

Appendix B

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF PREPARATION FOR LAND EAST OF BIGGLESWADE ROAD POTTON

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE LANDOWNERS/PROMOTERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement details the public consultation undertaken on behalf of the landowners/promoters in connection with the draft development brief for a Mixed Use development on land east of Biggleswade Road

1.2 The document is a Statement of Community Involvement in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Council's guidelines.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 Policy MA5 of the Central Bedfordshire (North Area) Site Allocations Development Plan Document adopted in April 2011 allocates land to the east of Biggleswade Road, Potton for a 'mixed-use development providing a minimum of 150 dwellings approximately 1 hectare of B1 employment land, a community hall and an extension to the existing sports ground'. A requirement of the policy is 'the production of a development brief to guide development'.

2.2 Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework states 'Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbours, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that local plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area'. Paragraphs 188-191 also note the participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle and the guidance notes Local Planning Authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage, which can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.

2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) adopted their Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the north Central Bedfordshire area in (former Mid Beds area) in February 2006. The CBC SCI sets out four key ways the Council would wish to see the Community engaged on major applications (para 6.11):

- *“Developers or landowners take a key role in this [public consultation] as part of their obligation to the local community;*
- *Consultation carried out at the earliest stage of the application process with local people to explore their reactions and optimise potential community benefits as part of the development;*
- *Extra effort made to engage with hard to reach groups;*
- *Exhibitions and/or workshops being held to involve people in a non confrontational way, if appropriate.”*

3.0 CONSULTATION WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIEF

3.1 Prior to preparing the brief the landowners/promoters appointed consultants to undertake reports and appraisals to inform the development proposals for the site. This included the preparation of a Flood Risk Assessment which has been the subject of exchanges with the Internal Drainage Board, the preparation of Ecology and Tree Reports, Ground Investigation Report and an updated Odour Assessment. These reports in their draft stages were forwarded to both CBC and the Potton Town Council.

3.2 An issue that was identified with the allocation of the site was securing an odour protection zone. The landowners/promoters’ planning consultant and advisers had early discussions with Anglian Water to review the conclusions and agreement was reached with Anglian Water and the Council’s Environmental Health Officer to ensure the necessary safeguarding by limiting the housing development on parts of the site.

3.3 The proposals generally were reviewed by officers within CBC.

4.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Group

4.1 A Stakeholder Group was formed in October 2011 with representatives of the Potton Town Council and local groups suggested by the Town Council. The Stakeholder Group met regularly to inform the interested parties and consider the emerging issues for the site, and its future development. Those participating represented:

- Potton Town Council
- Chairman of Potton Town Plan
- The Hollow Cricket Club
- The Potton Football Club
- Tennis Club
- Arts groups

4.2 The Stakeholder Group included representatives from CBC, the landowners/promoters and their planning consultant.

4.3 The Stakeholder Group have been kept fully informed of the process, and the comments and thoughts of the group were sought in preparing the brief.

Community Hall Steering group

4.4 A major objective within Policy MA5 is securing a site for a community hall and this emerged in response to a need identified in the Potton Town Plan. At an early stage it emerged however that the Potton Town Council does not support this proposal and questions the need. As a consequence some of the bodies represented in the Stakeholder Group meeting have explored alternative ways for the delivery of a community hall and this has led to the creation of a 'Hall for all' Steering Group of local residents. The group has sought to engage with the town increasing awareness of the development proposals and the opportunity, and has canvassed views on what the facility might achieve. This consultation has involved:

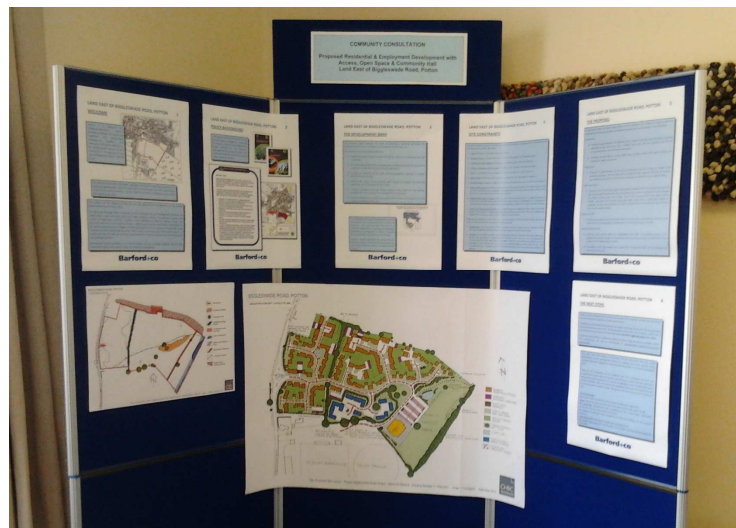
- Producing a questionnaire that was distributed to every home in March. **See appendix A**

