

Responses to Questions and Comments raised at public meeting in Orwell 31-07-10

Brief

The register has 51 visitors who attended the event of which there were 39 households. There were a total of 21 individual comments written on the question sheets and these are copied word for word below, names were provided for all, but not disclosed on this record.

Questions and Comments

- 1) I would like to see Shared Ownership for young local people to be able to put a foot on the housing ladder. Shared ownership mortgages are available from Cambridge Housing Society, I know I work there! My daughter will not be able to afford local housing ever without this step.
- 2) Can SCDC guarantee that these homes will be allocated to Orwell people or their relatives? One parent families from as far away as Luton have been allocated houses in Brookside, and have brought problems with them.
- 3) At the moment we are asked to comment on a pig in a poke, Allocation? Need? Drainage?
- 4) Concerned about impact on parking, flooding, lighting, road, safety(school). Why have other sites not been considered? Guaranteed that homes are for Orwell residents only?
- 5) Possibly missing out local people who are 1st time buyers? E.g. can't afford houses in the village or surrounding areas, but earn enough to count them out of qualifying for Shared Equity based on income. Suggest allowing a percentage of houses available for full purchase to local people?
- 6) Questions about:- Water run off exceeding flow capacity in the brook. Impact on wildlife – a family of 12 brown hares appear frequently on that field. % of rented to shared ownership, would prefer to see larger Shared Ownership. Access/risk of turning into Hurdleditch from A603, this is a dangerous turning. Principle of siting development next to a busy school with insufficient parking is very poor & could lead to accidents. Poor village transport facilities for people that may need access to and from village. Eligibility criteria unclear – needs to be open, clear and impartial.
- 7) Hurdleditch Road should be repaired, widened, lit. Is there any extra funding for Petersfield? Impact of trees on Hurdleditch. Need impact statement of effect on, electricity supply, water supply, sewerage, broadband.
- 8) No objections in principle but very concerned about the implications and cost of dealing with the water table.

9) Concerned about water table, drainage, access for site & school, excess parking. Too many houses on this single plot.

10) Effect on exit at A603.

11) I'm concerned about the sewerage and drainage from the new site as the existing drainage is inadequate in Hurdleditch and Town Green Road.

12) Why is the housing being described as "affordable" when the proposals are for rented – in effect we are not providing affordable housing merely rented accommodation with all the associated problems that will accompany that. How will the latest government proposals of "village voting" affect these plans or procedures.

13) Can you please get the infrastructure of the village sorted out before any high density housing is considered. The main issue is drainage (sewerage) as I am sure has been mentioned earlier. The site is far too dense and totally out of character with the village. We have parking problems in Brookside so can learn from past experience. The parking as shown is impractical mainly due to the lack of space. More land is required for such a site density in a village such as Orwell.

14) The density on the site is for too many properties. If 15 is deemed necessary and not the six we were told were needed then why? Potential traffic issues leaving the site. Why don't you come clean and tell us that the road from plots 4 and 5 will eventually go to the A603.

15) The entrance to the site is almost opposite to the school entrance. There are clearly traffic management issues which appear to be overlooked.

16) Before any new work begins in the area, I've ongoing, unresolved issue of excess surface water and the flooding that follows any downpour needs to be addressed fully.

17) Main Concerns: infrastructure, drainage especially, density (more than doubling the number of properties in Hurdleditch Road). Traffic allocation. Mix of properties, too many three bed, no 1 bed. However the village needs more affordable housing, so I would like to see it succeed(in a revised form?)

18) The requirement is entirely valid and needs a solution. The particular design leads to several concerns. Traffic – road layout assume all households park sensibly, people don't. School proximity and traffic management? A603 junction already dangerous. Density in context of village very dramatically different. Is this going to lead to congestion(designed in)? Drainage and Service – Question Adequacy.

19) I agree with all the above, especially drainage.

20) I also totally agree with the above comments, particularly impact on road, drainage and school proximity.

21) Two massive issue, 1) Proximity to school and issue re access, parking and frankly huge danger. It is complete nightmare already. 2) Water run off: will make already bad situation much worse.

Summary:

The main questions and concerns are summarised as follows:

- 1) Impact on Village Infrastructure – Drainage, surface water and Sewerage
- 2) Impact on Village Infrastructure – Other Services
- 3) Highways Safety – Impact of junction onto A603, and current condition, width of and provision of lighting on Hurdleditch Road
- 4) Site access – Arrangements and Traffic
- 5) Parking provision
- 6) Density and Character of the proposed development
- 7) Tenure of the development – Inclusion of Shared Ownership, first time buyers and full market housing.
- 8) Local Connection – To ensure that housing is allocated to those with the right connection to the Parish.
- 9) Impact on wildlife and trees, notably Hares and trees on Hurdleditch Road.
- 10) Will there be additional funding from Petersfield
- 11) Poor village transport
- 12) Will the “village voting” affect the proposals.

