

North West Haverhill Community Involvement Statement

Main Report

April 2009

Quality Assurance


Site name: North West Haverhill
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Report describes the process of public consultation undertaken for the masterplan document prepared for North West Haverhill.
- 1.2 The Report sets out the approach taken to inform the public and encourage participation and involvement of all within the consultation process. A dialogue of actions taken to consult relevant parties is presented alongside the ways in which comments have been reviewed and reported back to the public. These principles reflect those included within St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, 2008).
- 1.3 This Report seeks to provide an accurate summary of consultation submissions, the Consortium of Landowners' response to received comments on the masterplan and a schedule of changes made to the masterplan document.

2 INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Why a Masterplan?

- 2.1 A masterplan is being progressed for North West Haverhill. This is in accordance with Policy DS4 of the adopted Replacement Local Plan 2016. The aim of the masterplan is to provide a comprehensive development framework that applies definition and meaning to North West Haverhill and a framework for investment and implementation. The masterplan provides sufficient detail so as to identify the main environmental effects of the development.

Consultation Process

- 2.2 *'The purpose of community involvement is to create dialogue with, and seek the views of, the community and stakeholders on the land use development issues affecting their locality'.*

(St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Statement of Community Involvement, 2008).

- 2.3 The Consortium of Landowners' is in support of community involvement in the planning process for the production of the masterplan document. The principles of the SCI adopted 26 February 2008 have been followed. This is demonstrated below under the five themes from the SCI.

Early Involvement

- 2.4 Early involvement to identify/establish an appropriate development framework for North West Haverhill was initiated by St Edmundsbury Borough Council with the preparation of a Concept Statement for the site. A planning workshop was held on 24 March 2007 to inform the Council in the preparation of the Concept Statement.

A consultation event for the Concept Statement took place between 17 July and 14 August to guide the publication of the Concept Statement in October 2007.

- 2.5 Subsequently and since 2006 extensive meetings have taken place between the landowners, Planning, Landscape and Urban Design and Transport Consultants, Suffolk County Highway Authority, SEBC Planning Officers and the Wildlife Trust. These preliminary meetings have helped set the form, content and timetable for the preparation of the masterplan.

Informing

- 2.6 To move the masterplan forward it has been of importance to inform those who may have an interest or may be affected by the development of the site. To ensure that notification and information in relation to the masterplan was provided to relevant parties, letters were sent to the following consultees as identified by SEBC. Copies of the letters sent can be seen in appendix 1:

- Parish and District Councillors
- Parish and Town Councils
- Other Statutory Consultees

- 2.7 In addition to the above, an informative leaflet was posted to local residents, of which a copy of the leaflet and area of local residents delivered to can be seen in appendix 2.

- 2.8 The information provided to these parties identified the masterplan document, where informative material would be available, details of the public exhibition and method of commenting on the proposal.

- 2.9 In order to make information about the masterplan as widely accessible as possible, a designated internet site www.northwesthaverhill.co.uk went live at the start of the public consultation period (20 February 2009) to provide a comprehensive portal of resources about the North West Haverhill masterplan. Uploaded to the site included the masterplan document, masterplan design, public exhibition flyer, public exhibition panels, comment form and online commenting facility. Appendix 3 shows the formation of the website and the information available to the public. The web link was also posted on St Edmundsbury Borough Council's webpage and this can be seen in Appendix 3.

- 2.10 Advertisements were placed in two of the local papers; Haverhill Weekly News and Haverhill Echo. The advert was displayed in the Haverhill Weekly News for two weeks, 12 February and 19 February 2009. The advert in the Haverhill Echo was

displayed in the week of 12 February 2009. The newspaper adverts can also be seen in Appendix 3.

- 2.11 The public exhibition for the masterplan was a method of publicly displaying the main concepts of the masterplan and presented an open forum for informing the public. The public exhibition gave an important opportunity to ask questions to the representatives of the landowners' of which included transport, landscape, urban design consultant and planning consultants.
- 2.12 After the public exhibition, copies of the masterplan document and of the comment forms were sent to a variety of public locations for display, the list of venues can be seen in Appendix 4.
- 2.13 The above information highlights that the public consultation process for the North West Haverhill masterplan was appropriately publicised and made readily accessible to all.

Consulting

- 2.14 To ensure people were consulted on the masterplan, a letter was sent to statutory bodies and an informative leaflet to residents in advance of the public consultation period. The consultation letter informed the recipients of the masterplan document and how this document could be accessed and commented upon. The information provided details of the public exhibition and when the consultation would begin and end. A detailed review of the consultation process can be found at section 3, 'The Consultation Process'.

