

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT



**THE NORTH OXFORDSHIRE CONSORTIUM
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON PROPOSALS FOR A
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT HEYFORD PARK**

Summary of stakeholder involvement, public consultation and responses

September, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Public consultation and community engagement have become increasingly important in the planning and development process. It recognises the valuable contribution local people can make in helping to create more integrated and sustainable communities.

This Stakeholder Engagement Report sets out how the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) has engaged and consulted with local stakeholders in the pre application phase of a proposed sustainable development at Heyford Park.

The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 has allocated a settlement of about 1,000 homes, with associated facilities, and the provision of 1,200 jobs at Heyford Park (*adopted October, 2005*). Detailed endorsement of development at Heyford Park has also been given in the adopted Revised Development Brief, issued by Cherwell District Council (*adopted March, 2007*).

A former RAF and US Air Force base, Heyford Park is, to all intents and purposes, a self-contained community that sits to the East of Upper Heyford in the county of Oxfordshire. In terms of its layout and structures, Heyford Park has changed little since the US Air Force vacated the base in 1993.

Today, Heyford Park consists of some 300 residential properties, all of which were formerly used to house base personnel, and some 60 businesses that occupy a number of buildings and former aircraft hangars across the site. Both communities have become well established and a strong sense of 'belonging' exists on the base – this has been recognised by the NOC and its approach has been based on ensuring this sense of community remains and is enhanced.

The vast majority of both residential and commercial tenants are on short-term leases - a situation not conducive to ensuring Heyford Park's long term future. As such, it is widely agreed that a plan is needed that will secure a long term and sustainable future for the whole site.

Discussions about the development of Heyford Park have been taking place for a number of years. As such, commercial and residential tenants have long been aware that some form of development would be required at Heyford Park to secure its future.

Given the NOC's position as landlord for the residents of Heyford Park, consultation has been exhaustive and continuous. As well as embracing the spirit of consultation under PPS12, the NOC is itself part of the Heyford Park community and accordingly the consortium has done everything possible to ensure its commercial and residential tenants have been an integral part of the development process, that their views have been sought and considered and that their desire to remain residents of Heyford Park continues.

This pre-application consultation process has been designed to fulfil four primary objectives:

- To provide clear and up-to-date information on the emerging proposals for the commercial and residential tenants of Heyford Park, the surrounding local community and other key stakeholders involved with the site – in advance of submitting an outline application.
- To engage with all stakeholders, with a particular focus on existing residential and commercial tenants, and provide an opportunity to give feedback on the plans, prior to the submission of a planning application.
- To seek views on the steps needed to be taken to ensure a long-term and sustainable future for Heyford Park.
- For the consultant team to take on board, as far as is reasonable, feedback from the consultation process in the evolving plans for the proposed development.

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

The Heyford Park site falls within the jurisdiction of Cherwell District Council. Accordingly, the NOC team spoke extensively with officers in developing its pre-application consultation strategy. Consultation has also been carried out in line with the objectives of PPS12 and with specific reference to Cherwell District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (*adopted on 24 July, 2006*).

It was agreed between the NOC and Cherwell District Council that pre-application consultation would consist of three distinct 'rounds'.

Round One - outlining the broad principles of development at Heyford Park in line with the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 and Cherwell District Council's Draft Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief.

Round Two - exhibiting a draft version of the proposed masterplan and gathering feedback and comments

Round Three - exhibiting a final version of the masterplan that will be submitted to Cherwell District Council for outline planning approval.

Round One took the form of a public meeting/exhibition and was organised by Cherwell District Council. It took place at the Heyford Park Chapel on the 8 August, 2006 and was attended by approximately 100-150 people. More details on the exhibition, its objectives and feedback are available directly from Cherwell District Council.

Round Two and *Three* were organised by the NOC and are the focus of this document.

Whilst split into 'rounds', these should be seen as peaks in activity as consultation has been taking place on a continuous basis. Given that all the commercial and residential occupants of Heyford Park are paying tenants of the NOC, the consortium has had communication, either written, verbally or face-to-face, with them on a continual basis. Whilst this document predominantly focuses on the specific activities surrounding *Round Two* and *Three*, it will refer to any additional communication activities undertaken by the NOC outside of this where pertinent.

The situation at Heyford Park also meant that whilst consultation activities targeted neighbouring villages and other relevant stakeholders, the commercial and residential tenants of Heyford Park were a primary focus.

These tenants will be most affected by Heyford Park's development and it was agreed by Cherwell District Council and the NOC that they should be considered as a priority group in all consultation.

Throughout the NOC's consultation process, officers and relevant elected members have been kept fully informed and a continuous dialogue established.

Consultation toolkit

The following tools were created/utilised by the NOC to assist in consulting with the community on its proposal for Heyford Park:

- Stakeholder matrix to identify who should be addressed and in what ways
- Scheme newsletter – a dedicated newsletter distributed to commercial and residential tenants of Heyford Park and made available at the public exhibition
- Letters to stakeholders – sent to all residential and commercial tenants as well as other key stakeholders
- E-mail feedback address, hotline phone number (manned during office hours) and freepost address set up and promoted in all scheme materials
- Exhibition panels for use at a public exhibition
- Media pack and regular press briefings – to communicate the consultation process through the key local media
- Adverts in key local press highlighting the times of the exhibition
- Q&A document to address key questions
- Questionnaire developed for the exhibition

KEY CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES – ROUND TWO

Introduction

Round Two of consultation culminated in a public exhibition that ran from the 28-30 June. There were a number of activities that were undertaken in the build up to this exhibition, which are outlined below.

1. Individual Briefings with Elected Representatives

Individual briefing meetings were held with Tony Baldry MP and key elected members of Cherwell District Council, with officers present where deemed necessary, throughout Round Two consultation. These were aimed at keeping members informed of progress and advising on key elements of the masterplan as they developed.

Briefings held with members included **Councillor L Annaly** (*Conservative - The Astons & Heyfords*), **Councillor A J Fulljames** (*Conservative Ambrosden & Chesterton*), **Councillor C Fulljames** (*Conservative - Caversfield*), **Councillor J J Macnamara** (*Conservative - The Astons & Heyfords*), **Councillor G A Reynolds** (*Conservative – Sibford*).

2. Targeted Correspondence with Key Stakeholders

- Letters were sent **to all commercial tenants** (the content to be communicated on to employees) alerting them to the forthcoming exhibition of the draft masterplan and providing a basic update on progress (*See Appendix I*).
- A number of letters (*See Appendix I*) were written and door dropped **to all residential properties on Heyford Park**. An initial letter advised of a dedicated meeting for residential tenants, the exhibition of the draft masterplan that would follow and also updated residents on a number of key issues that would affect them moving forward.
- Letters were also sent to other **key stakeholders** inviting them to the exhibition and updating them on progress (*See Appendix I*). These included:
 - *Officers and members at Cherwell District Council and local MP Tony Baldry*
 - *Representatives of Oxfordshire County Council*
 - *Representatives from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE)*
 - *Heyford and neighbouring Parish Councils*
 - *Local Business Groups*
 - *Representatives of the local print and broadcast media*

3. Dedicated Briefing for Residential Tenants

A **dedicated meeting** was organised for residential tenants on the 19 June, 2007. This served to provide an update on progress but chiefly to advise tenants on a decision by the NOC that would result in the majority of existing properties at Heyford Park being demolished as part of the development. Letters were also sent to **Tony Baldry MP** and Ward Members **Councillor Luke Annaly** and **Councillor J J Macnamara** advising of the meeting (*See Appendix I*).

Whilst news of some degree of demolition had been expected, this was a highly emotive subject and one of the most contentious parts of the scheme. Accordingly, it was decided this news should be communicated in a public forum that would provide the opportunity for tenants to ask questions.

The meeting was **attended by some 90 tenants** and detailed information was available for people to take away, including a dedicated Q&A document (*See Appendix II*) - the dedicated hot-line, e-mail and freepost address were heavily promoted in all communications material. Several **NOC board directors** attended, and also spoke at the meeting, and **Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services** at Cherwell District Council, gave a presentation.

Whilst the news came as a disappointment to residents, constructive discussion was able to take place and the NOC outlined its intention to work with Cherwell District Council to agree a **Local Lettings Policy** that would give priority in the allocation of new affordable homes to existing tenants.

Subsequent calls to the hotline were also **predominantly constructive** and the low volume of calls also suggested that residents felt they had been provided with sufficient levels of information and had been reassured as far as could reasonably be expected.

A **follow-up letter** (*See Appendix I*) was door dropped to all residential tenants on the base, summarising the key points from the meeting and again alerting residents to the **forthcoming public exhibition** where there would be further opportunities to ask questions. The letter was accompanied by the Q&A document handed out at the meeting (*See Appendix II*).

4. Advertisements in the Local Media

Prominent advertisements for the public exhibition were placed in both the *Bicester Advertiser* and *Bicester Review* - both papers are widely read by residents throughout the Cherwell district and have a combined circulation of 15,018. The advertisements in both publications appeared on 22 June 2007 – just over one week prior to the exhibition (See *Appendix III*).

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) Unveils its Vision for Heyford Park

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC), made up of leading housebuilders Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, will shortly be unveiling its draft plans for the development of a new sustainable community at Heyford Park.

The NOC's vision for Heyford Park is designed to take the former air base into the next stage of its lifecycle by creating a permanent sustainable settlement that ensures its existing commercial and residential communities continue to thrive. It also strikes a balance between respecting and preserving the site's heritage whilst looking to the needs of the future.

As part of its commitment to community consultation, the NOC would like to invite local residents and interested parties to attend a public exhibition to view its draft proposals and feed back comments.

THE EXHIBITION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY 30 JUNE BETWEEN 10AM AND 2PM, THE CHAPEL, HEYFORD PARK, OXFORDSHIRE.
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE AND LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR VIEWS.

In the meantime, if you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the Heyford Park hotline on: **0800 988 9146** or email: **information@heyfordpark.co.uk**

5. Proactive Media Relations

In the build up to the exhibition, a press release was sent out to all key media. This resulted in coverage promoting the event in the **Bicester Advertiser** on the 22 and 29 June, the **Oxford Mail** on the 27 June, and the **Bicester Review** on the 29 June (See *Appendix IV*).

Following media briefings undertaken as part of the exhibition (which took place on Friday 29 June), coverage was also secured on **BBC Radio Oxford**, which broadcast on 29 and 30 June. Further, in-depth articles, also appeared in the **Bicester Advertiser** on the 6 July, **Oxford Mail** on the 3 July, **Banbury Guardian** on the 5 July and **Oxford Times** on the 6 July (See *Appendix IV*).

EX-AIRBASE PLANS ARE UNVEILED
But the existing US-built homes will have to go

1,000 homes plan on show
UPPER HEYFORD: Members of the public can view plans for 1,000 new houses on the former American airbase on Saturday.
The exhibition, at Heyford Park Chapel, will give people the chance to have their say on the proposals, which also include a primary school and several shops.
A group of three housing developers, known as The North Oxfordshire Consortium, is organising the event.

