



Wootton SDA, Northampton

A report on the Stakeholder Workshop

4 December 2007

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Summary of Feedback	4
2.1 Transport and Movement Strategy	4
2.2 Environmental Factors	5
2.3 Community Facilities and Amenities	7
3. Conclusions and Next Steps	9
4. Appendices	10
4.1 Stakeholder Invitees	10
4.2 Stakeholder Invitation Letter	11
4.3 Project Team	12

1. Introduction

The Consortium which comprises David Wilson Homes, English Partnerships, Harcourt Developments, Martin Grant Homes and Twigden Homes controls land to the south-east of Northampton and considers it to be a suitable location to accommodate future growth.

The Consortium is holding a series of public consultation events to consider the views of local stakeholders, councillors and residents. The first event was held on Tuesday 4th December from 10am to 2pm at the Wootton Community Sports Centre in Wootton close to the proposed development area.

Key stakeholders were invited in order to gain an understanding at an early stage of the main issues before holding further consultation events including a residents' workshop and public exhibition. Please see Appendix One for a list of invitees and Appendix Two for a copy of the invitation letter.

Following an initial presentation outlining the background and site constraints, participants were invited to break out into groups and discuss the key issues in turn.

The groups were organised along three themes:

1. Transport and Movement Strategy

- Walking and Cycling
- Public Transport
- Vehicular Access

2. Environmental Factors

- Flooding
- Drainage Strategy
- Archaeology/Ecology/Landscape

3. Community Facilities and Amenities

- Education
- Sports Facilities
- Local Centres – Shopping and Employment
- Health

2. Summary of Feedback

Below is a summary of the feedback received on the day. Comments were also encouraged via the project website www.engageplanning.co.uk/wootton

2.1 Transport and Movement Strategy

General Approach

- Provide infrastructure upfront
- An innovative transport vision is needed
- Take a holistic approach; consider the bigger picture

Relationship to Northampton

- The scheme needs to focus on the development of Northampton and not encourage migration to Milton Keynes/south
- Encourage a community, not commuters
- Provide good links to Northampton (encourage it as the primary destination)

Cycling and walking

- Provide safe and secure routes
- Need to be maintained
- Avoid segregated tracks; connect to carriageways (to avoid anti-social behaviour)
- Links to main amenities and town, particularly Brackmills (but remove the hill!)
- Links to national cycle ways
- Provide secure cycle storage
- Consider leisure routes

Public Transport

- Provide at an early stage
- High quality and frequent
- Need to achieve modal shift/encourage people out of cars
- Need a comprehensive Travel Plan e.g. free bus pass for a year
- Consider taxis and mini/community buses - not just buses
- Buses to key amenities and facilities e.g. hospitals, Tesco (not just town)
- Consider bus-only routes e.g. use the disused railway lines, BRTs
- Ensure traffic doesn't 'dominate' the development, in order to encourage use of public transport e.g. Home Zones

Junction/highway improvements

- Contributions need to go to local highways, not just trunk roads

Facilities/amenities

- Need to be located on site, within walking/cycling distance e.g. Tesco, health centre

Employment

- Encourage home working
- Consider employment provision on site; Poundbury is a good example
- Provide good links to local employment

Car parking provision

- Consider the negative impact under provision can have

Flooding

- Infrastructure to be in a lower area of flood risk; discount all other options through sequential testing

Surrounding villages

- Consider impact on surrounding villages
- Safer, but less attractive, routes through surrounding villages
- Avoid routes through sensitive villages

2.2 Environmental Factors

Drainage

- Important issue locally with Easter 1998 still fresh in residents' minds together with events over the summer. Key concern for local people. Need assurance with regard to 'up-stream' flooding and climate change among others
- Need for comprehensive and coordinated approach between relevant agencies including the Environment Agency, Anglia Water and WNDP. Ensure that the studies being undertaken reflect a joined-up approach to the issues of flood risk and sewage management

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- Worries that swales can attract rubbish and become unsightly areas – issue of management

Green Corridors

- Opportunities to provide high quality green infrastructure links through the site making use of Brackmills Wood and the possible creation of a country park at Wootton Brook
- Would like to see more woodland in any masterplan for recreation/dog walking
- New developments should enhance local biodiversity – linking and buffering existing sites, appropriate habitat creation and on-going conservation management. Should consider the potential to contribute towards Biodiversity Action Plan targets

Sustainability

- Code for Sustainable Homes – the requirement is increasing year on year – the development should seek the higher code levels
- Grey water and rainwater harvesting should be considered. Should adopt a philanthropic approach to environmental issues. Northampton should lead the way on initiatives such as ‘Building for Life’
- It was suggested that Northampton Borough Council adopt the Energy and Development SPD together with Daventry and South Northants

