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# Land West of Chesterton, Oxfordshire

Statement of Community Engagement

on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd

September 2014



**Land West of Chesterton**

**Planning Statement submitted on behalf of  
Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Engagement has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as “the Applicant”) in support of an outline planning application for the development of land to the west of Chesterton (hereafter referred to as the Site). The planning application proposes the erection of up to 45 residential dwellings with all matters reserved except for access (hereafter referred to as the “Proposed Development”).
- 1.2 The Applicant has engaged with the local community and stakeholders through public consultation exercises that were carried out prior to the planning application being submitted. This Statement of Community Engagement provides details of the consultation events that were held, the comments received and how the Applicants have responded.
- 1.3 Consideration has been given to the guidance contained in Cherwell District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (hereafter referred to as “the SCI”) (July 2006). The SCI sets out the Council’s proposals for involving local people and organisations in the planning system. Paragraph 7.8 of the SCI advises applicants to undertake pre-submission consultation when submitting a planning application and that genuine engagement with the community can be beneficial, with the aim of the process to encourage discussion before a formal application is made and therefore avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage.
- 1.4 This Statement provides: an overview of the consultation strategy (Section 2.0); details of the consultation process that was implemented (Section 3.0); a review the comments that were received on the proposals, and how the Applicant has responded to them, where appropriate (Section 4.0); and summary and conclusions (Section 5.0).

## 2.0 CONSULTATION STRATEGY

2.1 Given the nature of the site and the proposals for residential development, the consultation strategy has been carefully considered to ensure consultation with members of the public, Council Officers and other stakeholders. The main focus has been to engage with the local community and effectively communicate the developer's proposals for the site to everyone who has been consulted.

### Consultation objectives

2.2 The aim of the consultation strategy has been to conduct an open dialogue with the Parish Council and local community stakeholders. The following consultation objectives, established at the outset of the project, are in line with Local and National planning policy objectives and have shaped the consultation strategy:

- To understand any concerns of the local community in respect of the development of the site.
- To allow adequate opportunity for the local community to consider, understand and comment on the draft proposals for the development of the site.
- To promote understanding of the proposals.
- To achieve improvements in the design of the proposals.

### Strategy

#### (i) Early Engagement with Cherwell District Council through Plan-Making Process

2.3 The application site has been submitted to the Council for consideration within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Final Report 2013 and SHLAA Update 2014. These documents formed the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan and provide an informed estimate of housing availability within the district.

#### (ii) Public Consultation

2.4 Having reviewed the options available, it was considered that a public exhibition would be the best way of communicating the proposals to the local community and to allow for face to face engagement to discuss the proposals, answer any questions and receive comments.



**(iii) Communication**

- 2.5 A key element of meaningful consultation in the process, as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), is feeding back the results of the consultation process, thereby ensuring that any changes made to the proposals as a result of comments or suggestions are identified and fed back to local stakeholders. This includes ensuring that information is available to all interested parties.
- 2.6 A primary purpose of this report is to collate and communicate the comments received from the consultation exercise and identify how the proposals respond to the consultation process.

### 3.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 As set out in Section 2.0, a range of methods were employed to ensure all stakeholders were involved in the process of identifying development principles for the site. To ensure meaningful and effective consultation, the strategy employed was flexible, and could respond to changing circumstances and to consultation responses. As such, the strategy was able to develop and be adapted.

3.2 The consultation process was undertaken as follows:

- Submission of the Site as part of the SHLAA Final Report 2013 and SHLAA Update 2014;
- Leaflet drop to local residents to raise awareness of the proposals and confirm date for the exhibition session;
- Press release to inform residents within the surrounding area of the development proposals;
- One public exhibition with key stakeholders – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014; and
- Publication of development proposals on Taylor Wimpey website including link to exhibition boards

3.3 Details of each of these elements are provided in the following sections.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

3.4 The Applicant has submitted details of the Site to the Council for consideration as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Final Report 2013. The study provides an informed estimate of land availability for housing and forms part of the evidence base to the emerging Local Plan.

3.5 For clarity, the submission for the SHLAA Report 2013 included the application site and the agricultural field located immediately to the south. As such, the comments which were received by Officers refer to a larger site area than currently proposed.

3.6 The Council has since undertaken a review of the SHLAA, publishing an update in August 2014. The Site was again taken into consideration as part of the wider parcel of land, with Officers providing comments on its suitability for residential development.

