



Northwest and West Community Forum

Thursday 26 February 2026.

Storey's Field Centre. Eddington Avenue, Cambridge CB3 1AA.

Post meeting note

Due to the wi-fi unfortunately cutting out during the presentations, there is no recording of items 4 and 5, however the slides for these presentations are attached and commentary for the Secondary Education in Northwest Cambridge item is as follows, as are the questions and answers for each presentation.

Secondary Education in Northwest Cambridge

Slide 2: Key Stakeholders:

Cambridgeshire County Council are the client.

We have appointed Atkins Realis as our consultant and Morgan Sindall as the principal contractor.

The Academy Trust who will run the school are Meridian Trust, they also run North Cambridge Academy and Northstowe Learning Community. The master developer is Barratt David Wilson Homes. Local Planning Authority: Greater Cambridge Shared Planning highlighted that education schemes come under Regulation 3 applications so for the school scheme the project team will apply to the County for planning approval as opposed to the LPA.

Slide 3: Funding

Total project budget is approximately £36million this is made up of contributions from S106 contributions, Council funding and funding from the DfE.

Slide 4 Proposed/potential delivery timeline for DG Secondary

The project team, made up of Cambridgeshire County Council, Atkins Realis, Morgan Sindall and Meridian Academy Trust have been working hard on the design of the school.

We have put a proposed/potential delivery timeline up. We have put proposed/potential for a reason. There are key risks which I will come to on the next slide.

We are working towards having the planning application submitted in August with a target for planning permission for the scheme in January 2027.

We would then look to start on site in April 2027 with the building completed in November 2028.

As a project team we are discussing the potential for a partial handover to allow the school to open in September 2028.

Slide 5 Key risks to the delivery programme

There are several key risks to the delivery programme

Firstly, any delay in the planning application for the school scheme will delay the programme.

Secondly, there are huge dependencies on the wider development programme.

All stakeholders are unsure from a practical view when the site will be ready for handover from Barratt David Wilson Homes. This is dependent on several factors:

- DBWH do not yet own the site.
- There is an overhead power line which requires removing and trenching underground,
- The site requires levelling,
- Access to the site and the haul road needs to be agreed,
- Drainage connections need to be established,
- There is a badger sett on site,
- No archaeology surveys have been completed; these will require trenching on the school site.

Any of these works cannot start until the developer infrastructure application has been approved. This can only be submitted after the development Design Code, which as Elisabeth explained earlier is due to be submitted in April.

Indications are that these wider development infrastructure works may start in early 2027, and our programme is currently working on a start on site in April 2027.

As a project team we are doing everything we can to progress this school.

We know that we have an obligation under the DG 1 Section 106 agreement to secure planning permission for the school before being able to call for the site.

Therefore, we are working as hard to achieve this and are working to mitigate any risks which are within our control or which we can influence.

We will return to the community forum with updates and intend to communicate openly and consult with parents and families throughout the process.

Slide 6, 7, 8 and 9: School design

An outline of the school design. This will be shared with the community more widely through the scheme's planning process.

These are indicative currently- a sneak preview!

Questions and Answers

1) Planning & Local Plan – Janine Richardson and Elisabeth Glover

Q1 — What exactly will be tested during the design code “Testing Day”?

A: Elisabeth explained the testing day uses a 1hectare challenging parcel to see how the code performs where the development meets the Country Park. It tests:

- whether densities can be achieved,
- whether quality standards (cycle storage, bins, street layout) work,
- whether the code is flexible enough to allow innovation,
- and whether it provides sufficient control to avoid quality deterioration over time.

She emphasised the code must guide development for 5–20 years, including future developers who may not be Barrett/DWH.

Q2 — What happens if the design code review takes longer and delays the infrastructure RMA, potentially affecting the school?

A: Elisabeth stated that infrastructure and design code work is being “twin tracked”, meaning discussions and technical preparation run in parallel. Additional delays would affect developer timescales, so the matter should be addressed directly to the developer.

The question was deferred for the school discussion.

2) Darwin Green Phase 1 Delivery – Andrew MacLaren (BDW)

Q1 — What shops will be coming to the retail units, and who has taken the “sold” unit?

A:

- Units will go to market in 4–6 weeks.
- Only community appropriate businesses will be selected (e.g., cafés, artisan outlets).
- Uses that cause noxious smells, HGV traffic, or compete with the future supermarket will not be approved.
- One unit showing as “sold” was due to a sign being put up incorrectly.

Q2 — Can the sewer easement drawing be corrected to show the narrower section?

A: Andrew confirmed yes — the drawing can be corrected to show the narrowed easement where porches reduce the width to approximately 4.8 m.

He agreed that this should be noted and updated.

Q3 — What about unauthorised vehicle access into Central Park? Can more protection be installed?

A:

- Andrew stated the developer has built exactly what was approved.
- Any additional barriers would require a formal amendment, which may delay transfer of the park to the Council.
- He noted the developer would work with the County after transfer if extra protection was desired.

Q4 — What physical works must BDW do to enable the secondary school? Timeline?

A:

- Largescale earthworks are required to raise the site levels for drainage to fall toward the Country Park.
- Material must be imported; stabilisation will take “a significant amount of time.”
- All this depends on approval of the infrastructure RMA, which itself depends on the design code.
- Andrew could not give a date but promised a timeline at the upcoming 4 March drop-in session.

