



Chalk Hill – Foxton- South Cambridgeshire

A rural exception site development of 15 homes for affordable rent, developed and managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council with significant involvement of the parish council in the choice of site and design.



Affordable housing provider

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Download – case study here

<https://cambsruralhousing.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/case-study-affordable-rural-housing-foxtoni.pdf>

Partners

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Landowner

Burmor Construction

Cambridgeshire Acre – Rural and Community-Led Housing Enabler

Scheme outline

The Chalk Hill scheme provides 15 affordable homes for rent in Foxton, a small village located midway between Cambridge and Royston. Completed in 2017 it was the second rural exception site developed and managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council as part of its new build programme. The homes provide a mix of one, two and three bedroom properties with the rent capped to Local Housing Allowance rates.

Foxton is situated midway between Cambridge and Royston and is classified as a ‘Group Village’ reflecting the limited range of services and restrictions on new housing development. In consultation with the Parish Council a number of sites were considered. That chosen the faces the Green Belt and is within 1km of the village shop, primary school, church and recreation ground.

Considerable care was taken with the design with consultations with the parish council and community. The final design creates an extension to the village that is sympathetic to, and in character with, its surroundings. The houses were built to achieve Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Photovoltaic panels were avoided to improve their appearance, but air source heat pumps were used which also reduced heating costs for tenants.

The community events were also an opportunity for local residents to find out more about the scheme and how they or their family could apply for tenancies. Nine out of the 15 homes were let to households with a local connection to Foxton. The remainder went to households with a local connection to nearby villages through the cascade system.

The success of this scheme has encouraged the Parish Council to look for sites for a further rural exception scheme. The emerging Foxton Neighbourhood Plan contains a strong policy on supporting rural exception schemes where such schemes can demonstrate they are meeting local needs and are acceptable in terms of their environmental impact.

Need

A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by Cambridgeshire ACRE in 2009. This identified 12 households with a potential need for affordable housing and a local connection to Foxton. However, by the time the scheme was being considered at planning committee the level of need, based on the Housing Register, had risen to 18.

Good practice

This scheme demonstrates the importance of consultation and design as part of an iterative process with the full involvement of the parish council. Whilst the fundamentals of the scheme changed little since inception many minor changes have made a significant cumulative impact on the final scheme quality.

A local landowner with a vested interest in the community has different motivations to an institutional landowner. In this case the landowner looks out over the scheme from his window.

Funding

The scheme cost £2.3 million to build.

Right to Buy receipts contributed £719,259

The remainder of the funding was provided by South Cambridgeshire District Council from cash reserves.

Benefits

A man with disabilities who had lived in the village for over 30 years when he moved into his new home in Chalk Hill. He still lives with health issues, but his new council home has allowed him to live independently in a community he knows, with supportive family close by.