

Appendix C

Summary of consultation responses Draft Development Brief (January 2012) Land at Stanford Road, Shefford

76 responses received from members of the public.

A written response from the Environment Agency was also received.

Question 1: Connectivity

How important is it to provide connections from the site to the surrounding area? We are particularly interested to hear your views on a shared footpath/cycle way across the meadow area linking in with existing paths to the south of the site in order to access other parts of Shefford.

The majority of responses commented on this question. There was support for good connections from the site to other parts of Shefford. Whilst some did support a cycleway there were concerns about the practical arrangements for a shared or separate track across the meadow area and neighbouring areas. The following detailed comments were made:

- Concerns of having footpath(s) or other on the meadow area which is liable to flooding.
- Question over the timing of any improvements work in relation to the commencement of the development.
- Issue over whether footpaths should be 'upgraded' or formalised more and impact on the wildlife with more people using the site for recreation use.
- Concerns about the sharing of paths between pedestrians and cyclists and calls for keeping them separate.
- Potential for conflict between cyclist and walkers including young children using paths.
- Recognise the benefits of the paths connecting the site with other parts of the town to the south and reducing car journeys, for example, to access schools.
- Footpaths/footbridge could be better located elsewhere e.g. in the south west part of the site which would link well with the town centre.
- Accessibility for all required e.g. wheelchair users.
- Would lighting would be required. Impact on wildlife.

- Potential effect on those whose properties back on to the meadow area. In particular, issue over whether other vehicles like motorbikes and cars will get on to the meadows and other green area. Need some form of protection/ policing measures.
- Any new cycleway would link to existing footpaths which have cycle restrictions on them. They are not bridleways.
- A cycleway would be better located along Stanford Road.
- Path will make a pleasant amenity and shortcut into town but should not be main route into town given the potential for anti-social behaviour and crime in this area with people being able to congregate etc. in this area.
- Could the Shefford end of footpaths 3 and 4 be improved by s.106 monies from the development?
- Cycleway – present footpaths are too narrow to accommodate a cycleway. A very good idea to have a cycleway to the Millennium Green where there is room to widen the footpath, but there isn't the other way into Shefford. A cycle route to Samuel Whitbread College would be good to implement.
- A connecting path from the new bridge over the river a better cycle way link would be to follow the river downstream and join the corner with the Millennium Green for a route to school. There would be enough room.
- Difficult to stop cyclists using the footpaths illegally to the detriment of walkers.
- Object to Shefford footpath 3 being proposed to be upgraded to cycleway.
- Suggest that the path, after crossing a new bridge, should then follow the line of the River Flit to its junction with the River Hit. Pedestrians and cyclists would then have a choice of existing routes – ahead for the town centre, left towards the Millennium Green and schools or right to access the town via the old town wharf.

Environment Agency - Consider it to be very important that the site provide appropriate connections to the surrounding area. New development should always incorporate green infrastructure in order to facilitate natural habitats for wildlife and inter-connectivity between such habitats. These areas have multi-functional uses, also serving as walking/cycling links and amenity areas.

Question 2: Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Do you have any comments on the draft Concept Plan?

Flooding and drainage

- Floodplain – housing seems to be close to the floodplain line.
- The marked flood plain is misleading as field does flood and rivers raises to dangerous levels after several days of rain.
- Concerns about current infrastructure not being able to cope. Could lead to inadequate sewage drainage and flooding as well as other infrastructure and services like electricity, schools and shops not being able to cope with extra demand.

Natural environment

- Disturbance to nature area.
- Otter Holts need appropriate protection.
- Nesting birds on the site. Need to take account of nesting season.
- Trees should be of a mature size when planted.
- Loss of good arable land.
- Greater protection of the river is required.

Access and connectivity

- Reduce speed limit to 20mph in direction of the town.
- Reduce speed limit before the boundary of the site and also prior to development commencing.
- Footpaths need to be of an adequate width.
- Location of footbridge questioned as well as there being a need for including more footpaths.
- Question who will pay for upgrade and new bridge onto the Millennium Green?

Facilities

- Need an activity area for youths – skateboard park, cycleway paths etc.

Environment Agency – Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Byelaws, the prior written consent of the EA is required for any proposed works or structures in, under, over or within 9 metres of the top of the bank of the main river (River Flit). The proposed development does not appear to have any implications on our statutory byelaws.

Question 3: Concept Plan

Do you have any comments on the draft Concept Plan?

