

ST LUKE'S PARK

at Runwell

“A new Garden Village for Chelmsford and for Essex”

Submission to the EDG & SEHG 2019
Housing Excellence Awards
Countryside Properties



“Countryside Properties’ aim was to create an inclusive, vibrant and sustainable new community using previously developed land. Central to the aspirations for the site is the desire to develop a vibrant new neighbourhood comprising high quality housing and public open space, with appropriate community facilities, managed in such a way as to leave a lasting positive legacy”.



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ST LUKE'S PARK: PLANNING CONTENT AND SKILLS

St. Luke's Park provided a unique opportunity to create an exemplar new sustainable community for Chelmsford providing high quality housing, on-site social infrastructure, leisure and recreational opportunities within a landscape-led structure where the existing green infrastructure network established how the scheme was shaped.

Collaboration with Homes England and Chelmsford City Council

Countryside acknowledges and celebrates the power that high-quality professional planning adds to development. A recognised RTPI Learning Partner, employing a team of experienced in-house planners who work with external planning consultants to deliver planning excellence.

Countryside has a long and successful history of working in partnership with Homes England as well as other public bodies and landowners ranging from Local Authorities to the National Trust.

Working with Homes England at St Luke's Park, Runwell; Countryside secured a position on the Delivery Partner Panel to deliver 575 high-quality and much needed new homes, a neighbourhood centre, community facilities,

and a primary school as part of the creation of a new sustainable community. The first phases of the scheme are under construction and are projected to deliver in excess of 370 units by Autumn 2021 along with community, commercial and education facilities.

There are future opportunities to build upon the existing proposals that have been developed with surrounding land controlled by Countryside and Homes England to grow the community into a Garden Village.

A strong working relationship has developed between the project team at Homes England, Countryside in-house Planners and Planning Officers at Chelmsford City Council to ensure that the collective vision of quality design and place making are implemented. A single planning officer at Chelmsford City Council has dealt with all planning applications to ensure continuity and the successful delivery of a high-quality development.

Site Context

- Up to 575 high quality homes with a mix of housing typologies and tenure including affordable housing
- Site for a brand-new Primary School incorporating an Early Years and Childcare facility
- A central community hub with retail and leisure uses
- Strategic Open Space provision, including retained and new pitch provision, new court provision and enhanced club house facilities at Runwell Sports and Social Club adjacent to the site
- Pedestrian links to the public highway and existing Public Rights of Way
- Accessible local open space provision to meet varied needs of the community
- Retention and enhancement of heritage assets including Grade 2 listed Chapel and re-use of Administration Block
- SUD's employed throughout the development and designed into public spaces as a feature



Example of SuDS @ Runwell, Countryside Image

Professional Planning Team

The project has benefitted from a dedicated team of in-house and external planning consultants leading the scheme through the planning process. Collaboration with Homes England, Chelmsford City Council and other Key Stakeholders has enabled innovation and success throughout this project.

Quality in Design and Place Making

Making effective use of the site's heritage and landscape has enabled modern housing to be incorporated into a site where the landscape has established the framework for development.

Place making through high quality design has been acknowledged on the site through the Evening Standard's New Homes Award 2018 where the 'Mulberry' at St. Luke's Park received a highly commended award in the best out of London home award.

Planning Solutions

The site provided a unique and challenging opportunity to redevelop a former NHS hospital used for mental health treatment and located within the green belt into a sustainable new community.

A pragmatic decision was taken to remove the site from the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan process, recognising the need to provide additional sites for new homes, particularly where the land represents a sustainable location for future growth. The detailed design process also needed to be conscientious to several trees and ecological considerations including TPOs, Bats, and nesting Barn Owls.

The design process carefully considered opportunities present on the site and deliberately sought innovative planning solutions. For example, SuDs implementation presented an opportunity to provide generous landscaping on site (see image above) and the presence of a Grade II listed former hospital chapel provided important architectural interest and the retention of an important heritage asset.

ST LUKE'S PARK: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

Economic Objectives

The development will create high quality homes that support employment in the area and create jobs in the construction industry.

Social Objectives

A balanced community will be created from the varied mix of housing and the supporting community facilities that will form the heart of the development.

Environmental Objectives

Sustainable Urban Drainage techniques are employed within the development and integrated into public spaces.

A residential travel plan has been developed and a bus service connecting the site to the local town and train station has commenced.

Sustainable Development Goals

Good Health and Well Being

The landscape led development has open space woven into the urban form throughout, providing opportunities for informal and formal outdoor activity benefiting both physical and mental health. This is complimented by enhancements to the Runwell

Sports and Social Club, benefiting both new and existing members of the community, which has also formed part of the development.

Sustainable Cities and Communities

A residential travel plan has been agreed as part of the development and sustainable methods of transport including a bus route to Wickford Train Station have been implemented from the earliest stages to ensure sustainable modal choice for new residents.

Quality Education

A site has been designated in the heart of the development for a new primary school and an early years childcare facility.

Decent Work and Economic Growth

The new development would support local jobs and create new jobs within the site from the neighbourhood centre and community uses.

Life on Land

The development is set in acres of green spaces, the landscape led development once completed will be made up of over 8,000 trees and shrubs which will contribute toward the existing mature green setting.





