to live, work and visit.



Q. How can I find out about Homes for sale?

A. Homes for sale and rent can be viewed at Northstowe.com

Q. What is the role of Homes England at Northstowe?

A. Homes England is the government’s housing and regeneration agency. It is acting as master developer of Northstowe Phases 2, 3A and 3B, which in total will make up 85% of the town.

As master developer, Homes England produces a master plan, obtains outline planning permission, produces site-wide strategies (such as Design Codes to guide the quality of detailed proposals), prepares the land and carries out archaeological works and designs and implements strategic infrastructure (including roads and open space). This creates ‘oven-ready’ parcels where like-minded development partners are selected to build the homes that create Northstowe’s neighbourhoods. These designs follow approved Design Codes.

Homes England work closely with Northstowe Town Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council amongst others, to support and bring forward a range of community led activities to benefit residents, businesses and visitors.

Q. What are Homes England’s objectives for Northstowe?

A. Homes England’s objectives for Northstowe are:

- **Pace** – to deliver Northstowe quicker than the market would ordinarily deliver. We are aiming for 400 homes to be completed each year.
- **Quality** – to create pleasant homes, in good neighbourhoods with low environmental impact.
- **Affordability** – to increase supply of housing in an area of high demand, including a good proportion of affordable homes. Homes England’s provision of affordable housing at Northstowe equates to 44% and exceeds planning policy requirements. This includes discounted market sale, shared ownership and homes for affordable rent.

Q. Who is responsible for delivering facilities at Northstowe?

A. Most facilities, such as community spaces and sports facilities, are funded by the master developers (L&Q and Homes England). Many are then delivered by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) or Cambridgeshire County Council on land provided by either L&Q or Homes England.

Homes England has agreed to support the development of a new Civic Hub, seven schools, sports facilities, green spaces, new roads/footpaths and cycleways, a number of new lakes and a wide range of community development activities, totalling some £161m. These have been agreed with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council through planning requirements called Section 106 agreements. To date, Homes England has already paid s106 contributions exceeding £50m including school contributions of £30m and a Civic Hub contribution of £16.4m.

South Cambridgeshire District Council are responsible for constructing:

- The Phase 1 and 2 sports pavilions.
- The Phase 1 local centre including community facility and employment area.
- The Phase 2 Civic Hub including health, library and community space.

L&Q (Phase 1) and Homes England (Phase 2 and 3) are responsible for delivering the main open spaces including parks, greenways and equipped play areas. They are also responsible for preparing school sites.

Homes England is responsible for:

- Central One (an initial Phase of the town centre).
- Phase 2 Water Park.
- Phase 2 Sports Hub.

Cambridgeshire County Council are responsible for constructing schools and identifying an appropriate education provider. The County Council is also delivering the Northstowe Heritage Annex on land that has been made available by Homes England.

Q. When is Northstowe Town Centre being developed and what will it feature?

A. Homes England are currently seeking a partner to deliver Central One - an initial phase of Northstowe town centre. Central One will feature a market hall, convenience store and around 550 homes. It will also incorporate the Civic Hub being delivered by SCDC.



The preferred development partner will work up proposals during late 2022/early 2023 with community input. It is hoped development will commence in November 2023.

Q. How can I find out more about being part of the Northstowe community?

A. Northstowe has an expanding population of dynamic people and a strong community is already forming. A number of clubs have recently relocated to the Northstowe Secondary School. Also, SCDC is purchasing two homes and a sales office on Pathfinder Way, and, subject to receiving planning permission, plans to modify them for use by community groups. The buildings are proposed to be a medium-term replacement for the temporary community facilities which were previously in place at the Community Wing at Pathfinder Primary School. Subject to receiving planning permission to change the use of the buildings, the homes and sales office will be repurposed to provide community space ahead of the Sports Pavilion, Community Centre and Civic Hub coming forwards.

You can find out more information by contacting the Northstowe Community Development Officers at northstowe.community@scamb.gov.uk or on the [Community](#) and [Get Involved](#) pages of Northstowe.com

Q. When will the Southern Access Road West open?

A. We're currently unable to provide a specific date. Although works are nearly complete, there are some technical processes that need to be followed to ensure the road can open permanently and safely.