Built environment

- There appears to be a lot of emphasis on the built environment aspects of the development.
- Density too high.
- Development should repeat existing property design.
- Development should not comprise of housing of more than 2 storeys high.
- More affordable housing required.
- No.16 Stanford Road – need to have better regard to privacy of this neighbouring property. Position bungalows in this part of the site? Ensure an appropriate buffer zone?
- Further details required on what protection of existing amenity will entail.
- The development ignores local resident's rights to have a view of the open countryside. Increase in noise pollution and devaluation of neighbouring properties.
- Reinstate Mill feature as part of S.106 agreement.

Access and connectivity

- Requires a second vehicle access point and the opportunity for another roundabout on Stanford Road.
- New boundary planting will impair visibility on Stanford Road.
- Disappointed over the path positioning relative to existing footpath at Lucas Way. Consider a safety hazard. Entry needs to be adjacent to existing housing and site of ancient access to field.
- Should have a 40mph speed limit prior to the 30mph speed restriction.
- The position of the roundabout on Stanford Road and safe access into and out of the site questioned, especially with the close proximity of the nearby bend in the road west of Lucas Way.
- The proposed roundabout should be positioned at least two thirds of its diameter offset to the traffic flow into the town. This will have the effect of slowing traffic past the site entrance and into the town. The bend adjacent to the existing houses has been the site of many road traffic collisions due to the high speed traffic being out of position as it enters the road.
- Paths need to be wider along Stanford Road.
- Need to take account of ancient access to field from nearby house on Stanford Road across site to field. Disappointed over footpath positioning relative to existing footpath at Lucas Way. Consider this to be a safety hazard. Entry needs to be adjacent to existing housing and site to ancient access to field.
- Would like to see more footbridges across from the site to the meadow area to link the site to other parts of the town.
- Starting position of the speed limit should be reviewed.

- Will highway network be able to cope with the extra traffic especially at peak times and the speed of this traffic?
- Will more housing be proposed on neighbouring sites as a result of a new access road?
- Need to have footpaths which are well lit and wide enough for wheelchair users.
- Don't wish to see a bridge and paths across to the meadow area.
- Need to have good links to the High Street, not just via Stamford Road.

Natural Environment

- Encroachment of the development onto the open space.
- Otter Holts and location of new housing look very close.
- Impact on the County Wildlife Site has not been taken account of.
- No provision for green infrastructure e.g. tree planting.
- Issue of motorbikes and cycles etc. entering parts of the meadow area. Needs gates and barriers.

Play facilities

- Pumping station and children's play area are located too close together.
- Position of the play area near to the river is of concern. The play area is not considered to be in a prominent enough position. (Although, one comment was that it should be located away from residential properties.)
- Proposed play area and the green are too small.
- Play area to be suitable for up to 10 year olds, not just toddlers.

Flooding and drainage

- Flooding of other areas and effect on river.
- Page 16 – does not make it clear the necessary upgrade to the sewer system along Stamford Road.

Environment Agency – Supportive of the proposed layout within the site. This has appropriately adopted the sequential approach (as detailed in with Planning policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk) through locating, more vulnerable built development outside of the floodplain. Within the identified floodplain, existing (water compatible) uses are retained.

Other comments

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make on the draft Development Brief?

- Residents of properties along Stanford Road need to be kept informed and consulted on the impact of the development.
- The previous consultation meeting was well conducted and the development brief is good.

Principle of development

- Too much housing proposed on site and in the town.
- Too many houses being built. Impact on the town's character.
- Monies should be directed to fund more/improved infrastructure and amenities.

Infrastructure and Services

- What provision is the developer giving to the town to support the extra population, for example a community centre?
- Prior to the development starting there should be an improvement in the infrastructure of the town's major services. Consideration should also be given to better parking facilities within the town. Provision should also be made for more leisure services as at the moment they are abysmal.
- Schools and services – impact on these?

Housing mix

- No housing for the elderly has been identified.
- Location of affordable housing scattered amongst the other housing is not appropriate.
- More affordable housing is required.

Access and connectivity

- New roundabout – concerns on busy roads with poor sightlines in places.
- There should be no parking allowed on Stanford Road for construction vehicles.
- More thinking required on Health and Safety issues
- Would like to see a roundabout provided on Clifton Road at junction with Purcell Way.
- Preference for site off Hitchen Road to be developed instead of this site.

Environment Agency – A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required to be submitted with any future planning application. This should address the proposed surface water drainage from the built development areas. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated to mimic the existing green-field drainage regime of the site. No greater rate discharge than currently exists, in terms of volume or velocity, would be permitted.