Participating

- 2.15 The participation of stakeholders in the evolution of the masterplan has been and continues to be important. From early discussions with Officers at SEBC, Suffolk County Highway Authority and the Wildlife Trust, it was also important to involve those who have an interest in the site.
- 2.16 The active participation of residents and other bodies has been achieved through the engagement of the community during the publicly accessible exhibition. The public exhibition provided a friendly opportunity for the public to view the main principles of the masterplan and openly discuss any issues in relation to the development proposals with the representatives of the Landowners' Consortium. Comment forms were available to complete on the day, as well as viewing copies of the masterplan design and masterplan document.
- 2.17 Providing access to the masterplan has allowed a proper course of action to be taken for those with an interest in the site and to participate in the masterplan's evolution.

Feedback

- 2.18 On the completion of the public consultation process, responses received have been summarised, considered and responded to. This information is incorporated into this Consultation Report. In addition to this document, the amended masterplan is submitted to St Edmundsbury Council clearly identifying the changes made to the document in response to comments received.
- 2.19 Informing, participating, consulting and providing feedback define the main principles of the SEBC, SCI. The above information articulates how the Consortium of Landowners for North West Haverhill has met these requirements and the methods used to achieve this.
- 2.20 This Statement of Community Involvement adheres to and positively responds to the 'protocol' process for the preparation of masterplans.

3 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.1 This section outlines in more detail the process of consultation detailing each step taken to meet the requirements of the Borough Council.

Letters sent to Statutory Consultees 12 February 2009

- 3.2 Letters were sent to statutory consultees according to contact details provided by SEBC one week in advance of the start of the public consultation period. The letter is appended to the Report (Appendix 1).

Leaflets delivered to local residents 12 February and 13 February 2009

- 3.3 Up to 1500 leaflets were delivered to local residents that are likely to be affected/have an interest in the development proposals at North West Haverhill. The leaflet, catchment map and list of street names delivered to can be seen in Appendix 2.

Newspaper adverts in local papers 12 February and 19 February 2009

- 3.4 Newspaper adverts were displayed in both the Haverhill Weekly News and Haverhill Echo for up to two weeks informing the entire town and beyond of the public consultation event. The advert (as can be seen in appendix 3) was displayed on the 12 February 2009 and 19 February 2009 editions of the Haverhill Weekly News and on the 12 February 2009 issue of the Haverhill Echo.

Letters sent to Statutory Consultees with copy of masterplan document 16 February 2009

- 3.5 In addition to the preliminary informative letters sent to statutory bodies, copies of the masterplan document were sent prior to the public exhibition to statutory consultees.

Uploaded documents to North West Haverhill Website 20 February 2009

- 3.6 The masterplan, masterplan design, consultation flyer, comment form and public exhibition panels were all uploaded to the North West Haverhill website ready for the start of the public consultation period on 20 February 2009. The documents were accessible to internet users by accessing the website directly or via a link provided on the SEBC website. Details of the designated website were provided in the pre consultation letters and flyers sent to consultees.

28 day public consultation period 20 February 2009 – 19 March 2009

- 3.7 The twenty eight day public consultation period is the time frame set by the protocol within which to make representations to the masterplan. Anybody wishing to make representations was advised to do so by completing the comment form provided online or to send in via post, email or the website.

20 February 2009, 3pm – 8pm and 21 February, 10am – 2pm: public consultation held at the Haverhill Arts Studio, Haverhill

- 3.8 The public exhibition displayed illustrative material of the main concepts contained within the masterplan. This was an event for the public to openly discuss the North West Haverhill masterplan. The material presented is appended to the Report (Appendix 5).

Masterplan document sent to public venues

- 3.9 Subsequent to the public exhibition a number of masterplan documents and comment forms were sent to a variety of public venues including SEBC Offices at Angel Hill and Western Way, Haverhill Library, Bury St Edmunds Library, Haverhill Arts Centre and Haverhill Council Offices.

Meetings with Parish and Town councils and Local Councillors'

- 3.10 Additional meetings were held with interested parties subsequent to the public exhibition. This included meetings with local councillors, Withersfield Parish Council, Great Wratting Parish Council and Haverhill Town Council. This proved most useful in assessing the needs of all of the above parties in further detail and provided an open forum in which people could ask any additional questions to the landowners' representatives. Comments received from these parties can be found in Appendix 6.