3.7 Following the feedback from Officers, the site area has been reduced to include only the two northern parcels of land – ensuring that the development responded positively to the existing settlement boundary.



to the local community, answer any questions and obtain views. The exhibition session was arranged, for Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014. It was held at Chesterton Village Hall, Alchester Road, Chesterton which was selected as a suitable venue due to its accessibility and proximity to the Application Site.

- 3.12 The boards included details on the development proposals and intended development programme.
- 3.13 The exhibition sessions were manned by representatives from Taylor Wimpey, and Barton Willmore (Planning). The exhibition was attended by 93 people. Each attendee received a comments form and was given the opportunity to complete the form at the exhibition or take away a pre-paid envelope should they wish to comment on the proposals at a later date.
- 3.14 In total 60 completed comments forms were received and the issues raised are considered in Section 4.0 of this Statement.

**Publication on Taylor Wimpey website**

- 3.15 Details of the proposed development have been published on the Taylor Wimpey site. This includes an overview of the scheme and the survey work which has already been undertaken. A copy of the exhibition boards is accessible online.

## 4.0 REVIEW OF CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 4.1 The primary feedback from the community consultation exercise has been through the receipt of the completed comments forms. The comments have been analysed and considered as the proposals for the site have developed. A summary of the issues raised is provided below.

### **Review and Consideration of Comments Received**

- 4.2 A total of 60 comments forms/responses were received and have been collated and summarised below.
- 4.3 The proposals submitted as part of this planning application have considered all of the comments made and addressed or incorporated them where appropriate into the development proposals or the technical reports submitted in support of the application. The table below provides a summary of main issues raised and provides the Applicants response to these, as appropriate.

### **Question 1: Do you support provision of new housing, including affordable housing, in Chesterton?**

- 4.4 A larger equal proportion of consultees are opposed to the provision of new housing in Chesterton (54%) compared with those who are in support (40%). A small proportion (5%) are undecided.

### **Question 2: Which of the following types of home do you think are needed in the area?**

- 4.5 Consultees favour the provision of a varied mix of housing types with an emphasis on those at the lower end of the property ladder and families. The most popular preferences are for starter homes (47%), affordable housing (43%), family homes (35%) and smaller homes for those downsizing (35%), while the desire for the provision of larger luxury properties is minimal (7%). One in five consultees (22%) is of the opinion that no new homes are needed in the community.

### **Question3: In what ways, if at all, do you think the new development should interact with the existing development/the surrounding area?**

- 4.6 Although a small proportion of consultees (12%) take the opportunity to reiterate their opposition to the proposed development in response to this question, a number of

suggestions are also made for ways in which the development could interact with the surrounding area. These include the provision of new footpaths and cycle links (8%), designing the homes in keeping with the village vernacular (8%), ensuring the new homes are well integrated with the village rather than isolated (6%) and minimising the visual impact of the scheme on neighbouring properties (6%).

**Question 4: How important do you think it is that the proposals have a local or distinctive identity?**

- 4.7 There is a significant weight of opinion among consultees for the proposed development to have a local or distinctive identity, with the vast majority (62%) regarding this as either 'very important' or 'fairly important' and only a small proportion (8%) of the view that it is 'very unimportant' or 'fairly unimportant'.

**Question 5: Do you think that there should be pedestrian/cycle routes into and through the development? If yes, where exactly should these routes run in the development? Are there particular links outside the site that these routes need to connect with?**

- 4.8 A large majority of consultees (68%) believe that pedestrian and/or cycle routes should be provided into and through the proposed development, with the most common suggestions to improve neighbouring roadside paths (18%), enhance links to the village and its facilities (12%), provide connections to adjacent allotments (8%), improve links to the local school (8%) and to upgrade nearby roads (8%).

**Question 6: In your opinion, are the open spaces located in the right place within the scheme? If no, where do you think the open spaces should be located?**

- 4.9 A larger number of people believe that open spaces are sensibly located within the proposed development scheme (33%) than those who do not (25%). Among those who believe the open spaces could be relocated, the most popular suggestion is that they should be moved closer to the neighbouring Woodlands development, which borders the site to the south.

**Question 7: Do you have any further comments to make on our proposed development?**

- 4.10 A significant number of consultees took the opportunity to make general comments

about the development proposals in addition to the specific responses prompted by other questions on the feedback form. For ease of reference, some comments have been grouped to avoid repetition.

