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Barhale awarded Northstowe landscaping contract

A 40-metre-long timber bridge over a man-made lake will form the centrepiece of Barhale's first landscaping contract award from L&Q Estates.

Under the contract, civil engineering and infrastructure specialist Barhale will deliver the hard landscaping at a new country park at Northstowe in Cambridgeshire. A signature feature of the development is a new lake covering an area of approximately 10 hectares. Acting as a balancing pond, it is integrated into the urban drainage system and will now be spanned by the new bridge. Around 1km of cycleways and footpaths will be installed around the lake.

In addition, Barhale will create a children's play area. A specially designed water play feature will allow children to pump water around a 20 square metre beach and then to create dams and rivulets. The wet play area will have an inbuilt fall of 1.0 metres to keep the water flowing and the higher end will be modelled in a horseshoe shape using coloured concrete to resemble a beach.

When construction commenced in 2015, Northstowe was the first new town in the UK to be started for fifty years. It is located on the site of the former airforce base, RAF Oakington, and lies approximately eight miles north-west of Cambridge.

The ambitious project has been brought forward by L&Q Estates working in partnership with Homes England. It will ultimately create 10,000 new homes, attracting a population of almost 25,000 and becoming Cambridgeshire's third largest market town in the process. Barhale's general manager Keven Stobbs believes that the scale of the project meant that the company's civils expertise could be brought to bear.

"I think our experience of working on projects of this kind of size gives us a different perspective," he said. "We have been able to identify certain economies and efficiencies in the way we will approach the programme and bring with us large-scale infrastructure credentials.

"We are really pleased that L&Q Estates has given us the go-ahead and look forward to completion at the end of September."