Additional Information sent to residents at Brickfields Drive, Haverhill

- 3.11 During the public exhibition event, concerned residents of Brickfields Drive requested additional information about the Relief Road and in particular the anticipated relationship between the proposed relief road and existing residential properties. This

information was sent to residents on the 13 March 2009. A complete list of addresses and the information sent to residents can be seen in Appendix 9. This information was also sent to Councillor Anne Gower and Councillor Karen Richardson.

Number of attendees

- 3.12 Over the course of the two days public exhibition, over three hundred interested persons attended the event. This represents in the region of 20% of the total number of leaflets delivered and highlights the positive response to the public consultation process.

Summary of Responses

- 3.13 This section of the Report provides a summary of consultation submissions, the Consortium of Landowners' response to those submissions and a schedule of changes made to the masterplan. In total 90 responses were received commenting on the proposal. In addition to comment forms received, meetings held between Bidwells Planning Team and local councillors, town and parish councils also provided informative feedback which has been taken into consideration in the evolution of the masterplan.
- 3.14 A table of representations is provided in Appendix 7, with all of the original letters, emails and comment forms received in relation to the public consultation.

The Respondents

- 3.15 A variety of persons have responded to the public consultation. The majority of respondents have been local residents. In addition to this parish and district councillors have commented on the proposals as well as town and parish councils and other statutory consultees. A summary of the main points is presented below to reflect the comments received from respondents. It is important to recognise the issues of different sectors of the community and accordingly the summary is presented under a series of headings.

Local Residents:

Open Space/ Landscape/ Recreation

- Lack of green spaces in close proximity to Boyton Hall Estate/ Ann Suckling Road
- Lack of landscape buffer along Ann Suckling Road
- Pleased with the amount of green spaces provided within the development
- Tree planting required to the north of the relief road

Housing

- Houses should be set back further from Ann Suckling Road
- Noise impacts as a result of the development are of concern
- The proposal is likely to be dominant over the existing estate at Boyton Hall
- Housing heights of concern, in support of heights being reduced
- Housing densities too high, in support of housing density being reduced
- Support for additional higher end/top quality houses

Highway

- Concern for increase car journey's along Hales Barn Road
- Safety issues along Hales Barn Road are of concern
- Concern that there will be increased traffic levels at Ann Suckling Road
- Concern for increase in noise levels as a result of the Relief Road
- Level of screening south west Relief Road of interest
- The Relief Road will be beneficial for the town of Haverhill
- Traffic impact on A1307, already a congested route.
- Concern regarding the junction at Ann Suckling Road
- Recommendation of traffic calming measures along Ann Suckling Road
- Existing parking problems should be accounted for
- BOAT has a closure on it

Central Plaza

- Concern that the local centre may become an unpleasant environment that is likely to attract unsociable behaviour
- Agree with the uses of the school and the local centre
- The likely uses of the local centre are of interest

Support

- The proposal will help support the growth of Haverhill
- Proposal is well thought out
- No objections to the proposal so long as the relief road is implemented
- Pleased with answers received, presentation and amount of information available at the public exhibition

Other

- Lack of jobs and facilities in Haverhill to accommodate the level of growth proposed
- Concerns about drainage and flooding
- Concerns as to the visual impact on Great Wratting village

Parish/District Councillors:

- Limited capacity of the A1307 to accommodate additional travel
- Noise pollution
- Screening could be greater at the north and west sides of the development
- Local employment opportunities seem inadequate to cater to housing growth
- Housing heights are of concern, in support of reducing housing heights
- Housing density are considered too dense, in support of reducing housing density
- Car parking provision of concern, sufficient parking is considered important in the development

Statutory Bodies

- Support toward reducing building heights
- Support toward reducing housing density
- A refreshing proposal with a variety of street design, housing and green spaces
- The BOAT has a closure order on it

Town and Parish Councils

Withersfield Parish Council (Meeting 11 March 2009)

- Withersfield Parish Council supports the approach taken by the masterplan and the alignment of the relief road.
- A refreshing approach taken including a variety of street design, housing mix and green open spaces.

Haverhill Town Council (Meeting 3 March 2009)

- Concern regarding housing density and ideally would like to see more executive housing.
- The local centre was recognised as an area for thought in terms of the types of uses associated to this area and the implications this may have on the groups of children that may congregate there.
- Concerns regarding traffic along Wrattling Road were raised and along the A1307. It was considered that the standard of 1.5 car parking spaces is insufficient and leads to on street car parking as is currently evident on Slaters Drive, Meadowlands.