We apologise that the road and associated footways, cycleways and bridge have taken longer to build than we initially expected.

We hope we will be in a position to open the road to the public towards the end of the Summer (2022). Once open, the road will provide a convenient connection between Northstowe and the A14 at Bar Hill, reducing traffic traveling through Longstanton.

Q. Will Northstowe be a happy and healthy place to live?

A. Northstowe was one of ten ‘Healthy New Towns’ designated by NHS England in March 2016. Priorities were to reduce obesity, promote healthy aging and introduce a new model of care.

A Healthy Living Strategy was developed to guide detailed proposals for Northstowe Phase 2 and these principles have also been applied to Phase 3A and 3B to promote healthy lifestyles.

Amongst other things, Northstowe has an outdoor gym, cycle hire scheme, circular walking/running routes and frequent opportunities for sitting to enable older people to get around comfortably.

New health facilities are being planned as part of the Civic Hub being delivered by SCDC in the town centre.

Q. What is being done about environmental sustainability?

A. Northstowe has safe and comfortable walking and cycling routes throughout and has public transport at its heart – the main artery of the town in a bus only route with a cycle route alongside it.

Homes England is committed to the use of low and carbon zero technologies at Northstowe to achieve carbon savings. We are ready for the Future Homes Standard being introduced in 2025. We champion use of modern methods of construction (off-site manufacture) which are quicker to build, quieter, cleaner and more energy efficient than conventionally built homes.

Homes England is committed to reducing CO2 emissions. At Northstowe we implement the energy hierarchy (Be lean / Be clean / Be green) by incorporating the below approach to energy within buildings:

- Fabric First, incorporating high levels of thermal performance, thermal fabric and air permeability
- A stepped move away from fossil fuel heating
- Low carbon heating technology
- Incorporation of renewable energy generation technology (e.g. Solar PV)

For Phase 3, we have adopted a target of 19% reduction on the Dwelling Emission Rate (DER) against the Target Emission Rate (TER) based on the 2013 Edition of the 2010 Building Regulations (Part L). This target is significantly higher than SCDC policy requirements of a 10% reduction from on-site renewable and low carbon technologies. In all likelihood, the approach of fabric efficiencies, renewable generation and low carbon heating specification could lead to carbon reductions of at around 40-50% below current Building Regulations.

Q. What is being done to protect the environment at Northstowe?

A. All phases of Northstowe have been subject to a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

As stated in National Planning Practice Guidance, the aim of an Environmental Impact Assessment is to protect the environment by ensuring that, when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project that is likely to have significant effects on the environment, the local planning authority

does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision making process. The Environmental Impact Assessment regulations set out a procedure for assessing, consulting and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects.

A wide range of environmental surveys were undertaken to understand the existing environmental conditions at Northstowe and to drive the evolution of the scheme design. This included habitat and species surveys that were used to identify the key ecological features. This information was used to inform the scheme design and the need for appropriate mitigation to ensure that habitats were retained where possible and also improved.

Around a third of Northstowe is retained as improved 'green-infrastructure' including natural/semi-natural urban green space, retained woodland blocks, allotments, parks and gardens, including habitat for a number of protected species. Our first 'residents' on Phase 2 were badgers rehomed in a new artificial sett.

Our new lakes are already attracting great interest from a variety of nesting birds.

On phase 3 we are committed to achieving Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 15%, which greatly exceeds the normal planning requirement of 10%.

In addition we are providing 129 hectares of new habitat at Smith Fen, six kilometres north-east of Northstowe. This landscape is being designed and managed to attract farmland birds such as lapwing, linnet and skylark.

Q. How does site drainage work at Northstowe?

A. Northstowe features an exemplary Sustainable Urban Drainage system. Swales are accommodated alongside roads and through pleasant greenways. These carry surface water roughly west to east to large lakes in our new water park. The system has been designed to be sealed to prevent interaction with ground water.