US bungalows to be demolished under plans

Oxford Mail, 27 June 2007

BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW VILLAGE

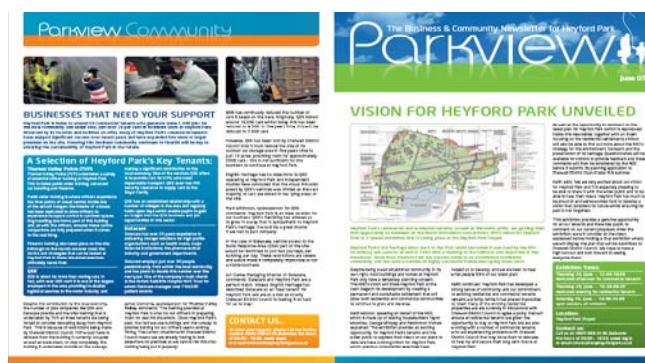
Oxford Mail, 3 July 2007

Bicester Advertiser, 6 July 2007

6. Creation and Distribution of Newsletter

Approximately 3,000 newsletters were printed which contained an update on progress, outlined key themes of the proposed development and included a copy of the draft masterplan (See Appendix V).

These were given out during the public exhibition with copies subsequently made available at the Heyford Park Chapel – a venue regularly used by Heyford Park’s residential tenants. Additional copies were also sent to all the commercial tenants of Heyford Park. The newsletter encouraged comments and views and, where possible, was distributed together with a feedback form and freepost reply envelope.



7. Public Exhibition to Explain and Discuss the Proposals

An exhibition ran from the 28 June to the 30 June at the Heyford Park Chapel. A series of exhibition boards were produced explaining key elements of the draft masterplan and covered topics such as transport and the environment. A breakout section was created in the centre of the room where enlargements of the draft masterplan were displayed and members of the NOC team were available to answer questions.

All attendees were encouraged to take away a copy of the newsletter and copies of the draft masterplan. Attendees were also encouraged to take away and return a questionnaire asking for their comments and views, which was supplied with a freepost envelope.



The questionnaire was designed to avoid a 'tick box' approach with space provided to write general comments. In addition, specific questions were also asked with regards to key elements of the draft masterplan and where there was genuine scope for their views to influence the design of the proposals.

A number of dedicated sessions were arranged designed to ensure as wide a participation as possible. These sessions broke down as follows:

- *Thursday 28 June (morning and afternoon) – especially for commercial tenants – **attendance approximately 45***
- *Thursday 28 June (evening) – especially for residential tenants – **attendance approximately 125***
- *Friday 29 June (morning) – press briefing – attendance from **key local papers, BBC Radio Oxford and BBC Oxford TV***
- *Friday 29 June (evening) – especially for key stakeholders, including Parish Councillors and business groups – **attendance approximately 35***
- *Saturday 30 June (morning and afternoon) – open to the wider general public – **attendance approximately 30***

Each session was manned by relevant representatives from the NOC, including board directors, the project architect, representatives from the managing property agencies and other consultants, who proactively engaged with attendees. All sessions were predominantly positive with the vast majority of comments being highly constructive – this was particularly encouraging given the recent news that had been communicated to residential tenants only the week before.

All communications materials promoted the dedicated '**hotline**' phone number, **e-mail** and **freepost** address.

8. Presentation to Oxfordshire County Council

Following the exhibition on the 6 July, a further dedicated presentation was given to representatives of **Oxfordshire County Council**. This included a presentation from the NOC and discussion based on the content of the exhibition panels.

Discussions were positive and constructive. **Paul Harris, Strategic Countryside Access Officer**, forwarded subsequent comments regarding public access to the site, which have been considered in the final masterplan.

9. Ongoing engagement

As noted, due to the way in which Heyford Park has developed, its entire population - both residential and commercial - are paying tenants of the NOC. As such, there has been a **constant dialogue with tenants**, both written and verbal, demonstrating clear evidence of the NOC meeting its 'duty of care' towards the residents of Heyford Park.

Representatives from the NOC have played an **active part in the community**, regularly attending resident meetings and meetings with businesses.

All enquires received, either through the hotline or in writing, have been handled promptly by the NOC and a significant number of dedicated meetings with both commercial and residential tenants have, and continue, to take place.

Summary of Round Two Consultation Activities:

- Discussion and confirmation of consultation methodology with Cherwell District Council
- Individual briefing meetings with key elected representatives
- Writing to key stakeholders including all residential and commercial tenants, officers and members of Cherwell District Council, representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and the Government Office of the South East, Heyford and neighbouring Parish Councils, local business groups and representatives from the media
- Dedicated briefing meeting with residential tenants
- Development of Q&A document
- Advertising in local media and press release regarding the public exhibition
- Public exhibition with information to take away and feedback form with freepost reply
- Proactive media relations, including press briefings with the Bicester Advertiser, Bicester Review and BBC Radio Oxfordshire, resulting in strong coverage throughout the local area and wider region
- Closed exhibition session for residential and commercial tenants
- Closed exhibition session for elected members
- Creation and distribution of scheme newsletter including copy of draft masterplan
- Setting up of dedicated hotline phone number, e-mail and freepost address
- Continual engagement with commercial and residential tenants through written and verbal communications

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES – ROUND TWO

In total, over **250 people attended the exhibition**. Discussions were constructive and predominantly positive. Whilst residential tenants were anxious about their future, the majority were keen to engage and many realised the opportunities that existed through the allocation of a new home at Heyford Park.

In terms of comments received, a total of **21** attendees returned questionnaires. This was lower than hoped but perhaps reflected that the majority of attendees were satisfied by what they had heard and did not feel the need to engage further. A summary of comments is outlined below, together with a specific breakdown pertaining to each of the specific questions asked.

Summary of General Comments

General comments were varied and tended to be specific to the individual, making it difficult to draw out any clear trends.

A number of comments, especially from residential tenants, reflected a concern over the future and a need to ensure existing residential tenants were given priority in the allocation of new affordable homes. Other comments related to concerns over **mixing business and residential** areas to the North of the Camp Road, the **future of businesses** and the opportunity being missed to **develop Heyford Park further**.

Comments included:

'The current attractiveness of Heyford to businesses is the security of the premises and the space around the units for parking etc. It is critical that any future development does not lose site of this.'

'Thank you for taking the time to consult. It's been a hectic ride and I hope that at last we are seeing the start of a new, high quality, sustainable village in the very near future. I think that you should aim for houses of 'excellent' Ecohomes rating - you can do it! I would like to see as much public (pedestrian) access as possible across the site.'

'I am happy with the residential plans and that a lot of green areas will be provided. I am not happy with the businesses planned location - or the type of business that may be allowed to operate here.'

'I believe the design as proposed is both sensible and sympathetic to all concerns. CDC must support the continued presence of QEK and allow 40 acres minimum of car storage.'

'The planned residential area is in the wrong place. It should be in the SE of the airfield over the old mission huts/school area. Mixing residential and commercial properties is not a good idea.'

Summary of Comments to Specific Questions

(answers are expressed in total numbers as well as a percentage in recognition of the low return rate)

Six additional questions were added to the questionnaire to help focus attendees on specific aspects of the draft masterplan where it was important the NOC captured views and where comments could genuinely influence final decisions.

As well as sample comments, a basic statistical breakdown is given. However, it should be remembered that this has been a qualitative, rather than quantitative, exercise so does not easily lend itself to a simple statistical analysis.

Question One

'The NOC's plan seeks to further develop the vibrant residential settlement and successful business community at Heyford Park whilst ensuring its heritage is preserved. Do you think our plans will help achieve this?'

Yes – 48%/10

No – 9%/2

Modifications Needed – 43%/9

Comments included:

'Yes I think the plans are very good and take most things into account.'

'I believe it is wrong to inter mix business and residential areas, from a security and health & safety point of view.'

'A vibrant community needs a living space and good links with neighbouring communities. I believe that more should be made of the open space along the runways to encourage people to explore the wildlife surrounding them. Having employment opportunities within and alongside the community is essential and to be supported.'

'No - the business community areas planned is too close to residential settlement. Access to business area goes through a residential area.'

'Yes. Good design.'

Question Two

In line with Heyford Park's Conservation Area status, the NOC would preserve the majority of Cold War structures but, in keeping with advice from English Heritage, would like to let the majority of buildings/hardened aircraft hangars to businesses who will use them in a sympathetic way. We believe this helps ensure they are maintained and also creates sufficient income for the NOC to effectively maintain the heritage and ecologically sensitive areas of Heyford Park. What do you think?

Yes – 67%/14

No – 9%/2

Other – 24%/5

Comments included:

'I think its better for them to be used than to sit empty.'

'I agree with the buildings being let to bring in more jobs to the area.'

'Yes it is common sense to create revenue towards the upkeep of these buildings.'

'Sensible outcome. It would cost both financially and environmentally to remove many of the structures. To use them such as Datacare etc. at present is the correct decision.'

'Yes, provided the cold war structures are preserved in accordance with English Heritage's policies.'

Question Three

To create a long-term future for Heyford Park, the NOC has taken the difficult decision to demolish the majority of properties South of Camp Road. This is because of the need to upgrade roads, sewers/water, electricity/gas services, during which time occupation of properties would be impossible. Accordingly, the NOC has developed a new layout for the residential settlement, which it feels delivers a highly desirable living environment for both existing and future occupiers. What do you think?

For - 29%/5

Against – 9%/2

Shame, but understand – 29%/6

Other – 38%/8

Comments included:

'It's a shame so many properties have to be demolished, but the new properties look very well thought out.'

'It is sad the bungalows are to be demolished. Our only hope is that that new houses will not be rabbit warrens.'

'Yes I am in total agreement for your residential plans.'

'Not a good idea at all.'

'Correct decision. Most of the residential buildings are beyond their designed lifespan.'

'I think that mixing business and residential areas poses problems for families with children in the form of higher traffic due to deliveries.'

Question Four

The security fence to the South, and to the West adjacent to Upper Heyford, would be removed. Cherwell District Council also favours removal of the fence North of the airfield. However, the NOC favours retaining the fence here as this area would prove impossible to police and open access could encourage those with ill intentions to enter the site - increasing the risk of vandalism to Cold War buildings and adversely affecting the site's ecology, which has developed because of the lack of public access. This sits in direct conflict with the site's Conservation Area status. The NOC is considering a number of options including retaining the fence as is, retaining the fence but with removal of the barbed wire around non sensitive areas, or replacing the fence with a new one. What do you think?

Keep current fence – 62%/13

Put in new one – 9%2

Take it down – 14%/3

Other – 14%/3

Comments included:

'A fence is a fence. The existing fence should be left at the north side to save any unnecessary expense.'

'Your present proposals give the most manageable solution.'

'I think the fence should be replaced with something more aesthetically appealing. I believe this approach would soften the council's view to having the area as closed access.'

'Remove the security fencing and the site will be 'invaded' by all types of the wrong people. A very bad idea!'

'Hide but keep fence, plant hedges and trees.'

'Fencing OK, sound sense, plus make it into a "living fence" to encourage nature.'

'I think the fence should be removed and the site opened up to the public.'

Question Five

QEK provides jobs for 500 people, many of them local. Under plans from the NOC, QEK has agreed to reduce its car storage area from 62 to 40 acres over the next five years. Cars would also be moved to an area of the site where they are hard to see. Under plans from Cherwell, QEK would have to reduce its car storage area to 14 acres, which would mean their business is unviable and they would move away from Heyford Park completely. What do you think?

Should be given the space they need - 57%/12

Should move from Heyford Park - 14%/3

Other – 29%/6

Comments included:

'Everything possible must be done to keep business companies on the base.'