Summary of Main Issues/Concerns Raised by the public	Applicants Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic congestion in Chesterton is an issue for local people and the proposed development will worsen this problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development is expected to generate up to 29 two-way vehicular movements in the peak hours. This level of traffic is not likely to have a perceptible impact on the operation of the local network. Nevertheless, the development will undertake improvements to the unnamed road with local widening and provision of a footway.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The A4095 will need to be widened and improved in order to accommodate traffic from the development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The A4095 is considered to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the minimal trips which are expected to be created from the proposed development.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed vehicular access requires improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst the application is to be made in outline, the matter of access is to be taken into consideration as part of the determination. As such, details of the proposed access have been submitted alongside the application, demonstrating that it accords with Highways standards.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrades are required to existing roads in the vicinity of the site to ease congestion and improve safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As highlighted above, the proposal is expected to produce only 29 additional two-way vehicular movements in the peak hours which can be suitably accommodated within the existing highway network. However, a footway is also to be created along the unnamed road to the west of the Site, increasing connectivity for pedestrians and reducing the need to use a private car.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are enough new homes currently being developed in Chesterton and further development is not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The attached Planning Statement explains that there is currently a shortfall of housing within the District. As such, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed development is not welcome in the village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The emerging Local Plan establishes Chesterton as a 'Category A Village' and will be expected to accommodate a proportion of residential development over the coming plan period. As such, future development within Chesterton will be required to meet the strategic housing needs of the District.</li> </ul>

Summary of Main Issues/Concerns Raised by the public	Applicants Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New and improved footpaths would be essential if the development is to go ahead, particularly roadside paths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed development will include footpath works to the road which runs alongside the western boundary – providing direct footpath links to the north of Chesterton.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct links to the village centre and facilities including the church, pub and bus stops are required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As highlighted above, the newly formed footpath will provide a direct footpath link to the bus stops located along Alchester Road.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footpath connections should be provided to the allotments adjacent to the development site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The illustrative Master Plan submitted alongside the application allows the opportunity for a footpath link to be provided into the allotments. It is anticipated that the creation of such a link could form part of a S106 agreement.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footpaths and cycle links should be provided between the new development and the village school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chesterton Church of England Primary School will be easily and safely accessible from the proposed development via the newly formed footpath.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a requirement for improved pedestrian and cycle connections between Chesterton and Bicester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the granting of planning permission, the proposals are likely to require a contribution to the County Council Highways Department towards the improvement of local highways and public transport.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The primary school is already full/approaching capacity and cannot cope with additional demand from the proposed development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the granting of planning permission, a financial contribution will be made payable to the local educational authority to improve local provision.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More new homes would have a negative impact on the existing environment of Chesterton village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and local planning policy requires good design within all new developments. Whilst matters of appearance are to be taken into consideration at the reserved matter stage, it is considered that the Site can be suitably developed to ensure that it does not have a detrimental impact upon the existing settlement of Chesterton. Indeed, landscape buffers have been included within the illustrative Master Plan and it is proposed that no buildings will be above 2-storey in height.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new homes should be designed so that they are in keeping with homes already in the village, using similar building materials (eg stone)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As highlighted above, the design of the properties is not to be taken into consideration at this outline stage.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed scheme should not be isolated from the village but well connected to neighbouring residential areas and local facilities to ensure better community integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed development provides a legible extension to the existing built form of Chesterton given that it is contained on two sides by existing built-form. However, additional links will be included as part of the scheme to ensure that residents of the proposed units are not isolated from the existing settlement.</li> </ul>



Summary of Main Issues/Concerns Raised by the public	Applicants Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development should be laid out so that its visual impact on neighbouring properties is minimised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given that the proposals seek outline permission, matters of layout are not to be taken into consideration at this stage. However, the submitted illustrative layout demonstrates how the Site can suitably accommodate 45 residential dwellings with the associated internal roads, open space and balancing ponds.</li> </ul>

4.11 We therefore consider that the proposals have fully considered and responded to the comments received.

### Summary

4.12 A variety of methods of consultation have been employed to achieve meaningful consultation in order to meet with Government objectives and those of the adopted SCI, as well as the commitments of the Applicant. This has involved both formal and informal consultation with a variety of consultees including the Council, local community and other stakeholders.

## **5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 This document demonstrates the way in which the Applicant has engaged with the local community and reviewed the comments received. We also highlight that as set out in the summary schedule of responses, support was forthcoming for the scheme with comments in respect of the development.
- 5.2 The main issue raised related to road congestion which is already an issue in Chesterton and what impact the additional traffic generated from the development would have on the town, particularly in relation to the A4095 and whether it will need to be widened and improved in order to accommodate the proposed development.
- 5.3 A range of views have been gathered from the consultation exercise and these have highlighted issues that have been addressed in the final submission.