Q. What measures are in place to prevent flooding in and around Northstowe?

A. Lakes in the new water park have been designed to have a 2m permanent water depth and surface water attenuation will be provided on top of this for up to deal with the 1 in 200 year rainfall event (including an allowance for climate change) – which exceeds planning policy requirements.

Water is then discharged at an agreed rate equivalent to the mean annual greenfield run off rate. In times of high rainfall, discharge rates will be lower than would otherwise occur were the site not developed. In addition when water levels within the adjoining Beck Brook are high, all surface water runoff can be held in the lakes for up to 48 hours, with zero discharge, to allow water levels in adjoining waterways to lower as part of our strategy of reducing flood risk – both for the town and adjoining communities. These arrangements exceed planning policy requirements.

Q. I've heard that the developments at Northstowe are impacting ground water levels in Northstowe and the village of Longstanton, and that the developers are continuing to remove water from the ground. Is this true?

We are aware of concerns about ground water levels, however these are primarily related to the first phase of Northstowe. Homes England is not involved in Phase 1 and is not able to comment on it.

Homes England is responsible for Phases 2, 3A and 3B, which have all been subject to an extensive Environmental Impact Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment.

In terms of ongoing development at Northstowe – Phase 2 is currently underway, with Homes England acting as master developer, and we can confirm there is no abstraction of groundwater taking place. Any well points sunk relate to bore holes, which have been created for monitoring purposes only.

Northstowe Phase 2 drainage has been designed as a sealed system, keeping groundwater and surface water runoff separate to ensure capacity for design rainfall events is available (up to a 1 in 200 year event plus additional allowance for climate change and 48 hour retention).

The water park lakes have been designed to have 2 metres minimum permanent water (stored surface water) below the space available for surface water attenuation for runoff in extreme events. Whilst they may appear 'full', there is significant storage capacity over and above this to accommodate attenuation of the developments surface water which is currently under-utilised. It should also be noted that there is currently no pumped outfall from these lakes, this is allowing the lakes to fill up to the permanent water level.

Contractors SISK have been managing water levels between the two lakes to enable them to complete the lakes (including swimming platform installation) in accordance with the various permissions. This work is almost complete. Contractors SISK have confirmed that no ground water is being abstracted and that no water is being pumped into Beck Brook.

Homes England is aware of water pooling near lake three (the southern- most lake). Archaeological excavations here have led to the ground level in this location being lower than it was originally resulting in a low point where surface water is unable to drain away due to underlying clay. Water has not been pumped there. In time the ground level will be restored as part of proposals to create sports pitches in this location.

Plans for Phase 3A were approved earlier this year (2022), and as of July 2022 we can confirm that no work has commenced on this phase of development. Impact on ground water was fully considered as part of the Phase 3A planning application within the Flood Risk Assessment and specific clarification was provide in the Ground Water Management Note produced by technical consultants. It was concluded that the development is not anticipated to change ground water levels in the surrounding area. However, Homes England is committed to installing additional boreholes to enable groundwater levels to be monitored going forward as a precautionary measure.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has provided its own information on this issue which can be read [here](#).

Q. I've heard there's a Judicial Review relating to Phase 3A. Does this relate to local ground water levels in Northstowe and Longstanton?

No. The Phase 3A Outline Planning Permission (for up to 4,000 homes) is subject of an ongoing Judicial Review claim but the grounds of challenge centre on the supply of potable water to serve Phase 3A and its related environmental effects. Both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Homes England are contesting the claim and as such we cannot comment further on it at this stage.

Q. I've heard Urban Splash House is in administration. What does this mean for Inholm?

A. As reported in the press during May 2022, the Urban Splash House group fell into administration and this affects 'Inholm' on Phase 2A Northstowe.

In an administration event the site with its rights and contractual obligations pass to the administrator. Homes England is in discussion with the administrators and is hoping to agree a position that will clarify uncertainty for all residents. Information will be shared as soon as it is available. In the meantime. Residents are welcome to contact the Community Development Officer at South Cambridgeshire District Council with any specific concerns:

northstowe.community@scambs.gov.uk

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Keep in touch



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