'It is important that QEK stay in Heyford as they are such a big employer.'

'If QEK can reduce the storage area, I feel it is better for them to be able to stay here.'

'QEK is recognised as one of Cherwell's major employers. It sources workforce from the local community and must be encouraged to stay. I can't see the problem with the usage as it is at present.'

'I do not believe that car storage is necessary or desirable in this location.'

'We thought NOC had bought all the site so what has the council's views got to do with this, surely NOC have the final decision - put your foot down and stand up to the council.'

'You need to secure the business otherwise Heyford will be a commuter town feeding Oxford, Banbury or surrounding area.'

Question Six

The NOC would like to create a Heritage Centre so residents and visitors to Heyford Park can learn about its history. It would also provide a meeting place where residents could drop in for something to eat or drink. The proposed Heritage Centre would be located near to the command centre, fronting Camp Road. Together with other nearby facilities, it would form part of Heyford Park's heart. From the Heritage Centre, managed tours would periodically be arranged to enable visitors to appreciate the full scale and past importance of the former Cold War airbase. Do you think this is a good idea?

Yes – 71%/15

No – 14%/3

Other – 14%/3

Comments included:

'I think it's a great idea. People should be able to see it and understand what the Cold War was all about.'

'Yes very good idea, it will keep something of the air base as there will not be a lot left.'

'Good idea.'

'First class proposal.'

'Yes, I think it would increase the sense of community and also may increase interest in the area.'

'Not really. What's the point.'

'I support a larger scale 'visitor' programme for this area.'

Conclusions

Thought and consideration had clearly been put into the answers of those who responded and comments were predominantly constructive. Based on responses the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The plan has been favourably received although further thought needs to be given to certain elements e.g. mixing business and residential areas to the North of Camp Road
- The majority of respondents want to see the buildings and aircraft hangars used for sympathetic business purposes
- There is general understanding why residential properties will have to be demolished but there is concern over the future and what will happen to residential tenants
- The majority of respondents feel the security fence to the North of the site should be kept
- The majority of respondents feel steps should be taken to ensure QEK remains at Heyford Park
- The majority of respondents feel the development of a Heritage Centre is a good idea

HOW THE NOC HAS CONSIDERED COMMENTS

- Regarding comments concerning mixing residential and commercial areas and risks to health and safety, the NOC looked again at this part of plan.

The reason for this mix was one of planning policy issue driven by Cherwell District Council. Health and safety was a prime consideration when designing this part of the scheme and the business area would be accessed via its own segregated entrance/exit, which does not pass through the residential district.

Whilst comments were noted, it was not felt that any changes to the plan were needed or possible under planning policy.

- Many who attended the exhibition felt that the buildings and hardened aircraft hangars should continue to be used sympathetically for business purposes - this was evidenced in the questionnaires that were returned and was a comment made anecdotally by a number of visitors to the exhibition. This has also been a subject of discussion throughout the consultation process and with over 20% of residents living and working on the base, the need to provide jobs for the local and surrounding community has been a priority.

Accordingly, the NOC is liaising with Cherwell District Council to find suitable tenants for all the buildings and aircraft hangars where sympathetic commercial use has been deemed appropriate. In many cases, this would simply mean retaining those businesses who already occupy the buildings.

- The demolition of the majority of existing residential properties has, quite understandably, dominated discussions with residents throughout the consultation process. It has been the subject of numerous meetings and has accounted for the vast majority of calls to the hotline. Whilst news of demolition was not unexpected, residents were clearly concerned about their future. Many wished to remain at Heyford Park and a priority for the NOC was to look at ways this could be achieved.

Accordingly, the NOC worked with Cherwell District Council to agree a Local Lettings Policy whereby existing residents would be given priority in the allocation of new affordable homes at Heyford Park. This was confirmed and communicated to all residents in the weeks following the exhibition and was welcomed by Heyford Park's residents.

- The security fence proved a point of contention with a number of residents. Some felt it was an eyesore that should be removed, allowing the airfield to be opened up to the public, whilst others felt it was important to retain because of the security it afforded and also that it was an integral part of Heyford Park's heritage.

Acknowledging all sides of the debate, it was decided that the fence would be removed to the East of the site around Aves Ditch (except around the Southern bomb store). Where the fence remains in other parts of the site, the barbed wire will be removed from the top and planting will minimise visual impact. However, it was determined that the barbed wire had to remain around the Northern bomb store and the QRA as these had been scheduled by English Heritage as Cold War monuments.

- A desire to see public access improved across the former airfield was a comment made by several visitors to the exhibition and by representatives from Oxfordshire County Council. Accordingly, the NOC is now working with Oxfordshire County Council to provide additional footpath links into Heyford Park.
- The idea of a Heritage Centre at Heyford Park to act as an education resource for both residents and visitors to the base received widespread support. Accordingly, the NOC's plan will have provision for a Heritage Centre in a former aircraft hangar close to the former Cold War Command Post.

KEY CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES – ROUND THREE

Introduction

Having considered the comments made during Round Two, Round Three represented an opportunity for the NOC to report back to the public and exhibit a more finalised version of the plan, which would ultimately be submitted to Cherwell District Council.

Whilst still looking to gather further feedback, the main objective of Round Three was to show how previous comments had been considered. Round Three ran from 11-14 September.

This section will explain how stakeholders were targeted through direct mail, adverts in the local press and a proactive media campaign to raise the profile of the exhibition.

1. Targeted correspondence with Key Stakeholders

- Letters were sent to all commercial tenants (the content to be communicated on to employees) and residential tenants updating them on progress since the previous exhibition and promoting the Round Three exhibition. Accompanying the letter was a summary of the results from the questionnaires returned following Round Two. (See *Appendix I*).
- Similar Letters were also sent to all key stakeholders who were invited to Round Two. These included:
 - *Officers and members at Cherwell District Council and local MP Tony Baldry*
 - *Representatives of Oxfordshire County Council*
 - *Representatives from the Government Office of the South East (GOSE)*
 - *Heyford and neighbouring Parish Councils*
 - *Local Business Groups*
 - *Representatives of the local print and broadcast media*

2. Advertisements in the Local Media

Prominent advertisements for the public exhibition were placed in both the Bicester Advertiser and Bicester Review. The advertisements appeared in both papers on Friday 31 August (just over one week ahead of the start of the exhibition), with a further advert in the Bicester Advertiser on Friday 7 September (*See Appendix III*).

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) will shortly submit its plans for Heyford Park

Following the public exhibition of its draft plan held in June, the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) will shortly be submitting its final plan for Heyford Park to Cherwell District Council.

The June exhibition provided an opportunity for members of the public to comment on the NOC's vision for the future of Heyford Park. These views have now been considered, together with those of other stakeholders, and the consortium is now preparing to submit its final plan to Cherwell District Council.

Before the submission takes place, and as part of the NOC's commitment to community consultation, there will be an opportunity to view the final plan at an exhibition that will take place at Heyford Park.

THE EXHIBITION WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER BETWEEN 2PM TO 8PM AT THE CHAPEL, HEYFORD PARK, OXFORDSHIRE.

If you cannot make this date, the exhibition will then move to **Heyford Park House** and will be open to the public on **Wednesday 12 September** from 2PM to 5PM, **Thursday 13 September** from 10AM to 1PM and on **Friday 14 September** from 2PM to 4PM.

Directions to the exhibition are available on request.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Heyford Park freephone Hotline on: **0800 988 9146** or e-mail: information@heyfordpark.co.uk

3. Proactive Media Relations

In the build up to the exhibition, a press release was sent out to all key print and broadcast media and press briefings were arranged during the week of the exhibition. Journalists from all key local print press, as well as local radio were invited to the exhibition. Articles appeared in the some of the key local papers, announcing the exhibition times.

Heyford homes plan on show

RESIDENTS are being reminded that plans to develop Heyford Park are now on show.

The North Oxfordshire Consortium is displaying its proposals for the former airbase at Heyford Park Hotel. The consortium will soon be submitting its plans for the site, which were first unveiled in June, to Cherwell District Council.

Members of the public can view them from 10am until 1pm today (Thursday) and from 2pm until 4pm tomorrow (Friday).

Air base plans

PLANS are to be submitted for a scheme to build 1,000 homes, shops, a primary school and a museum on the disused Upper Heyford air base. The North Oxfordshire Consortium Housing Group is preparing a planning application to put before Cherwell District Council. There will be an opportunity for local people to view the details of the scheme at an exhibition at Heyford Park Chapel, Upper Heyford, on Tuesday, from 2pm to 8pm.

Banbury Guardian, 13 September, 2007

Bicester Advertiser, 7 September, 2007

4. Public Exhibition to Showcase The Final Plan Ahead of Submission

An exhibition of the final plan ran from the 12-14 September – held at the Heyford Park Chapel on the 12 September and at Heyford Park House thereafter. This was designed to

communicate how comments from the previous exhibition had been considered and give the public an opportunity to view the final plan that would be submitted to Cherwell District Council.

Round three of the public consultation attracted over 70 people, with around 50 people attending on the first day. Everyone was given the opportunity to view the changes to the plans and, if necessary, ask members of the NOC team questions about the plans.

Feedback forms were also provided at the event offering people the chance to raise concerns or questions.

The feedback forms for the Round Three exhibition invited people to have their say on the scheme and raise any concerns they may have, rather than asking direct questions. It is worth noting that only a handful of these forms were completed.

The majority of the attendees of the exhibition were residents of Heyford Park. Many were pleased to hear about Cherwell's Local Lettings Policy (LLP) and appreciated the work done by the NOC to ensure that as many people as possible can stay on the base.

Five key areas were highlighted at the Round Three exhibition:

1. A number of comments were made about mixing residential and commercial areas, chiefly relating to concerns over health and safety.

The reason for this mix was a planning policy issue driven by Cherwell District Council. Health and safety was a prime consideration when designing this part of the plan and the business area would be accessed via its own segregated entrance/exit, which does not pass through the residential district.

Whilst comments were noted, it was not felt that any changes to the plan were needed or possible under planning policy.

2. Many who attended the first exhibition felt that the buildings and hardened aircraft hangars should continue to be used sympathetically for business purposes.

Accordingly, the NOC is liaising with Cherwell District Council to find suitable tenants for all the buildings and aircraft hangars where sympathetic commercial use has been deemed appropriate. In many cases, this would simply mean retaining those businesses who already occupy the buildings.

3. The security fence proved a point of contention with a number of residents. Some felt it was an eyesore that should be removed, allowing the airfield to be opened up to the public, whilst others felt it was important to retain because of the security it afforded and also that it was an integral part of Heyford Park's heritage.

Acknowledging all sides of the debate, it was decided that the fence would be removed to the East of the site around Aves Ditch (except around the Southern bomb store). Where the fence remains in other parts of the site, the barbed wire will be removed and planting will minimise visual impact. However, it was determined that the barbed wire had to remain around the Northern bomb store and the QRA as these had been scheduled by English Heritage as Cold War monuments.

4. A desire to see public access improved across the former airfield was a comment made by several visitors to the first exhibition and by representatives from Oxfordshire County Council.

Accordingly, the NOC is now working with Oxfordshire County Council to provide additional footpath links into Heyford Park.

5. The idea of a Heritage Centre at Heyford Park, to act as an education resource for both residents and visitors to the base, received widespread support. Accordingly, the NOC's plan will have provision for a Heritage Centre in a former aircraft hangar close to the Cold War Command Post.