Waste management

- Need to be in line with County Waste Plan

Sense of Place

- Need to create a ‘sense of place’ – a focal point for the new community – be it architectural or through landscaping
- Learn from the ‘good and bad’ aspects of other new developments such as Upton
- Consider relationship of the new development with the countryside; ensure permeability and avoid ‘sanitising’ the countryside

2.3 Community Facilities and Amenities

Primary school provision

- Possible need for three primary schools across the site rather than two

Secondary school provision

- Need to consider the issue from a town wide perspective – not just the local view
- Capacity issues at Caroline Chisholm School need to be addressed but a new secondary school would need a development of 6,000-7,000 to justify it

Nursery provision

- Need for further local provision

Affordable housing

- Affordable housing is a key issue in the area with 40 percent across new developments being required

Sports Facilities

- MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas) to meet needs of older children
- Development should include informal spaces and allotments
- Need for teenage activities, for example skateboarding as well as youth officers/workers to cover the area
- Localised shortage of sports pitches in the area already

Local centre

- Retail – there was some call for a local supermarket which must be viable
- Flexibility over the type of units available and avoiding mono use of shops was also considered important
- Health – need for GPs and dentists

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- Multi-use centre could include a pharmacy and health centre providing minor operations. Need to liaise with the Primary Care Trust over these issues
 - Consider a new place of worship
 - Cemetery provision

Employment

- New employment facilities should complement Grange Park and Brackmills
- Small office units located throughout the area
- Make appropriate for local skills
- Seek for high quality development

Crime

- Important to design out (not in) crime – early liaison with the police

3. Conclusion and Next Steps

This report summarises nine separate discussions over three topic areas and has produced a range of detailed issues for further thought and discussion.

The general themes that emerged include;

- Need for 'upfront' infrastructure delivery – including public transport provision, education and health
- Assurance over and mitigation against future flood risk
- High quality, sustainable development creating a sense of place and community spirit

Engage Planning invited 60 stakeholders to the workshop and over 30 attended; with most of the bodies invited sending a representative. A further residents' workshop is being arranged to which key stakeholders will also be invited.

Following the residents' workshop a public exhibition will be held to enable those who haven't attended a workshop to see and comment upon the proposals.

The Consortium will respond to all points raised at the end of the consultation process in a separate report.

4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix 1 Stakeholder Invitees

WNSDC Officers

Member of Parliament

Northamptonshire County Council Officers and Portfolio Holders

Northampton Borough Council Officers and Portfolio Holders

South Northamptonshire Council Officers and Portfolio Holders

Site Ward County, District and Borough Councillors

Hackleton Parish Council

Hardingstone Parish Council

Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council

Grange Park Parish Council

Quinton Parish Council

Environment Agency

Highways Agency

Primary Care Trust

Northamptonshire Police

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue

The Wildlife Trusts

Friends of the Earth

Ramblers

Natural England

River Nene Regional Park

Sport England

Caroline Chisholm School

Northants Residents' Alliance

Chamber of Commerce

4.2 Appendix 2 Workshop Invitation Letter

Name
Title
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Postcode

2 November 2007

Wootton SDA

I am writing to invite you to a stakeholder consultation workshop on behalf of David Wilson Homes, English Partnerships, Harcourt Developments, Martin Grant Homes and Twigden Homes. The Consortium controls land to the south-east of Northampton and considers it to be a suitable location to accommodate the future growth that is to be planned in the area. The enclosed leaflet gives more detail regarding the background to the proposals.

At this stage we are consulting key stakeholders and local representatives. The workshop is being held in order to gain an understanding at an early stage of the key issues before holding further consultation events including a public exhibition for all local residents.

Although the Consortium is working with the LDF process, the workshop does not form part of the wider consultation undertaken by the local authorities, and attendance is not taken as support for development in the area; the aim being to inform the Consortium of local issues and opinions.

Following an initial presentation outlining the background and site constraints, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the key issues in smaller groups. The workshop will be held on **Tuesday 4th December at Wootton Community Sports Centre**, Curtlee Hill, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6EX. Registration will be from 9.30am for a 10am start, we aim to close by 2pm.

If you or one of your colleagues would like to attend, please confirm your attendance by contacting Rachel Carson on 01753 839315 or emailing rachel@engageplanning.co.uk

If you are unable to attend, there will be further chances to comment at future events and via a dedicated website which will be live following the workshop. You are also welcome to pass any comments on to me directly by phone, email or letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Carson

Director, Engage Planning Ltd

4.3 Appendix 3 Project Team

The Consortium

- David Wilson Homes
- English Partnerships
- Harcourt Developments
- Martin Grant Homes
- Twigden Homes

Consultants and their roles

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|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • JB Planning Associates | Lead consultants/Planning |
| • Woolf Bond Planning | Planning/Strategy |
| • LDA Design | Masterplanning, Landscape, Ecology |
| • TA Millard | Transport, Drainage, Utilities |
| • Cyril Sweett | Energy and Sustainability |
| • CgMs | Archaeology |
| • Engage Planning | Community Consultants |