Planning permission has been granted for Cambridgeshire’s largest education campus which once completed will provide teaching and learning facilities for more than 3,000 students aged 0-19.

Cambridgeshire County Council has received the go ahead to develop Phase 1 of the Northstowe Education Campus, in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Homes England (HE), the government’s national housing agency.

The first phase of the campus, which will cost around £45m, includes a secondary school, a multipurpose school hall / theatre space and drama studios, a sports hall large enough for four tennis courts, a gym, two dance studios, an all-weather floodlit football pitch and a 110-place Special Education Needs (SEN) school.

Located on the site of the former RAF Oakington base on the northwest edge of Cambridge, Northstowe will be a sustainable new development with up to 10,000 new homes and an anticipated population of around 24,400 people.

Cllr Simon Bywater, Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: “It has taken several years to get to this point and a huge congratulations to all the parties involved that have made it possible to get to where we are today. This is a truly one-of-a-kind, landmark project bringing all core education and community facilities together into one place for the children of Northstowe and Longstanton and the wider community.”

Cllr Peter Hudson, local member for Longstanton, Northstowe and Over at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: “I am thrilled to see plans for what will be the County’s largest education campus finally come to fruition. This is an important step in the development of Northstowe Education campus.”

The secondary school, planned to open in September 2019, will be run by Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) and will provide places for up to 600 pupils aged 11-16. It will then be extended in two subsequent phases to 1,200 and finally 1,800 pupils. The timing of these phases will be dependent upon the pace of housing development and demand for places from families moving into the catchment area.

The school will be the seventh secondary school to join CMAT and will work closely with CMAT’s other schools across Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas, including Swavesey Village College, which has been rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted since 2011.
Andy Daly, Executive Principal, Swavesey Village College and Northstowe Development for CMAT said: “We are delighted to have received planning consent for the first phase of the Northstowe Learning community. This is a significant milestone to have passed which enables us to open on time for our first year 7s on 4th September 2019. We look forward to continuing to work with the community in Northstowe and Longstanton over the coming weeks to look at options for the uniform, house names and launching the new website.

“Having been involved in the planning and delivery of the Northstowe Learning Community since 2007, it is very exciting to be in the position where we have had our first open evening, welcoming over 120 families to find out more about the new Secondary College which they will be applying to. We have also interviewed and appointed the Head of School for the Secondary College who will take up their post in January 2019.”

Cllr Tumi Hawkins, South Cambridgeshire District Council’s Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, said: “This is fantastic news and another key milestone in making sure that Northstowe is a thriving community with excellent facilities. Making sure that the right high quality facilities go hand in hand with new homes is really important to us and it is great to see the sporting facilities at the heart of Northstowe are moving forward. These will benefit children at the school, people living in the town and all the surrounding communities.”

Phil Harker, Senior Development Manager Strategic Land for Homes England said: “Building communities is at the heart of what Homes England does, and the education campus will be a key feature of Northstowe town centre. “Seeing the secondary school start to take shape will really mark the start of this new town's growth into a thriving neighbourhood.”

Kier Construction and Faithful and Gould are working with the County Council on the project, which once complete will also include a 400-place sixth form college co-located with the secondary school. Also on the campus will be the second of two primary schools and a nursery, an eight-court indoor sports hall, gymnasium, café, dance and fitness studios and outdoor community sports facilities.

The first primary school in Northstowe - Pathfinder Primary School - opened in September last year.

Mark Dady, Managing Director, Kier Construction, said: “Having previously constructed Pathfinder Northstowe’s first primary school we are delighted to now be delivering the next stage of Northstowe Education Campus. This addition to the school development further builds on our position as a leading UK provider of educational buildings and we are looking forward to starting the first phase of works on this project.”

Michelle Miranda, Managing Quantity Surveyor at Faithful+Gould, comments: “This is a key milestone for the evolution of Northstowe and we feel very lucky to be playing a part in this. Our new projects in the area, including the Education Campus and sports facilities, will be real assets for people locally, and will be open and accessible for everyone.”

Construction of the first 1,500 homes has already begun while Homes England, who are leading phase two of Northstowe, have prepared the land for the building of the campus. They will also oversee the creation of more than
3,500 new homes, retail and office space as part of plans for the town centre once planning permission has been granted.

It is hoped phase two, which also includes a new civic centre, library and health centre will be completed by 2030. The final phase will deliver the remaining 5,000 homes.