The main questions raised by the residents were related to the time scales of potential demolition and the future commercial uses of the base. Some of the comments can be seen below:

Comments included:

"The plans look great. I've only lived here for a few days, but its really shaping for a bright future. Good luck with it."

"I hope this all goes through and we can just get on with it. I'm pleased to see that the hangars are being put to good use. It would be a real shame to not use them for something. I like the idea of the Heritage Centre. That will go good for school trips and things."

"I think the plans are good, but I'm not supportive of demolition the two bungalows in Trenchard Circle and the access doesn't quite look right to me."

A number of Cherwell District Council members and planning officers attended the event to view the final plans before they were submitted.

Following the exhibition, articles were printed in the Bicester Advertiser and the Oxford Mail, reporting the exhibition.

Public given glimpse of village proposals **FORMER AIRBASE PLANS ON SHOW**

VILLAGERS got a glimpse of how a new community consisting of 1,000 homes, a primary school and a museum would look during a public exhibition.

The North Oxfordshire Consortium housing group, which owns the former US airbase at Upper Heyford near Bicester, this week unveiled its latest plans for the 1,200-acre site.

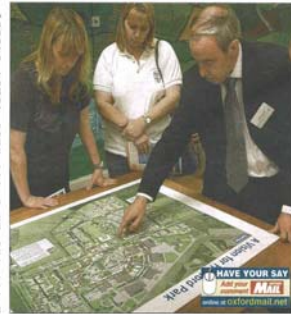
Chief executive Keith Watson said the consortium had made a few minor changes since the plans were first put on display to the public in June.

He said it had improved its plans for footpath links from the site to nearby villages and had provided more information about the mix of homes and business premises to the north of Camp Road.

Mr Watson said a heritage centre, possibly with a cafe or pub, would definitely be included in the plans after the site proved popular with the public.

He said: "We are looking to get one of the F111 planes on display. One of the former pilots now works in the Pentagon and has offered to look for one for us."

However, the consortium's



ON SHOW: Keith Watson, chief executive of the North Oxfordshire Consortium, explains plans for Upper Heyford to visitors.

By **Ellie Simmonds**

proposals fall to empty with conditions laid down in Cherwell District Council's latest planning blueprint for preserving the site's character.

These include the number of our journeys allowed to businesses in the old Cold War aircraft shelters and the amount of space used by our firm GQR.

Mr Watson said: "We have to avoid going to appeal if we can – it's obviously time and money – but if we can't resolve it, we will."

"We have had a very favourable response, better than we imagined but very positive."

"We are looking at it as a separate village."

"There will come a point where we will probably need to be a parish of our own."

Some 1,200 jobs are also included in the plans, about 300 more than the site currently offers.

The plans are due to be formally submitted to the district council on Friday, September 28.

If approved, work would begin on the site by late 2008.

ELLIE SIMMONDS writes for the Oxford Mail.

New plans for former airbase development unveiled

A glimpse of the future

VILLAGERS got a glimpse of how a new community of 1,000 homes, a primary school and a museum would look during a public exhibition.

The North Oxfordshire Consortium housing group, which owns the former Cold War US airbase at Upper Heyford near Bicester, this week unveiled its latest plans for the 1,200-acre site.

Chief executive Keith Watson said the firm had made a few minor changes since the plans were first put on display in June.

He said the firm had improved its plans for footpath links from the site to nearby villages and had provided more information about the mix of homes and business premises to the north of Camp Road.

Mr Watson said a heritage centre, possibly with a cafe or pub, would



PLANS: Keith Watson explains the plans to two interested visitors.

By **ELLIE SIMMONDS**

definitely be included in the plans after proving popular with the public.

He said: "We are hoping to get one of the F111 planes on display. One of the former pilots now works in the Pentagon and has offered to look for one for us."

The consortium's proposals also fail to comply with the conditions included in Cherwell's latest planning blueprint for preserving the site's character. These include the number of car journeys allowed to businesses in the old Cold War aircraft shelters and the amount of space used by our firm GQR.

Mr Watson said: "We have to avoid going to appeal if we can, it's obviously time and money – but if we can't resolve it we will."

"We have had a very favourable response. Better than we imagined but very positive."

"We are looking at it as a separate village. There will come a point where we will probably need to be a parish of our own."

Some 1,200 jobs are also included

Oxford Mail, 14 September, 2007

Bicester Advertiser, 14 September, 2007

The story of the public exhibition was also aired on BBC Radio Oxford on the Breakfast Show on 14 September 2007.

During the run up to the submission of the planning application, the NOC has continued to engage with stakeholders. Senior members of the development team have offered meetings with tenants and interested parties to discuss the proposals. The Heyford Park hotline (0800 988 9146) and email address (information@heyfordpark.co.uk) have been routinely monitored and enquires dealt with promptly.

Once the application has been submitted, the second of edition of Park View, the Heyford Park Newsletter will be drafted and sent out to all residents. This will help to inform all residents of the next steps in the planning process.

The NOC will also be writing to all stakeholders to inform them that the application has been submitted. A press release will also be drafted and issued to key local press contacts to inform them of the submission.

Ongoing communication and consultation will also continue with stakeholders at key milestones throughout the planning process, such as when a decision is made, through to, if appropriate, the construction process and beyond.

CONCLUSION

This has been a comprehensive programme of consultation. The NOC has proactively engaged with the residential and commercial communities of Heyford Park, together with additional key stakeholders, on a continuous basis.

Even allowing for the fact that part of the NOC's proposals require the demolition of the majority of existing residential properties, the mood within the community has remained broadly positive and optimistic. This stands testimony to the consortium's open and honest approach, which has been adopted throughout the consultation process and reflected in its communications, and willingness to listen to views and opinions. This is an approach that will continue as the redevelopment of Heyford Park progresses.

APPENDIX I - SAMPLE LETTERS

ROUND TWO

Letter Sent To Commercial Tenants (20 June) Regarding The Public Exhibition

Dear <insert name>,

As you are no doubt aware from previous communications, the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) has been working hard to develop its vision for Heyford Park.

This vision has been developed following extensive prior consultation with our commercial tenants and other key stakeholders and in line with our ongoing commitment to open dialogue and communication, we would like to invite you to an exhibition especially for our commercial tenants on **Thursday 28 June at the Heyford Park Chapel, between 12.00 and 18.00.**

The exhibition will provide a real opportunity for you to comment on our draft proposals. I will be on hand, together with Michael Loveland, representatives from our property agents Lambert Smith Hampton and other consultants, to answer your questions. Information will also be available on the NOC's proposed strategy for transport, the environment, commercial development and the preservation of Heyford Park's heritage.

Your views are important and will be considered before we finalise the proposals. We will then present them to the public prior to submission of a planning application to Cherwell District Council.

Maintaining a strong relationship with our existing commercial tenants is very important and we want to ensure you are part of the process of taking Heyford Park to the next stage in its development. We hope to see as many people attending the exhibition as possible.

For anyone who cannot make this date, we also have a further session on **Saturday 30 June, from 10.00 to 14.00**, which is open to everyone. Alternatively, please call the **Heyford Park Hotline on 0800 988 9146**, between 09.00 and 18.00, and we will make sure you are sent all relevant information after the exhibition. You can also call the hotline, or email information@heyfordpark.co.uk, with any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely



Keith Watson
North Oxfordshire Consortium

Letter Sent To Residential Tenants (14 June) Regarding 19 June Residents Meeting and Public Exhibition

Dear <insert name>

Thank you to everyone who was able to complete the 'housing needs' questionnaires that we circulated recently. We have a thriving residential community and it's been important for us to understand your long-term aspirations and whether you wish to remain at Heyford Park, in order that we can put forward a proposal to Cherwell District Council that best meets everyone's needs.

We have now had time to analyse the findings of this survey and with the benefit of other studies that have been taking place, we can now discuss in more detail NOC's proposals.

Therefore, we would like to invite all our residential tenants to a meeting on Tuesday 19 June that will take place at the Heyford Park Chapel at 7.00pm for a 7.15pm start and run until 8.30pm. This will provide you with an opportunity to be brought up to speed with the latest developments and Michael Loveland and I will be on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Having regard to the requirements of our existing residential tenants is a priority for NOC and we want to ensure you are part of the process of taking Heyford Park to the next stage in its development. We hope to see as many people at the meeting as possible and we will be making time available afterwards to talk to individual residents as required.

If you cannot make this date, please contact the **Heyford Park Hotline on 0800 988 9146**, between 09.00 and 18.00, and we will make sure you are sent all relevant information after the meeting. You can also call the hotline with any questions you may have.

As far as our overall proposals for Heyford Park are concerned, I would also like to use this opportunity to invite you to a public exhibition at the Heyford Park Chapel. This will provide all tenants with a real opportunity to comment on our draft proposals. Experts will be on hand to answer questions and information will be available on NOC's proposed strategy for transport, the environment, commercial development and the preservation of Heyford Park's heritage.

Your views are important and will be considered before we finalise the proposals. We will then present these to the public prior to submission of NOCs planning application to Cherwell District Council. The exhibition will take place at the **Heyford Park Chapel. On Thursday 28 June, from 18.30-20.30**, there will be an evening dedicated to our residential tenants. We will also be holding an open session on **Saturday 30 June, from 10.00-14.00, which you are warmly invited to.**

I look forward to seeing you.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Watson
North Oxfordshire Consortium

Letter Sent To Tony Baldry MP (17 June) Regarding 19 June Residents Meeting

Dear Tony,

I write to advise you of a meeting we are holding with the residential tenants of Heyford Park on the evening of Tuesday 19 June, which may generate a number of calls to your office.

The meeting will inform tenants that the vast majority of existing properties at Heyford Park will now be demolished as part of the plans to develop the site. Residents have long been aware that some demolition would be required but its extent is now greater than originally anticipated.

While we feel many tenants will understand why this decision has had to be made, and that we are doing everything in our power to help ensure they remain at Heyford Park, there is clearly the potential for some residents to feel aggrieved. Accordingly, I wanted to ensure you were fully informed of the situation and the facts that have led to this decision.

Included with this letter you will find a 'Question and Answer' handout that will be distributed to residents on the night of the 19 June. This will help explain why the decision for more extensive demolition has had to be made. The handout also explains how we are working with Cherwell District Council, who support the decision, to agree a Local Lettings Policy that will give priority to existing tenants in the allocation of new affordable homes at Heyford Park.

Ultimately, it is our intention to work towards a solution whereby all tenants who wish to remain at Heyford Park, and qualify for affordable housing, are re-homed on the site. A representative from Cherwell District Council will be attending on the 19 June and it is hoped they can give some reassurances in this area.

We firmly believe that our decision has the best interests of existing tenants and the long term future of Heyford Park at its heart and hope that after a degree of inevitable disappointment, the majority of tenants will also come to see this.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you in more detail and discuss any questions you may have, so please feel free to call my office at any time.

Yours faithfully,



Keith Watson
North Oxfordshire Consortium

Follow-Up Letter Sent To Residential Tenants (22 June) Following 19 June Meeting

Dear tenant,

Firstly, thank you to everyone who attended the tenants' meeting on Tuesday evening. As I said at the time, we are embarking on a long journey and Tuesday's meeting was the start of this process.