- At the meeting Councillor Richardson was advised that works will start on the relief road at the commencement of development and it is considered that 200 dwellings would be occupied at this stage.
- Support the proposals as submitted by Great Wrating Parish Council and Little Wrating Parish Council with regard to building density and building heights.
- Clarification required in relation to the proposed cutting and screening of the relief road in the south west section of the road.

Great Wrating Parish Council (Meeting 12 March 2009)

- Support reducing building heights to reduce impact on Great Wrating rural character.
- Housing is too dense and should be set between 27-37 dwellings per hectare.
- Trees should be planted around the entire perimeter of the new development.
- The BOAT has a closure order on it. If it is not designated to be rural footpath, Great Wrating Parish Council would prefer it to be closed off.

Little Wrating Parish Council

- Removal of the local centre.
- Main concerns relating to housing density and housing heights of which full details can be seen in Appendix 7.
- Reduce building density in the entire area of executive housing, housing bordering Ann Suckling Road and Falklands Road. Appendix 7 provides a full plan outlining the reduced building zones.
- Lack of trees north of the relief road.

Local Press

Haverhill Weekly News

- 3.16 An article was written in the Haverhill Weekly News on Thursday 26 February 2009 edition. The article outlined the details of the proposals and the public exhibition and consultation dates. The Concept Statement and progression of the masterplan document were also noted. The article can be read at Appendix 8.

Amendments to the North West Haverhill masterplan

- 3.17 After reviewing and considering the responses received by the stakeholders, the Consortium of Landowners' propose to amend the masterplan as follows:

1. Landscape, recreation and open space

Amendments are made to section 5.2 Open Space of the masterplan. The primary and tertiary open space structures are to incorporate the following amendments.

In response to the issues raised it is proposed that the green area to the rear of Falklands Road be widened replicable to that of the western boundary of the site.

Setting back residential properties to the north of Ann Suckling Road is considered beneficial to improve the relationship between the new housing and existing properties. In addition to this a green edge to the north of Ann Suckling Road will be introduced to soften this edge of the development.

A new walkway link is introduced from Ann Suckling Road to join with the main movement framework within the site. This has been introduced to improve the connectivity between the Boyton Hall Estate and the green areas within the site.

Additional buffer planting has been introduced to both sides of the Relief Road to further improve visual amenity and limit noise related concerns.

2. Housing

Chapter 5.5 Built Form outlines the height and density frameworks for the site. After reviewing comments received from Little Wratting Parish Council, Haverhill Town Council and local residents, the following amendments have been made to building heights and densities.

The local centre has been reduced to a maximum 3.5 storeys in height. The local centre is considered an important area within the development for future and existing residents and will remain as part of the development proposal.

A new height band has been introduced to include the range of heights between 2-3 storeys. This new height range is shown around Boyton Hall, Ann Suckling Road and to the rear of Falklands Road. This considerably improves the visual relationship between the new housing and existing residential properties on the Boyton Hall Estate. The entire north eastern area of housing is now to have a housing height of 1.5 – 2.5 storeys. The amended housing heights can be seen on the revised parameter plans.

3. Highway and Transport

It has been considered necessary and important to define the extent of the development that will be capable of being accessed from existing roads that connect to the development proposal. This is important to ensure the delivery of a

development that links into Haverhill and which protects the residential amenity of nearby residents. The three roads which connect to the development include Ann Suckling Road, Howe Road and Hales Barn Road. It is considered that through continuing discussions measures will be incorporated into the masterplan to seek to prevent "rat running" and encourage access to be focussed on the relief road.

In response to comments received in relation to Ann Suckling Road, the following action has been taken to address concerns of respondents. The existing design of Ann Suckling Road including its junction with Wrattling Road is being reviewed to determine whether it is appropriate to incorporate junction improvements/alterations and/or alterations to the length of Ann Suckling Road.

In addition to the above, concerns were raised with regard to the potential of rat-running within and through the development. It is considered that rat running through the development will be deterred through the overall design and layout of the streets, the use of the bus-gate facility near to the local centre and through the design and junctions of the development with the surrounding existing roads. It is anticipated that this is sufficient to prevent unacceptable travel behaviour.

The living environment for existing residents is of utmost importance. To protect these interests, it is considered that the development phases of the development are important. For these reasons, a construction management plan will be part of any planning permission. This will detail how construction vehicles will enter and leave the site.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This document has detailed the process and outcomes for public consultation relating to the masterplan prepared for the North West Haverhill development. It has provided information as to the approach taken to deliver the requirements of the St Edmundsbury Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and the protocol for production of the masterplan. This Report has provided an accurate summary of the consultation submissions, the Consortium of Landowners' responses to those submissions and a schedule of changes made to the draft masterplan.