Short term Benefits

Improvements to Runwell Sports and Social club adjacent to the site have encouraged the existing community and new community to come together from the outset of the development to socialise and get active.

Medium Term Benefits

As the site progresses, a varied mix of size and tenure of homes will be created; complimented by an array of facilities on site to support the new community.

Long Term Benefits

The completed site legacy will be a sustainable balanced community living in high quality homes supported by sustainable infrastructure and facilities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community involvement in developing the proposals at St Luke's has been key to ensuring an exemplar development. Countryside and Homes England have worked with the local community through good working relationships with local Councillors and the parish council. This has helped shape the development by understanding the needs of the local community.

Local Cost Housing where local people got first refusal, together with the delivery of a new primary school were both considered to be critical to local residents in terms of the acceptability of the development, both of which now form part of the development proposals.

Ongoing involvement of local residents and local ward members as the scheme has been developed has allowed any issues or concerns to be dealt with in a timely manner.

ST LUKE'S PARK: OUTCOMES

“A Community based on quality and innovation”

Impact on the Community

Imaginatively designed and bespoke new housing with generous gardens and accessible green space is at the heart of Countryside's ethos for delivering a healthy community. A desire to provide a wide range of benefits for the community framed the development of the proposal. For example, low-cost home ownership units have allowed local residents to access the housing ladder who may not have previously been able to, and the mixed tenure of units has allowed for a balanced inclusive neighbourhood to be created.

Impact on the Economy

A positive impact on the Economy through providing construction jobs and new residents supporting the local economy. Our analysis has considered that 180 construction jobs and 270 supply chain jobs would be created. Also, once the development is completed, additional residential expenditure is expected to contribute £6.8 million to local shops and services.

Impact on the Environment

St Luke's Park is a landscape led-development reflecting its edge of village location, based on strong and generous green infrastructure, distinctive tree-lined streets and linear greenways.

A full public art programme has been developed to be incorporated into the development which reflects the walks and natural surroundings of the site. A series of sculptures will be located around the development to invite exploration and create a sense of place. A specific identity will be given to each sculpture creating memorable walks.

A full Sustainable Urban Drainage network has been developed and incorporated into the development layout.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

St Luke's Park provides 35% affordable housing which consists of both affordable rent and Low-Cost Home Ownership Housing and is designed to be tenure blind. The provision of Low-Cost Home Ownership Housing allows local residents to acquire up to 60% equity of a property and pay no or little rent on the remaining equity for the first 10 years. Priority is given to buyers who reside or work close to the site in Runwell or Rettendon, followed by residents living within the Administrative Boundary of Chelmsford.

This affordable housing product has proved to be extremely popular on the development with 30 low cost units having been taken up to date.

Countryside have sponsored several community events at the Runwell Sports and Social club adjacent to the site to promote community integration of new and existing residents in the area. The most recent being a social sports day in July 2018.

Inclusive Planning

In developing St Luke's Park, Countryside has worked to achieve an accessible and inclusive design. The layout was designed to be safe and easy to navigate, taking careful consideration of all potential users of the development.

Several community services will be located on the development including local shops and a primary school. Pocket parks have been created near to residential properties; providing opportunities for all users to enjoy spaces for outdoor recreation.

Key services and amenity areas are within a short walkable distance from residents, while provision of

ample disabled parking spaces also provides easy access for those unable to walk.

A bus service was implemented by Countryside from the 120th occupation. To ensure that all members of the new community could benefit from the sustainable transport on offer each resident received free travel permits.

Policy compliant levels of wheelchair accessible and lifetime homes units provide for 30 units specifically designed for these users.

The Runwell Sports and Social Club received significant contributions from the development as it plays such an important part integrating the new community with the existing. Countryside have also participated in community events and sponsored the junior football team.



Good Practice

Collaborative working with Homes England and local stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process has proven to be successful.

Ongoing engagement with local Councillors, residents and the parish council has ensured that the development is implemented in a way the local community expect. Engaging with local stakeholders, not only during the planning process but throughout the construction of the development, will allow place making and integration within the local community to be more effective and is a positive approach that can be transferred to any future project.

Countryside has been recognised through the National House Building Council (NHBC) who awarded this uncompromising approach to achieving the highest possible standard of house building, by awarding the Senior Site Manager for St Luke's Park in Runwell, with a Pride in the Job Seal of Excellence Award at the NHBC East Regional Finals. 'Pride in the Job' recognises the best site managers who help achieve the finest possible standards of house building and is the highest industry accolade a site manager can receive.



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ABOUT COUNTRYSIDE

Countryside is a leading UK home builder specialising in place making and urban regeneration. Founded over 60 years ago, Countryside has earned a reputation for quality, sound governance and good management practices.

Our Housebuilding division develops sites that provide private and affordable housing, on land owned or controlled by the Group. It operates under the Countryside and Millgate brands, primarily around London and the South East of England.

Our achievements are exemplified by the receipt of more than 340 awards since 2000 and we hold more Housing Design Awards than any other home builder.

We are skilled at working collaboratively with landowners, public agencies and major commercial organisations to create places people love, and which consistently deliver a premium for our partners.



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