Moving forward, we very much want to have further meetings with our tenants, on a one-to-one basis if required, so we can discuss individual circumstances and look at the best options available to you. In the meantime, I wanted to write to you to clarify the key points from Tuesday's meeting and map out how we move forward from here.

As you know, over recent months the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) has been making good progress on developing its vision for Heyford Park and has moved closer to submitting a planning application to Cherwell District Council.

Currently, most buildings and homes at Heyford Park only have a temporary planning consent and for the majority of residential properties at Heyford Park this currently expires in 2010. The NOC's key objective is therefore to gain approval for a plan that will secure a long-term and sustainable future for Heyford Park and remove this uncertainty.

The NOC's plans to develop Heyford Park set out with the intention to retain as many of the existing properties/bungalows as possible, although some demolition was always inevitable.

However, over the last six months a number of important surveys and discussions with key stakeholders have been concluded. This has included work with the statutory service providers for gas waster and electricity about the supply of services to Heyford Park, with the County Council about the road network around the site and with Cherwell District Council about how affordable housing will be provided. More details are contained within the enclosed document, but to summarise:

- *The existing services infrastructure (e.g. water pipes and pumping stations, gas pipes and electricity substations) is approaching the end of its useful life. These facilities have always been privately managed by the NOC but as part of securing a long term future for Heyford Park this arrangement will have to change and the statutory service providers, who will take on the long-term management of these services, require completely new ones to be laid. The roads around Heyford Park are in a similar state and will also need to be dug up and re-laid to adoptable standards.*

It is neither practical nor viable for this work to be undertaken with the properties occupied as gas and electricity supplies would need to be suspended and vehicle access would be impossible for some considerable time, making continued occupation impossible.

- *Cherwell District Council's policy on affordable housing means affordable homes will need to be 'pepper potted' (i.e. scattered) throughout the development in small numbers. Whilst in itself this does not necessitate the need for demolition, it does mean that, even if the properties were retained, many existing tenants would still need to be relocated as very few of the existing properties could remain as 'affordable'.*

- *There has always been an underlying concern about the integration of existing properties with new build homes and the danger of creating a community within a community, which would clearly be undesirable for everyone who lived at Heyford Park. The NOC's latest proposals have been specifically designed with a fully inclusive and integrated community at its heart.*

With these considerations in mind, it has proved neither possible nor in the best interests of current tenants or the future of Heyford Park for the majority of residential properties to be retained. Accordingly, the decision has been made to demolish the majority of properties South of Camp Road (although some properties in Carswell Circle and Dow Street are likely to remain).

No demolition of bungalows would take place before 2010 so we have plenty of time to meet with everyone on a one-to-one basis to discuss individual needs.

Taking care of our existing residential tenants remains our priority and we are already exploring a number of options with Cherwell District Council, who will make final decisions in this respect, that we hope will give all tenants who wish to stay at Heyford Park the opportunity to do so. One option, which we hope to agree with Cherwell shortly, is a policy that would give existing residents priority in the allocation of new affordable homes on the site.

In the meantime, if you who wish to be considered for a new affordable home, **you need to complete an application form so you can be registered on Cherwell District Council's housing register**. To request an application form and to discuss how this process works in more detail, please call Cherwell District Council's Housing Enquiry line on **01295 22 1809** during normal office hours.

You will have a further opportunity to talk to representatives of the NOC at an exhibition dedicated to Heyford Park residents that will be held at the Chapel on **Thursday 28 June, from 18.30-20.30**. At the exhibition you will be able to see the NOC's proposed plan for Heyford Park and let us know your comments. These comments will then be considered before we submit a planning application to Cherwell District Council later in the summer. If you can't make this date, there will also be an open session on **Saturday 30 June, from 10.00-14.00**, which you are warmly invited to. Your views count and we hope to see you there.

If you have any questions, would like to arrange a meeting or simply want to talk something through, please contact the **Heyford Park Hotline on 0800 988 9146**.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Watson
North Oxfordshire Consortium

Letter Sent To Key Stakeholders (20 June) Regarding Public Exhibition

Dear <inset name>,

As you are no doubt aware, the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC), which is made up of leading housebuilders Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, has been working hard to develop its vision for Heyford Park.

We are committed to open dialogue and communication with all our stakeholders and accordingly would like to invite you to an exhibition on **Friday 29 June 2007 at the Heyford Park Chapel, between 18.30 and 20.30pm** to explain our vision for the future of the site.

I will be on hand, together with Michael Loveland and representatives from the development team to answer your questions. Information will also be available on the NOC's proposed strategy for transport, the environment, commercial development and the preservation of Heyford Park's heritage.

If you cannot make this date, we also have a further session on **Saturday 30 June, from 10.00 to 14.00**, which is open to everyone. Alternatively, please call the **Heyford Park Hotline on 0800 988 9146**, between 09.00 and 18.00, and we will make sure you are sent all relevant information after the exhibition. You can also call the hotline, or email information@heyfordpark.co.uk, with any questions you may have.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely



Keith Watson

North Oxfordshire Consortium

ROUND THREE

Letter sent to residential tenants (29 August) together with a summary of feedback from Round Two.

N.B. Slight variations of this letter were also sent to commercial tenants and other key stakeholders

Dear tenant,

Thank you to everyone who attended our June exhibition of the draft plans for Heyford Park. With over 230 attendees from the local and surrounding community, we were pleased so many of you took time out to come and express your views.

Over the last eight weeks we've been considering all the comments received during this consultation period and making amendments to the draft plans ready for submission to Cherwell District Council during September (a summary of feedback based on the questionnaires returned from the exhibition is enclosed with this letter).

Ahead of this, we'd like to invite you to a further exhibition that will give you the opportunity to view the final plans we will be submitting (copies of these plans are enclosed and include a plan covering the entire site as well as a detailed plan specifically of the residential area). The exhibition will take place at the **Heyford Park Chapel and will be held on Tuesday 11th September from 2.00pm to 8.00pm.**

If you are unable to make this date, the exhibition will then move to **Heyford Park House on Wednesday 12th September from 2.00pm to 5.00pm, Thursday 13th September from 10.00am to 1.00pm and Friday 14th September from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.**

Once the plan is submitted there will be a further 16 week statutory consultation period where you can register your views directly with Cherwell District Council. To find out more, you can **contact the Council on 01295 252535.**

Overall, the June exhibition was very positive with much constructive discussion. The commercial and residential tenants of Heyford Park were broadly welcoming of development and appreciated why it had to take place.

Residential tenants were understandably keen to find out more about how the plans for development would affect them and what the future held. With regards to this, we are pleased that **Cherwell District Council has now agreed a Local Lettings Policy.**

The policy will give priority to applicants with a housing need who have existing connections to Heyford Park. However, to be considered as part of this Local Lettings Policy, it is vital that residential tenants register on the Council's housing register as soon as possible. Application forms can be obtained by calling the **Housing Department at Cherwell District Council on 01295 221 809.**

This represents a positive step forward for our existing tenants. However, residents will only be considered if they have registered on the Council's housing register.

Many of our commercial tenants who attended the exhibition expressed their support for the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) and their desire to remain at Heyford Park. We are continuing to liaise with Cherwell District Council and we hope a way can be found to accommodate all those commercial tenants who wish to stay in a manner that is acceptable to them and their business needs.

Please have a look through the information we've enclosed. **If you have any questions or comments**, you can contact us by calling the **Heyford Park Hotline on 0800 988 9146**, e-mailing us at information@heyfordpark.co.uk or writing to us at Freepost RPKG-AZTG-JLJX Camargue Eagle Tower, Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA.

I hope to see you at the exhibition.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Watson
Tenant Liaison and PR Manager

- Heyford Park - Feedback from Exhibition

In total, 21 questionnaires were completed and returned. Below is a summary of the responses. The totals are expressed as a percentage and also as an actual number of respondents.

1. We asked you:

'The NOC's plan seeks to further develop the vibrant residential settlement and successful business community at Heyford Park whilst ensuring its heritage is preserved. Do you think our plans will help achieve this?'

You told us:

Yes – 48%/10

No – 9%/2

Further work needed – 43%/9

You said:

'Yes I think the plans are very good and takes most things into account.'

'I believe it is wrong to inter mix business and residential areas, from a security and health & safety point of view.'

'No - the business community area planned is too close to residential settlement. Access to business area goes through a residential area.'

'Yes. Good design.'

'A good start, but more houses required if this is to be a vibrant community.'

How we've considered your views:

We looked again at the mix of business and residential areas to the North of Camp Road - the reason for this mix being one of planning policy issue driven by Cherwell District Council. One of the main concerns related to safety and concerns over traffic.

We can confirm that access to the business area would be via its own segregated entrance/exit, which does not pass through the residential district. The health and safety of everyone at Heyford Park is of prime importance and businesses would not be allowed to operate in this area if it was felt their activities put residents at risk.

2. We asked you:

'In line with Heyford Park's Conservation Area status, the NOC would preserve the majority of Cold War structures but, in keeping with advice from English Heritage, would like to let the majority of buildings/hardened aircraft hangars to businesses who will use them in a sympathetic way. We believe this helps ensure they are maintained and also creates sufficient income for the NOC to effectively maintain the heritage and ecologically sensitive areas of Heyford Park. What do you think?'

You told us:

Yes – 67%/14

No – 9%/2

Other – 24%/5

You said:

'I think its better for them to be used than to sit empty.'

'I agree with the buildings being let to bring in more jobs to the area.'

'Yes it is common sense to create revenue towards the upkeep of these buildings.'

'Sensible outcome. It would cost both financially and environmentally to remove many of the structures. To use them such as Datacare etc. at present is the correct decision.'

How we've considered your views:

We are liaising with Cherwell District Council and suitable tenants will be found for all the buildings and aircraft hangers where sympathetic commercial use has been deemed appropriate. Of course, many buildings and hangers are already occupied by such businesses and we are working with these tenants to help secure their long term future at Heyford Park.

3. We asked you:

'To create a long-term future for Heyford Park, the NOC has taken the difficult decision to demolish the majority of properties South of Camp Road. This is because of the need to upgrade roads, sewers and water, electricity and gas services, during which time occupation of properties would be impossible. Accordingly, the NOC has developed a new layout for the residential settlement (as illustrated in the NOC plan of the residential settlement), which it feels delivers a highly desirable living environment for both existing and future occupiers. What do you think?'

You told us:

For - 29%/5 Against – 9%/2 Shame, but understand – 29%/6 Other – 38%/8

You said:

'It's a shame so many properties have to be demolished, but the new properties look very well thought out.'

'It is sad the bungalows are to be demolished. Our only hope is that that new houses will not be rabbit warrens.'

'Not a good idea at all.'

'Correct decision. Most of the residential buildings are beyond their designed lifespan.'

'Acceptable provided existing tenants are rehoused on site whilst rebuilding takes place.'

How we've considered your views:

We understand that whilst some degree of demolition was expected, this news will still have come as a shock to many residents. The good news is that that Cherwell District Council has now agreed a Local Lettings Policy.

The policy will give priority to applicants with a housing need who have existing connections to Heyford Park. This represents a positive step forward for our existing tenants.