Q4 — When will the online reporting platform for residents go live?

A: Andrew said the website is still being worked on, is “quite complex,” and he will communicate a launch date through the forum once confirmed.

Q5 - Can you let us know if it has it been decided if there will be a pedestrian link from the top of Central Park and edge of Franklin Gardens to run between back gardens of Caveson Court and Tavistock Road to join Aingers Lane that leads to Histon Road? There was a regularly used access point there before the development started.

A: *To be confirmed*

3) Site Compliance, Conditions & Planning Enforcement – John Shuttlewood

Q1 — Why are some streetlights still not working?

A:

- BDW replaced the lanterns; all were *supposed* to be working by end of February.
- Residents reported several still out.
- John asked residents to specify which ones so BDW could immediately address them.

Q2 — Why do homes have fewer solar panels than shown on plans? Are they compliant?

A:

- Conditions require all homes to meet Part L 2021.
- Improved building fabric means fewer panels can still meet the energy efficiency requirement.

- BDW must submit Part L compliance certificates once homes are built.
- Future heating adaptability (for heat pumps) is also conditioned.

Q3 — Why has an unapproved retaining wall been built at the Woodlark Road ditch? What happened to planning control?

A:

- John discovered the wall during a site inspection — it was “not in the plans.”
- He told BDW to stop work immediately.
- BDW voluntarily paused.
- The developer must:
 - meet residents,
 - explain why they built it,
 - submit full details for planning approval,
 - demonstrate no harm,
 - accept that if unacceptable, they will have to remove it.

Cllr Hawkins acknowledged the concern and will follow-up with Officers in the enforcement team.

Q4 — When will the Windsor Road pocket park condition be approved so work can start?

A:

- New drawings have been submitted after multiple revisions.
- Public comments are invited until 17 March.
- The condition must be discharged before Parcel 3/4 works can lawfully begin.

Q5 — Why is Franklin Gardens not under the same parking enforcement regime?

A:

- John explained there is no current private enforcement contract for Franklin Gardens, unlike Parcels 1 & 2.
- The Council wants uniform enforcement and will discuss changes with the housing association.

Q6 — Have finished floor levels behind Grosvenor Court been independently verified?

A:

- John has not measured them personally (requires surveying skills).
- BDW states the levels match the approved plans used in the light impact assessment.
- John will write to residents confirming which drawings show the approved levels and provide copies.

4) Secondary School (Programme, Risks, Contingency)

Presenters: Cambridgeshire County Council Education Team & Morgan Sindall

Q1 — Can we access the earlier Education Meeting recording?

A:

- Yes. The recording exists. The Council will either upload it or send a link through local schools.

Q2 — When will the infrastructure RMA be submitted, and how does it depend on the design code?

- A:
- The RMA can only be submitted after design code approval
 - The design code is expected to be submitted in April.
 - Infrastructure RMA would follow “a couple of weeks later.”
 - Full certainty depends on developer milestones, not the education authority.

Q3 — Is a September 2028 school opening realistic?

- A:
- Major risks exist:
 - planning approval times,
 - Site ownership timing,
 - overhead powerline diversions,
 - major earthworks to raise the site,
 - access roads,
 - archaeology not yet completed.
 - The project team is working toward the date but acknowledges all risks openly.

Q4 — Will the Council publish a joined-up timeline showing BOTH developer works and schoolwork's?

- A:
- Education officers agreed this is needed and committed to bringing a coordinated programme to the forum and the 4 March developers' session.

Q5 — What is the contingency plan if the school is not ready for intake?

- A: Two options are being assessed:
- Option A: open in temporary accommodation
 - Option B: ask local schools to over admit (as previously used).
- A consultation with parents and schools will follow.

5) University of Cambridge – Eddington - Cambridge West (Biky Wan)

Q1 — When will upgraded sports pitches be ready?

- A
- RMAs for the football/MUGA and cricket facilities have been submitted
 - Construction is targeted for later this year, with opening planned for next year.

Q2 — What is the timeline for the final retail unit and the GP practice?

- A:
- One retail unit has interest and is expected to become a food & beverage outlet.
 - The Healthcare building was delivered as part of Phase 1 of Eddington, and the space is located beside the Sainsbury's car park entrance. We previously consulted on the design of the healthcare space. We'll hopefully make an announcement by the next Forum about this space.

Q3 – Has the hydrology on Conduit Head Road been considered?

- A:
- Our engineers have reviewed this, and we don't believe there to be link between our development and the hydrology at Conduit Head Road.

Q3 – How will the Vet School at Cambridge West be supported?

A:

- The University's General Board met, and a statement is [online](#) about the future of the Vet School following a campaign. The Vet School will be developing ways to operate sustainably, and our team are working closely with them on space options.

6) Community Development – Sue Jackson

Q1 — How do residents join activities, get welcome packs, or participate in new programmes?

A:

- Welcome packs available at the Darwin Green Community Rooms.
- Activities (Lego Club, board games, toddler groups) operate through local resident organisers; Sue attends weekly to assist signups.
- Sketching classes and "Find Your Wild" guided walks will be advertised via WhatsApp groups, resident associations, and council channels.
- Holiday lunches, litter picking kits, and summer activity grants are open and will be circulated locally.