The responses and comments are as follows:

1) Impact on Village Infrastructure – Drainage, surface water and Sewerage

Anglian Water are a statutory consultee to the planning process and would confirm whether any capacity exists in the network to accommodate the homes. This is only usually requested when a planning application has been submitted, however we have made an approach to Anglian Water about the current capacity and also future capacity for the development, and also to seek clarity of work that has been discussed at the meeting.

What I would add to this is that the village is likely to have a combined surface water and sewage system, meaning that flow is at the most risk of overflowing in very heavy rainfall.

The proposal that we are to put forward allows only for the foul water to go into the system and that surface water must be dealt with by alternate means. This surface water flow must only discharge off the site at the same rate as it's currently undeveloped state. This is a mandatory requirement of the Code for sustainable homes.

It isn't usual practice to design a full drainage layout prior to a planning application, as the water authority will always request as suitable condition for foul and surface water drainage be submitted and discharged prior to any commencement on site.

That said we are obtaining a cost quotation from an engineer to design a layout.

2) Impact on Village Infrastructure – Other Services

If the proposal goes ahead all the service company's have to be content on the capacity of their networks to accommodate the new homes. In the case of some providers this may require additional infrastructure to accommodate the homes.

3) Highways Safety – Impact of junction onto A603, and current condition, width of and provision of lighting on Hurdleditch Road

The Highways department is as above a statutory consultee to the planning process, however we have made early contact to seek their comments on the layout and access arrangements of the development, including the proximity to the school. They will make recommendations on the proposals and confirm their requirements in relation to the highway safety issues. Based on previous schemes of varying scale in rural and built up areas the proposal will add no more than 15 dwellings with associated vehicles which from a Highways perspective will add very little impact in relation to the volume of traffic that currently use Hurdleditch Road. I would expect that a lighting scheme is proposed in relation to the new junction that would be created with the site entrance and this would very likely include lighting at the junction to ensure maximum visibility. Any requirements for traffic calming and specific issues relating to the proximity of the school would be discussed in depth and implemented. These could be the moving of the speed limit, chicanes or implementing restrictions on the use of the highway adjoining the school. Road widening usually serves to speed traffic up not slow it down.

With regard to the junction of the A603. It is not ignored that this junction is a high speed junction, but that this development does not make a significant impact to this junction to require the scheme to undertake works to this junction.

4) Site access – Arrangements and Traffic

The site access is away from the school and allows for a maximum visibility splay to ensure that traffic leaving the site will be able to safely leave the junction. This is for the period of development and also when occupied.

A suitable planning condition can be imposed to ensure that site traffic does not sit on the main highway for the period of construction.

Further more it can be imposed by the client and the contractor that all delivery's for the development site only come in off the A603, and therefore do not pass the school at any time. This is a regularly used tool that we adopt to be sensitive to the local area.

In addition to this our principal contractors engage with the local schools to provide health and safety talks for the pupils and engage where possible to use the development as a learning exercise for the school.

5) Parking provision

We are acutely aware of the need for adequate parking provision and always seek to maximise the amount of parking spaces we can deliver on a development. There are restrictions placed upon us by local planning policy which is supplemented by the Department for Transport Manual for Streets. Where possible we would seek to have

2 spaces per dwelling, which is the maximum permitted level of parking under the current policy.

Further to this the highway on site is proposed as a 5.5 highway so that if there were to be any excess parking this is contained on site.

6) Density and Character of the proposed development

The density of the development has been carefully thought out to maximise the best use of land but not seek to have a high density scheme. The density proposed allows for good size homes and gardens also, but not too large as to be unmanageable. The density is below that of the usual private developer. It is of a lower density to those dwellings that already front Hurdleditch Road.

With regard to character of the proposals, as we have only a site layout plan at present and elevations it makes a response difficult at this time. That said any elevations would be sensitive to styles and architecture in the village and will be further reflected in the pallet or materials that would be selected for the finishes of the dwellings, and a suitable planning condition would reflect this.

7) Tenure of the development – Inclusion of Shared Ownership, first time buyers and full market housing.