4. We asked you:

'The security fence to the South, and to the West adjacent to Upper Heyford, would be removed. Cherwell District Council also favours removal of the fence North of the airfield. However, the NOC favours retaining the fence here as this area would prove impossible to police and open access could encourage those with ill intentions to enter the site - increasing the risk of vandalism to Cold War buildings and adversely affecting the site's ecology, which has developed because of the lack of public access. This sits in direct conflict with the site's Conservation Area status. The NOC is considering a number of options including retaining the fence as is, retaining the fence but with removal of the barbed wire around non sensitive areas, or replacing the fence with a new one. What do you think?'

You told us:

Keep current fence - 62%/13 New one - 9%/2 Take down - 14%/3 Other - 14%/3

You said:

'A fence is a fence. The existing fence should be left at the north side to save any unnecessary expense.'

'I think the fence should be replaced with something more aesthetically appealing. I believe this approach would soften the council's view to having the area as closed access.'

'Remove the security fencing and the site will be 'invaded' by all types of the wrong people. A very bad idea!'

'Hide but keep fence, plant hedges and trees.'

'I think the fence should be removed and the site opened up to the public.'

How we've considered you views:

We recognise that tenants, particularly businesses, enjoy the security the fence provides. However, we also understand many feel the fence is an eyesore. Accordingly, the fence will be removed East of Aves Ditch except around the Southern bomb store. Where the fence remains in other parts of the site, the barbed wire will be removed from the top and planting will minimise visual impact. The barbed wire will remain around the Northern bomb store and the QRA as these have been scheduled by English Heritage as Cold War monuments.

To help improve access by foot, we are working with Oxfordshire County Council to provide footpath links into Heyford Park.

5. We asked you:

'QEK provides jobs for 500 people, many of them local. Under plans from the NOC, QEK has agreed to reduce its car storage area from 62 to 40 acres over the next five years. Cars would also be moved to an area of the site where they are hard to see. Under plans from Cherwell, QEK would have to reduce its car storage area to 14 acres, which would mean their business is unviable and they would move away from Heyford Park completely. What do you think?'

You told us:

Should be given the space they need - 57%/12

Should move from Heyford Park - 14%/3

Other – 29%/6

You said:

'Everything possible must be done to keep business companies on the base.'

'It is important that QEK stay in Heyford as they are such a big employer.'

'If QEK can reduce the storage area, I feel it is better for them to be able to stay here.'

'QEK is recognised as one of Cherwell's major employers. It sources workforce from the local community and must be encouraged to stay. I can't see the problem with the usage as it is at present.'

'I do not believe that car storage is necessary or desirable in this location.'

'You need to secure the business otherwise Heyford will be a commuter town feeding Oxford, Banbury or surrounding areas.'

How we've considered your views:

We are liaising with Cherwell District Council and hope a solution can be reached which is acceptable to QEK and will allow the business to continue to operate at Heyford Park.

6. We asked you:

'The NOC would like to create a Heritage Centre so residents and visitors to Heyford Park can learn about its history. It would also provide a meeting place where residents could drop in for something to eat or drink. The proposed Heritage Centre would be located near to the command centre, fronting Camp Road. Together with other nearby facilities, it would form part of Heyford Park's heart. From the Heritage Centre, managed tours would periodically be arranged to enable visitors to appreciate the full scale and past importance of the former Cold War airbase. Do you think this is a good idea?'

You told us:

Yes – 71%/15

No – 14%/3

Other – 14%/3

You said:

'I think it's a great idea. People should be able to see it and understand what the Cold War was all about.'

'Yes very good idea, it will keep something of the air base as there will not be a lot left.'
'Good idea.'

'First class proposal.'

'Yes, I think it would increase the sense of community and may increase interest in the area.'

'Not really. What's the point.'

How we've considered your views:

The plan we are submitting to Cherwell District Council will include a proposal for a Heritage Centre that would be housed in a former aircraft hangar close to the former Cold War Command Post.

-ends-

APPENDIX II – Q&A DOCUMENT

Question And Answer Document Handed Out At 19 June Meeting And Door Dropped To All Residential Tenants

- Heyford Park – Residents ‘Question & Answer’ Handout – 19 June, 2007

*We hope this document helps answer many of your key questions but please feel free to call the Heyford Park hotline on **0800 988 9146**, between the hours of 09.00-18.00, e-mail us at information@heyfordpark.co.uk or write to us at Freepost RPKG-AZTG-JLJX, Camargue Eagle Tower, Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA with any further questions you may have or to arrange a meeting.*

The following questions are based on the assumption that the schemes we are proposing will receive planning consent. We are hoping to submit our plans in August.

Q. *Is my property one of those that needs to be demolished?*

A. Apart from some properties in Carswell Circle and Dow Street, all properties South of Camp Road will be demolished – this represents the vast majority of residential properties at Heyford Park. If you are in any doubt, please call the hotline.

Q. *Why is there a need to demolish the majority of the existing properties?*

A. The North Oxfordshire Consortium’s (NOC) original intention had been to retain as many of the existing properties as possible, although some demolition was always anticipated.

However, there are a number of reasons why the decision to undertake more extensive demolition has had to be made, many of which have only recently come to light as a result of detailed surveys and discussions with statutory service providers and Cherwell District Council.

- The existing services infrastructure (e.g. water pipes and pumping stations, gas pipes and electricity substations) that supply these properties are coming to the end of their useful life.

As it stands, these services are not up to ‘adoptable standards’, which means the statutory service providers (e.g. British Gas) would not be prepared to take on and pay for their ongoing maintenance and repair. All service providers require completely new services to be laid.

The roads around Heyford Park are in a similar state and are also not up to 'adoptable standards'.

Put simply, this means that all the gas, water, drainage and electricity services will need to be re-laid and, in addition, all the roads dug up and re-laid.

This work cannot be undertaken with the properties occupied as gas, electricity and water supplies would need to be suspended for some considerable time, and there would be no vehicle access to properties.

- Cherwell District Council's policy on affordable housing means affordable homes will need to be 'pepper potted' (i.e. scattered) throughout the development in small numbers. Whilst in itself this does not necessitate the need for demolition, it does mean that, even if the properties were retained, many existing tenants would still need to be relocated as very few of the existing properties could remain as 'affordable'.
- There has always been an underlying concern about the integration of existing properties with new build homes and the danger of creating a community within a community. This would clearly be undesirable for everyone who lived at Heyford Park.

All of the factors listed above, when considered together, have led the NOC to decide that retaining the majority of existing properties South of Camp Road is neither possible nor in the best interests of current tenants or Heyford Park's long-term future.

Q. *When will the existing properties be demolished?*

A. No demolition of the existing bungalows is planned before 2010. Temporary planning permission currently requires a phased vacation of the properties from 2008. Although this may be extended we will need to look at a phased work programme.

This gives the NOC and its residential tenants time to meet and discuss options and work towards a best possible solution for all tenants.

Q. *Will I get a new home?*

A. There are a number of options being proposed for the site as part of the plans. This includes housing to buy, low cost home ownership options (where a share in the house can be bought) and social rented housing.

The NOC and Cherwell District Council are doing everything they can to try and ensure all those who wish to stay at Heyford Park, and qualify for affordable housing, are given the opportunity of a new affordable home on the site.

Ultimately, all decisions regarding the allocation of affordable homes will be made by Cherwell District Council. The NOC is liaising with Cherwell District Council and hopes a policy can be agreed whereby existing residents, who qualify, are given priority in the allocation of new affordable homes at Heyford Park.

Q. How do I apply for a new home?

You will be able to apply for an affordable home at Heyford Park by completing an application form and registering on the housing register. The council maintains a housing register of everyone wanting to apply for affordable housing in the district and has an allocations policy which provides a framework for assessing housing needs, priority and determining who will be put forward to the providers of the housing in the district.

To request an application form and to discuss how this process works in more detail, please call Cherwell District Council's Housing Enquiry line on **01295 22 1809** during normal office hours.

Q. When will I have my new home?

It is difficult to predict exact times at this stage but for those residents who remain at Heyford Park, new homes will be ready for occupation before any demolition of existing properties begins.

Q. What's my home going to look like and how big will it be?

Cherwell District Council has determined the housing mix, e.g. the different sizes of property available, for affordable homes at Heyford Park. From this mix, and following discussions with individual tenants who qualify, a suitable property would be allocated.

In terms of house designs, this is something the NOC and its architects are working on and more information will be available in due course.

The NOC remains fully committed to its existing tenants and will keep all residents fully informed throughout this process. We are also keen to meet with tenants on an individual basis to discuss options and identify the best course of action for them.

-ends-

APPENDIX III – Press Adverts

Round Two – Published in the Bicester Review and Bicester Advertiser (22 June)

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) Unveils its Vision for Heyford Park

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC), made up of leading housebuilders Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, will shortly be unveiling its draft plans for the development of a new sustainable community at Heyford Park.

The NOC's vision for Heyford Park is designed to take the former air base into the next stage of its lifecycle by creating a permanent sustainable settlement that ensures its existing commercial and residential communities continue to thrive. It also strikes a balance between respecting and preserving the site's heritage whilst looking to the needs of the future.

As part of its commitment to community consultation, the NOC would like to invite local residents and interested parties to attend a public exhibition to view its draft proposals and feed back comments.

THE EXHIBITION WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY 30 JUNE BETWEEN 10AM AND 2PM, THE CHAPEL, HEYFORD PARK, OXFORDSHIRE.
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE AND LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR VIEWS.

In the meantime, if you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the Heyford Park hotline on: **0800 988 9146** or email: **Information@heyfordpark.co.uk**

Round Three – Published in the Bicester Review (31 August) and the Bicester Advertiser (31 August, 7 September)

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

The North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) will shortly submit its plans for Heyford Park

Following the public exhibition of its draft plan held in June, the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) will shortly be submitting its final plan for Heyford Park to Cherwell District Council.

The June exhibition provided an opportunity for members of the public to comment on the NOC's vision for the future of Heyford Park. These views have now been considered, together with those of other stakeholders, and the consortium is now preparing to submit its final plan to Cherwell District Council.

Before the submission takes place, and as part of the NOC's commitment to community consultation, there will be an opportunity to view the final plan at an exhibition that will take place at Heyford Park.

THE EXHIBITION WILL TAKE PLACE ON TUESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER BETWEEN 2PM TO 8PM AT THE CHAPEL, HEYFORD PARK, OXFORDSHIRE.

If you cannot make this date, the exhibition will then move to **Heyford Park House** and will be open to the public on **Wednesday 12 September** from 2PM to 5PM, **Thursday 13 September** from 10AM to 1PM and on **Friday 14 September** from 2PM to 4PM.

Directions to the exhibition are available on request.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Heyford Park freephone Hotline on: **0800 988 9146** or e-mail: **information@heyfordpark.co.uk**

APPENDIX IV – PRESS COVERAGE

Sample Of Press Coverage Promoting The Public Exhibition

Homes show

LOCAL people can view plans for 1,000 new houses on the former American airbase at Upper Heyford next weekend.

The exhibition at Heyford Park Chapel will give residents the chance to have their say on the proposals, which will also include a primary school and several shops.

A group of three housing developers, known as The North Oxfordshire Consortium, is organising the event to gather opinion before it submits a planning application for the site later this year.

The exhibition will take place on Saturday, June 30, between 10am and 2pm.

1,000 homes plan on show

UPPER HEYFORD: Members of the public can view plans for 1,000 new houses on the former American airbase on Saturday.

The exhibition, at Heyford Park Chapel, will give people the chance to have their say on the proposals, which also include a primary school and several shops.