- 24th April 2012 – the Steering Group had a stall on the market square and discussed with the locals.
 - 7th May - The Steering Group had a stall at the Cricket Club fayre
- 4.5 On the 17th May the draft brief was reviewed by the Placemaking Group meeting attended by representatives of the landowners/promoters. Following this alterations to the consultation document were reviewed with officers.
- 4.6 On the 12th June the landowners/promoters' planning consultant attended a meeting of the Town Council to update it on the progress of the brief and explain the consultation programme/arrangements.
- 4.7 A formal public consultation exercise on the brief commenced on 1st July 2102 for just over four weeks until the 30th July.
- 4.8 The consultation programme was publicised by a Public Notice and feature article in the Biggleswade Chronicle on the 29th June (**Appendix B & C**). In addition a consultation leaflet with a brief summary of the proposals including the indicative layout/concept plan and a questionnaire (**Appendix D**) was distributed to every home in Pottton (more than 2,600 leaflets), with further copies left in the library, local Post Office and the town petrol filling station.
- 4.9 Copies of the draft consultation document were made available for public inspection at the Pottton Town Council offices, the Pottton Library and the Pottton Vineyard Church offices in the Market Square. In addition this was available on the Council's and landowner/promoters' planning consultant's web-site.
- 4.10 The Public Notice, feature article and leaflet informed residents of a public display and the opportunity to meet representatives able to explain the proposals and answer questions. These meetings were held at the Town Council Community Hall between 2.00 pm – 8.00 pm on the 17th July and 10.00 am – 2.00 pm on the 18th July. This was attended by representatives of the landowners/promoters and their planning consultant, and CBC officers. The display comprised of panels with information on the proposed development and these are attached - **Appendix E**. Over the course of the two days it is estimated about 50 visitors attended the exhibitions (21 signed the visitor book), where further leaflets and questionnaire

forms were available. The supporting technical documents were also available for inspection by the public. The comments of those who attended showed there was a good level of understanding locally of the proposed development.

4.11 The leaflet provided a brief summary of the proposals including the indicative layout/concept plan. The leaflet invited any member of the public to talk direct to the landowners/promoters' planning consultant and this opportunity was taken up by a number of residents.

4.12 To ensure as many people as possible were able to be involved in the consultation the display board was also put on exhibit at the Vineyard Church Office in the Market Square throughout the consultation period.



Display Board

4.13 Arrangements were made for the questionnaire to be returned to a comments box left at the Town Council offices, by post or by email to the landowners/promoters' planning consultant.

4.14 A total of 73 completed questionnaires and responses were received (this included some representations received after the closing date). Of the response: 37 were posted in a comments box in the Town Council offices; 16 were sent to a dedicated email address; and, 20 were posted directly to the landowners/promoter's planning consultant.



5.0 RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

5.1 The comments have largely been from members of the public residing in Potton. A breakdown of the comments found in the completed questionnaires is attached – **Appendix F**.

5.2 Whilst there were a few responses opposing development altogether (12 in total), the overwhelming majority of comments were constructive in highlighting the issues residents perceive to have a bearing on the development and their personal aspirations for the site. Appendix F includes a response to the specific comments.

6.0 CHANGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

6.1 Taking account of all comments received during the public consultation, a number of proposed changes to the development brief are considered appropriate and these are as follows:

1. The introduction has been updated to reflect the consultation programme and consideration of the consultation response.
2. Page 4 - The plan with the site's relationship to services in the town will be updated prior to final publication.
3. Paragraph 4.1 - the constraints and opportunities have been updated to acknowledge:

- the undulating nature of the site with reference to the raised mounds and slopes added.
 - protected trees on the boundaries
 - the established boundary planting
 - there are residential properties to the south of the site where amenity will need to be considered and the differing ground level of some of the adjacent properties.
 - Light sources from The Hollow sports area to be considered
 - bat flight paths crossing the site
5. Update following the conclusion of the archaeology investigation
 6. Constraints plan updated to acknowledge neighbouring housing amenity to the south.
 7. Paragraph 5.9 - clarification the affordable housing will be integrated in appropriate clusters.
 8. Paragraph 5.14 - clarification the layout plan is conceptual and the simple building blocks this indicates are intended to only loosely represent the final possible built form.
 9. Paragraph 5.16 - wording clarification
 10. Indicative plan revised to highlight pedestrian access links to The Hollow.
 11. Paragraph 5.20 - greater emphasis given to ensuring footpath cycle links through the development and to the north-east and north-west.
 12. Paragraph 5.27 - clarification with reference to jargon.
 13. Page 16 - employment development image updated in light of comments.
 14. Paragraph 5.37 One of the issues highlighted in the consultation is the possible loss of on street parking used by residents along Biggleswade Road and text has been added to reflect this.
 15. Paragraph 5.41 - clarification of the aim to try and secure footpath cycle link connection to Sheepwalk Close and existing footpath number 1.
 16. Paragraph 5.45 - clarification of the need to ensure the existing hedgerow feature is retained and is subject to a management plan and maintenance contribution.
 17. Paragraph 7.3 - clarification in respect of additional contributions for new footpath links within the site, the maintenance of the hedgerow and contributions generally in accordance with the Council's adopted SPG.

7.0

APPENDICES

Appendix A	'Hall for All' Steering Group Questionnaire
Appendix B	Biggleswade Chronicle Public Notice 29 th June
Appendix C	Feature article in the Biggleswade Chronicle
Appendix D	Consultation leaflet and questionnaire
Appendix E	Public meeting display board panels
Appendix F	Summary of consultation response