The development was originally proposed as a 100% rented scheme. The reason for this is due to timing and specifically the housing market position, with prices falling and lack of mortgage availability. It is confirmed that the position has stabilised and that Shared Ownership is now a proposal for a proportion of the site. It is proposed that 5 - 6 homes out of the 15 would be shared ownership homes.

It is not possible to include any housing for first time buyers or full market housing for two main reasons. The first is that a rural exception site can only be developed if it's to meet the local housing need, on an affordable basis, the legislation doesn't consider first time buyers or full sale as meeting that need. The second reason is that we have a maximum earnings criteria which we have to maintain to ensure that we maintain our charitable status.

8) Local Connection – To ensure that housing is allocated to those with the right connection to the Parish.

The only way that we can develop an exception site is where there is a proven housing need for the village. If the planning is successful then a requirement will be to enter into a Section 106 agreement, which is a legally binding agreement for the site which ensures the ongoing criteria are met by the first residents and then in perpetuity.

When the property's become available for letting, adverts are posted on the 'home link' system and also in the 'Homebuy' magazine where applicants can bid for these homes.

This list is then shortlisted to individual applicants based on the local connection criteria, and checked to ensure compliance.

It is imperative that anyone who would like to be housed on the scheme is registered with the district council.

We would also seek to put notices up on the site and make announcements via the parish meetings and sign boards to make people aware of the completions.

9) Impact on wildlife and trees, notably Hares and trees on Hurdleditch Road.

The Code for sustainable homes requires us to improve the ecological value of a site. To enable this a survey is undertaken of the undeveloped site. All species that have a 'value' are noted and preserved where possible. This also includes reptiles, badgers bats etc. Once this work has been undertaken a landscaping plan is formed which must enhance the ecological value of the site. This is a mandatory requirement for the Code for Sustainable Homes.

10) Will there be additional funding for Petersfield

I am uncertain if this request relates to the school of the field, however will answer as follows. The County Council does not seek an education contribution for 100% affordable schemes from the developer. As the development would be Government funded this would require further subsidy to contribute. Therefore the County Councils assess the impacts of new developments such as this and determine if further provision is required. It is unique with exception sites as the families are likely to already be living in the village, so are unlikely to place an extra burden on the school.

With regards to the playing field, it is possible that a contribution may be requested to provide 'off site' playing provision where we cannot provide on site. This is subject to discussion with the planning authority.

11) Poor village transport

A development such as this will not provide enough additional numbers to facilitate any further improvements to the transportation of the village. On some large scale developments this is required, but these are developments into the 100's. The site has a decent parking provision to allow for car use.

In addition as with the school, those that are likely to be taking up residence are likely to reside in the village, and if not will certainly be familiar with the village through their local connection.

12) Will the "village voting" affect the proposals.

There have been a great number of announcements with regards to policy. Many of these announcements are yet to have the detail to enable me to respond on this question.

Further Information

These responses are provided with reference to other documents and of guidance notes and policy documents. We have to adhere to those which affect housing development and specifically development for housing by Registered Providers. Some of the responses will be dictated by those instruments. To assist this I have a few backgrounds informatives to mention:

Statutory Instruments:

Planning – This is national legislation and filters down to Local Authorities who set individual planning guidance and supplements to enable development to be controlled.

Building Regulations – These are a regulator to ensure that building achieve a required standard of development in terms of fabric of the buildings and to ensure that homes are fit for habitation.

Water Industry Act – These determine the roles and responsibility of all aspects of the supply of potable water and removal of waste product.

Highways Act – This act encompasses the provision of existing and new highways. It also determines the transportation elements of any new developments.

Other Regulation:

Grant Funding – For a development such as this, Housing Associations require grant funding to enable this to go ahead, this is usually sourced from the Homes and Communities Agency. To enable Housing Associations to access funding we must meet a range of other criteria above the statutory requirements and these are highlighted below.

Code for Sustainable Homes – The current government has confirmed the previous administrations target of achieving zero carbon homes by 2016. These is to be achieved in increments from Code 1 to Code 6, and will be met by changes in the building regulations over the period. The Code requires some items as mandatory to achieve the various levels.

Design and Quality Standards – These are a set of design criteria that govern the size and design of our homes. They are far in excess of the private market.

Lifetime Homes – A further change in the building regulations will be the provision of new housing to be Lifetime Homes, but this is not yet. Housing Associations have adopted the criteria some time ago. This is a provision that all homes can be adapted in the future to meet the changing demands of a resident should their health deteriorate to ensure they can remain in their home for as long as practical.