A group of three housing developers, known as The North Oxfordshire Consortium, is organising the event to gather opinion before it submits a planning application later this year.

The exhibition will take place between 10am and 2pm.

Views are sought over plans

A CONSORTIUM which is planning to build new homes on the former RAF base at Upper Heyford is asking the public for its views.

Heyford Park was used by the United States Air Force until 1994, and is surrounded by 300 former military homes and supports about 70 businesses employing over 1,000 people.

The North Oxon Consortium, which is made up of several leading house builders, now hopes to build 700 homes on the site and give the businesses a more sustainable future.

This week they have invited members of the local authorities to view their proposals and are holding a public display of plans at the Chapel in Heyford Park tomorrow, Saturday.

Chairman of the NOC, Keith Watson, said: "This presentation is a chance for local people to see where the plans are at the moment and where we intend to go with them as we work towards the planning application."

Mr Watson said he hoped the application would be with planning officers by the end of August.

Chairman of Upper Heyford Parish Council, Ian Lough-Scott said: "We have been talking about the future of Heyford Park for 15 years. While there has been some disagreement we are generally satisfied with the proposals and the consultation, which, most importantly, included the existing residents."

Last year English Heritage declared much of the base a conservation area and many of its buildings are now protected as buildings of historical interest. It is hoped the new plans will strike a balance between preserving the base's heritage while giving the chance for businesses to thrive.

Bicester Advertiser, 22 June

Oxford Mail, 27 June

Bicester Review, 29 June

Sample of Coverage Following Press Briefings Held During Public Exhibition

EX-AIRBASE PLANS ARE UNVEILED

But the existing US-built homes will have to go

Plans to transform a disused airbase into a new village, with 1,000 houses, a primary school, museum and shops, have been unveiled. But the latest proposals for the Upper Heyford base, near Bicester, mean almost all the existing 300 American-built bungalows will be knocked down.

The poor condition of the site's roads, sewers and gas mains prompted developers to drop their original plan of keeping the houses because local authorities were not prepared to adopt the infrastructure.

By ELLIE SIMMONDS

A housing group known as the North Oxfordshire Consortium owns the 1,250-acre site and hopes to submit a formal planning application in August.

NOC chairman Kevin Shelley said: "We have got to rip out and replace. We can't do that in the midst of an existing housing estate. "It would make life



North Oxfordshire Consortium chief executive Keith Watson unveils plans for 1000 homes on site of former USAF base at Upper Heyford at a public exhibition

intolerable for the residents and give us all sorts of health and safety issues. So we have taken the difficult decision to say it would be better to replace everything with new housing."

Mr Shelley said of the 1,000 new houses, 300 would be affordable housing, meaning there would be enough, in theory, to accommodate all the current residents. But he said the size of

the new housing for rent and how much priority was given to existing tenants would be determined by Cherwell District Council.

Mr Shelley said his firm was working on a

local lettings policy for the site, which would give existing residents priority, provided they meet means-based criteria.

If Cherwell fails to back the idea, then

current tenants would have to compete with the 2,500 other people on its housing waiting list, he added.

Mr Shelley said: "If the local lettings policy gets approved and they

quality to achieve that we will guarantee that we won't make anybody homeless."

And he added he had offered support to residents and urged them to join Cherwell's housing list.

The consortium's proposals also fail to comply with strict conditions included in Cherwell's latest planning blueprint for the site.

These include the number of car journeys allowed to businesses now located in the old Cold War aircraft shelters and the amount of space used by car firm Q&A.

Mr Shelley said: "We are going to support our tenants. Our application will be in conflict with Cherwell District Council and it will be tested through the planning process. If they refuse it, we will have the choice whether or not to take it to appeal."

Some 1,300 jobs are also included in the plans - about 300 more than the site currently offers.

The consortium's chief executive, Keith Watson, added a heritage centre would be created for people to learn about the site's history as an American airbase used during the Cold War.

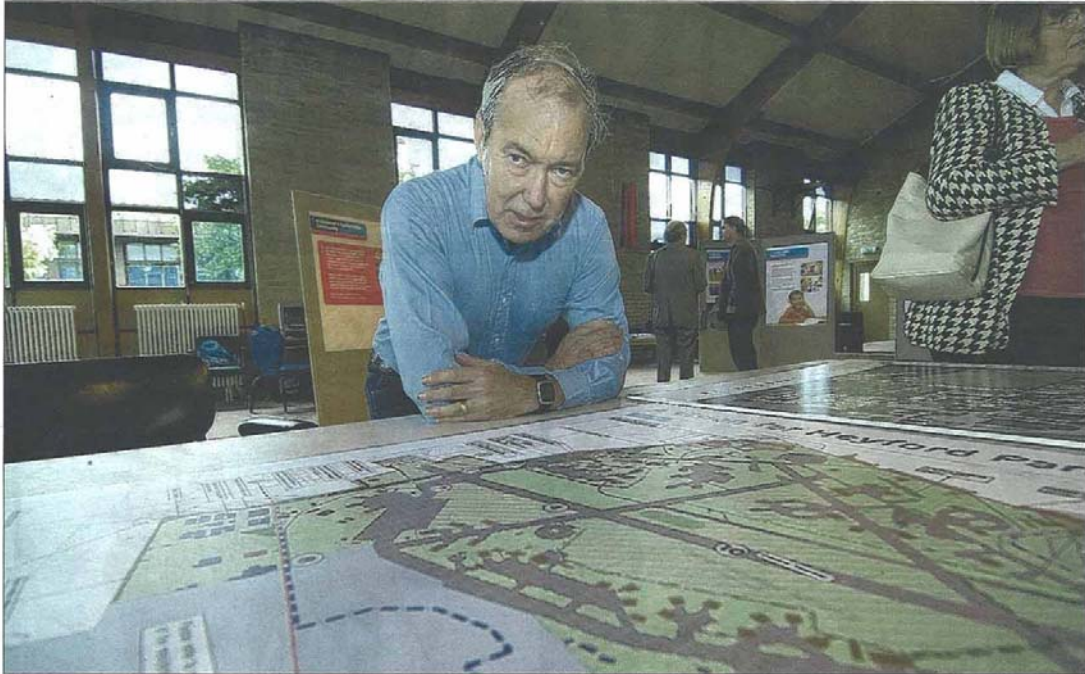
He said he hoped an F111 jet could be put on display to remind visitors of the airbase's past.

If the plans get the thumbs up, work could begin on the site by late 2008.



Bicester Advertiser, 6 July 2007

US bungalows to be demolished under plans



AMBITIOUS: Keith Watson, chief executive of the North Oxfordshire Consortium at the exhibition Picture: Damian Halliwell Order No. 300607768 oxfordmail.net/photosales

BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW VILLAGE

PLANS to transform the former US Air Force base at Upper Heyford into a new village with 1,000 houses, a primary school, museum and shops have been unveiled.

But the latest proposals for the site near Bicester mean almost all the

By Ellie Simmonds
Bicester Reporter

existing 300 American-built bungalows will be knocked down.

The poor condition of the housing area's roads, sewers and gas mains has prompted the developers to drop their original plan to retain the homes because councils and utility companies were not prepared to adopt the infrastructure.

The North Oxfordshire Consortium, made up of Wimpey Homes, Taywood Homes and Westbury Homes, owns the 1,250-acre site and hopes to submit a formal planning application in August.

The group staged an exhibition at Heyford Park Chapel on Saturday to give residents a chance to find out more about its proposals.

NOC chairman Kevin Shelley said: "We have got to rip out and replace, and we can't do that in the midst of an existing housing estate."

Patricia Kirby, chairman of Heyford Park Residents' Association, said the announcement that the existing houses would be demolished had shocked and angered a lot of people. "We all love living here," she said.

Mr Shelley said that of the 1,000 new houses, 300 would be affordable housing, meaning there would be enough in theory to accommodate all the current residents.

But he said the amount of new housing for rent would be decided by Cherwell District Council.

Mr Shelley said the consortium was working on a local lettings policy for the site, which would give existing residents priority, provided they met means-based criteria.

If Cherwell failed to back the idea, current tenants would have to compete with the 3,500 other people on the district's housing waiting list, he added.

Mr Shelley said: "If the local lettings policy gets approved and they qualify to achieve that, we will

guarantee that we won't make anybody homeless."

The consortium's proposals also fail to comply with strict conditions included in Cherwell's latest planning guidelines for the site.

These include the number of car journeys allowed to businesses now based in the former aircraft shelters and the amount of space used by car storage and distribution firm QEK.

Mr Shelley said: "Our application will be in conflict with Cherwell District Council and it will be tested through the planning process. If they refuse it, we will have the choice whether to take it to appeal."

Some 1,300 jobs are also included, about 300 more than at present.

The consortium's chief executive Keith Watson added a heritage centre would be created for people to learn about the site's history as an American airbase during the Cold War.

If the plans are approved, work could begin late next year.

bicester@nqc.com

'We have got to rip out and replace and we can't do that in the midst of an existing housing estate'

Oxford Mail, 3 July 2007

Some 1,000 homes could be built at Upper Heyford

Plan unveiled for village on disused base

By **ELLIE SIMMONDS**

bicester@nqo.com

PLANS to transform a former Oxfordshire airbase into a new village with 1,000 houses, a primary school, museum and shops have been unveiled.

But the latest proposals for the former Upper Heyford base near Bicester mean almost all the existing 300 American-built bungalows will be knocked down.

The poor condition of the site's roads, sewers and gas mains prompted developers to drop their original plan of keeping the houses that make up the Heyford Park community.

A housing group known as the North Oxfordshire Consortium (NOC) owns the 1,250-acre site and hopes to submit a formal planning application in August.

NOC chairman Kevin Shelley said: "We have got to rip out and replace and we can't do that in the midst of an existing housing

estate. It would make life intolerable for the residents and give us all sorts of health and safety issues. So we have taken the difficult decision really to say we would be better replacing it with new housing."

Mr Shelley said of the 1,000 new houses, 300 would be affordable housing, meaning there would be enough in theory to accommodate all the current residents.

But he said the amount of the new housing for rent and how much priority was given to existing tenants would be determined by Cherwell District Council.

Mr Shelley said his firm was working on a local lettings policy for the site, which would give existing residents priority, provided they meet means-based criteria.

If Cherwell fails to back the idea, then current tenants would have to compete with the 3,500 other people on its housing waiting list, he added.

Mr Shelley said if the local lettings policy was approved and people qualified, the consortium

would guarantee no one would be made homeless.

Patricia Kirby, chairman of Heyford Park Residents' Association, said: "A lot of people are very upset. People are beginning to not trust what they're told."

Mrs Kirby, who lives in a two-bedroom bungalow, said: "The bungalows are really spacious. We have got huge gardens and are not overlooked. I would be eligible for a one-bedroom flat.

"I will lose my garden, my space and my current spare room. So not only are we going to lose our homes, we are going to lose our lifestyles too.

"Some people have been here ten years, communities are established and people have relatives living nearby. It's going to be a big upheaval."

The consortium's chief executive Keith Watson added a heritage centre would be created for people to learn about the site's history as an American Cold War airbase.

If the plans are approved, work could begin on the site by late 2008.

Oxford Times, 6 July 2007

APPENDIX V – NEWSLETTER

Copy of Newsletter Distributed at Public Exhibition



BUSINESSES THAT NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Heyford Park is home to around 50 commercial tenants who generate some 1,000 jobs for the local community and wider area. Just over 20 per cent of residents work at Heyford Park. Attracted by its location and facilities on offer, many of Heyford Park's commercial tenants have enjoyed significant success over recent years and have expanded into more or larger premises on the site. Ensuring this business community continues to flourish will be key to ensuring the sustainability of Heyford Park in the future.

A Selection of Heyford Park's Key Tenants:

Thames Valley Police (TVP)

Thames Valley Police (TVP) undertakes a variety of essential officer training at Heyford Park. This includes public order training, advanced car handling and firearms.

Public order training is where officers experience the finer points of crowd control. Inside one of the aircraft hangars the interior of a house has been replicated to allow officers to experience occupant control in confined spaces. Dog handling also forms part of this training and, as with the officers, ensures these canine companions are fully prepared when it comes to the real thing.

Firearms training also takes place on the site. Although no live rounds are ever used, the tactics and strategies that can be tested at Heyford Park in these simulated exercises ultimately saves lives.

QEK

QEK is about far more than storing cars, in fact, with over 500 staff it is one of the largest employers in the area, providing invaluable logistical services to the motor industry and

making a significant contribution to the local economy. One of the services QEK offers is to provide cars for VIPs, who need dependable transport. QEK even has MIS security clearance to supply cars to the Royal Family.

QEK has an established relationship with a number of colleges in the area and regularly holds open days which enable pupils to gain an insight into the QEK business and job opportunities in this sector.

Datacare

Datacare has over 25 years experience in delivering storage solutions for high profile organisations such as health trusts, major financial institutions, the pharmaceutical industry and government departments.

Datacare employs just over 30 people, predominantly from within the local community, and has plans to double this number over the next year. One of the company's main clients is the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust for whom Datacare manages over 750,000 patient records.

Despite the contribution to the local economy, the number of jobs companies like QEK and Datacare provide and the vital training that is undertaken by TVP, all three tenants are being forced to consider relocating away from Heyford Park. This is because of restrictions being made by Cherwell District Council. TVP would have to relocate from the building it currently occupies as well as scale down, or stop completely, the training it undertakes outside on the runways.

James Clements, spokesperson for **Thames Valley Police**, comments: 'The training provided at Heyford Park is vital for our officers in preparing them for real life situations. Given Heyford Park's past, the fact we use buildings and the runway to provide training for our officers seems entirely fitting. The current situation with Cherwell District Council means we are already having to look elsewhere for premises as we cannot risk this vital training being put in jeopardy.'

QEK has continually reduced the number of cars it keeps on the base. Originally, QEK stored around 15,000 cars whilst today this has been reduced to 9,500. In five years time, this will be reduced to 7,500 cars.

However, QEK has been told by Cherwell District Council that it must reduce the size of its outdoor car storage area in five years time to just 14 acres, providing room for approximately 2000 cars – this is not sufficient for the business to continue at Heyford Park.

English Heritage has no objections to QEK operating at Heyford Park and independent studies have concluded that the visual intrusion posed by QEK's vehicles was limited as the vast majority of cars are stored in low lying areas of the site.

Mark Wilkinson, spokesperson for QEK, comments: 'Heyford Park is an ideal location for our business. QEK's flexibility has allowed us to grow in a way that is sympathetic to Heyford Park's heritage. It would be a great shame if we had to part company.'

In the case of **Datacare**, vehicle access to the Quick Response Area (QRA) part of the site would be restricted to just two journeys, per building, per day. These restrictions are severe and would make it completely impossible to run a viable business.

Jon Clarke, Managing Director of Datacare, comments: 'Datacare and Heyford Park are a perfect match. Indeed, English Heritage has described Datacare as an 'ideal tenant' for Heyford Park. We are at a loss as to why Cherwell District Council is making it so hard for us to stay.'

CONTACT US...

To show your support, please call our hotline number 0800 988 9146 (between the hours of 09.00 – 18.00, week days) or e-mail information@heyfordpark.co.uk



VISION FOR HEYFORD PARK UNVEILED



Heyford Park's commercial and residential tenants, as well as the wider public, are getting their first opportunity to comment on the North Oxfordshire Consortium's (NOC) vision for Heyford Park at a special exhibition that is taking place at the Heyford Park Chapel.

Heyford Park's rich heritage dates back to the First World War when it was used by the RAF. Its military use came to an end in 1993 with a thawing of the Cold War and departure of the Americans. Since then, Heyford Park has become home to an established residential community and has seen a number of highly successful businesses laying down roots.

Despite being a well established community in its own right, most buildings and homes at Heyford Park only have a temporary planning consent. The NOC's vision will move Heyford Park to the next stage in its development by creating a permanent and sustainable settlement that will allow both residential and commercial communities to continue to grow and develop.

Keith Watson, speaking on behalf of the NOC, which is made up of leading housebuilders Taylor Woodrow, George Wimpey and Persimmon Homes, explained: 'The exhibition provides an exciting opportunity for Heyford Park's tenants and the wider public to express their views on our plans to date. We have a strong vision for Heyford Park, which previous consultation exercises have

helped us to develop, and we are keen to hear what people think of our latest plan.'

Keith continues: 'Heyford Park has developed a strong sense of community and our commitment to existing residential and commercial tenants remains a priority. While it has proved impossible to retain many of the existing residential properties, we are currently in discussions with Cherwell District Council to agree a policy that will ensure all residential tenants are given the opportunity to stay at Heyford Park. We are also working with a number of commercial tenants, who are experiencing problems with Cherwell District Council that may force them to relocate, to help try and secure their long term future at Heyford Park.'

As well as the opportunity to comment on the latest plan for Heyford Park (which is reproduced inside this newsletter, together with an insert focusing on the residential settlement), visitors will also be able to find out more about the NOC's Strategy for the environment, transport and the preservation of its heritage. Questionnaires will be available for visitors to provide feedback and these comments will then be considered by the NOC before it submits its planning application to Cherwell District Council later this summer.

Keith adds: 'We are very excited about our vision for Heyford Park and it is especially pleasing to be able to share it with the wider public and to be able to hear their views. Heyford Park has much to be proud of and we've worked hard to develop a vision that considers its future whilst ensuring its past is not forgotten.'

'This exhibition provides a genuine opportunity for all our tenants and the wider public to comment on our current proposals. After the exhibition, we will consider all the views expressed before holding a final exhibition where we will display the plan that will be submitted to Cherwell District Council. We hope to have a high turnout and look forward to seeing everyone there!'

Exhibition Times:

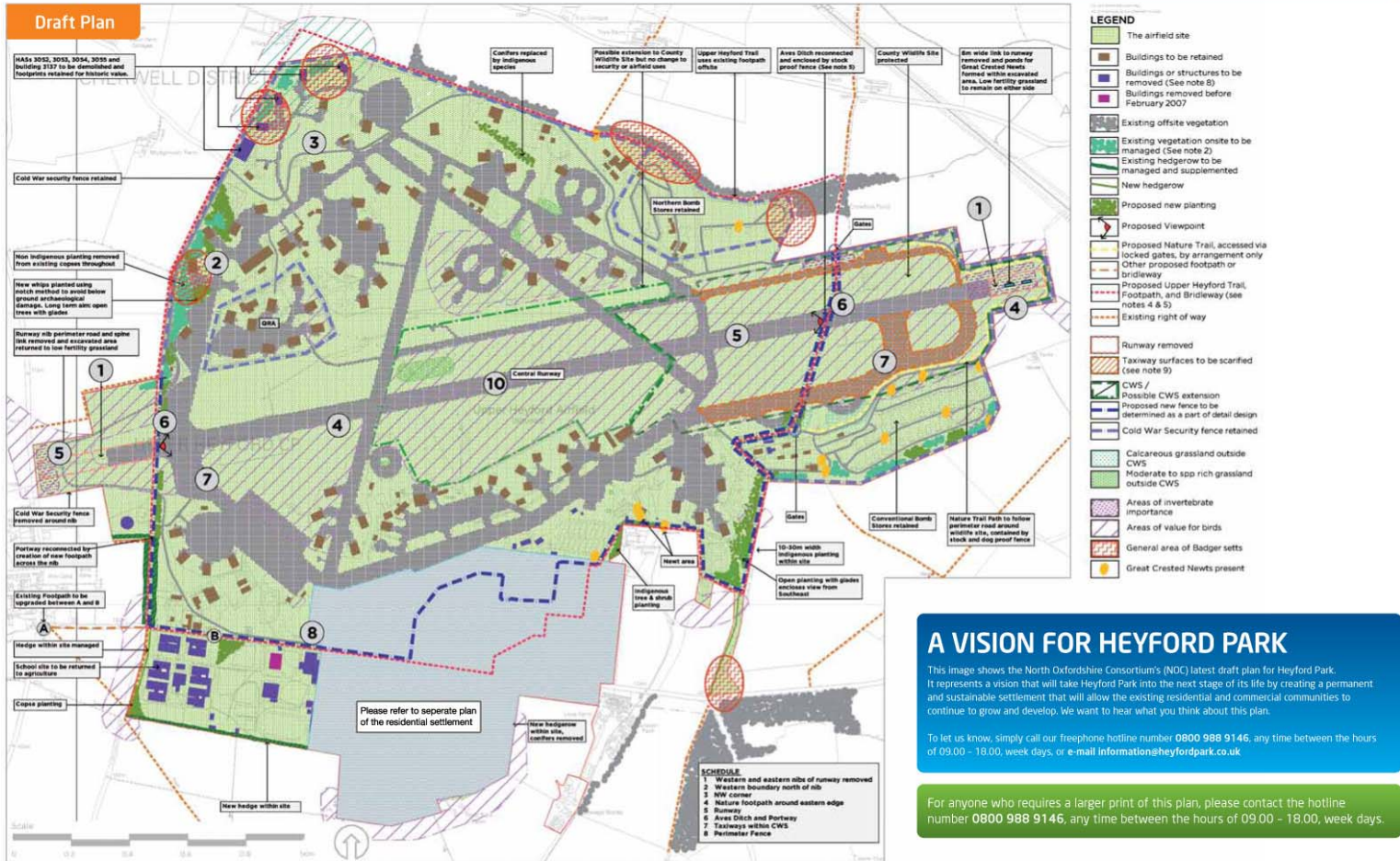
Thursday 28 June – 12.00-18.00
dedicated afternoon for commercial tenants

Thursday 28 June – 18.30-20.30
dedicated evening for residential tenants

Saturday 30 June – 10.00-14.00
open session, all welcome

Location:
Heyford Park Chapel

Contact us:
Call us on 0800 988 9146 (between the hours of 09.00 – 18.00, week days) or email information@heyfordpark.co.uk



A VISION FOR HEYFORD PARK

This image shows the North Oxfordshire Consortium's (NOC) latest draft plan for Heyford Park. It represents a vision that will take Heyford Park into the next stage of its life by creating a permanent and sustainable settlement that will allow the existing residential and commercial communities to continue to grow and develop. We want to hear what you think about this plan.

To let us know, simply call our freephone hotline number 0800 988 9146, any time between the hours of 09.00 - 18.00, week days, or e-mail Information@heyfordpark.co.uk

For anyone who requires a larger print of this plan, please contact the hotline number 0800 988 9146, any time between the hours of 09.00 - 18.00, week days.

