



# Land east of Heyford Park

## Statement of Community Engagement

Prepared by Meeting Place Communications on behalf of Pye Homes

April 2015



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# 1. Introduction



This Statement of Community Engagement (SCE) sets out the strategy undertaken for consulting the general public with regard to Pye Homes' plans for new homes on land east of Heyford Park, near Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire. The proposals seek to develop the site with approximately 70 new homes in a landscaped setting.

This document aims to demonstrate that the applicant has actively informed and involved the local community about the plans, in accordance with Cherwell District Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Pye Homes is committed to stakeholder engagement and wanted to ensure that the community were made aware of the proposed development. Pye Homes welcomed and invited feedback on the proposals to establish if any amendments could be taken on board prior to the submission of a planning application.

This Statement of Community Engagement gives an overview of all consultation activity undertaken prior to the current planning application submission.

Pye Homes has a long tradition of providing new homes and is proud of its reputation for the quality of build. We aim to provide housing in the places where people want to live and which reflects the style of the local area.

Established in 1927 we have built up a wealth of experience with developments throughout Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire and our emphasis is on delivering every time a quality product which purchasers will enjoy for many years.

Meeting Place Communications (MPC) was established in 2006 and we are now one of the leading public relations companies specialising in consultation around planning issues. We have worked with a wide range of house builders, retailers and commercial developers.

Our experience is across England and Wales and we are experienced in reaching out and positively engaging with local residents when it comes to planning applications.

*Draft scheme layout*



# 2. Requirements of the consultation...

Community involvement is at the forefront of national planning policy and is noted in the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (adopted March 2012). The NPPF states that 'early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential' in the creation of plans.

Planning Policy Statement 12 (Para 4.21) required local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of their Local Development Frameworks. The principle objective of the SCI is to ensure that all sections of the community, including local groups and organisations, are given an opportunity to engage in the planning process.

Cherwell District Council adopted its current Statement of Community Involvement in 2006. It applies to both the preparation of local planning policy documents and to planning applications. The SCI remains in force despite the publication of the NPPF in March 2012, although PPS12 has been formally cancelled from national planning policy.

Section 7.8 and 7.32 of the SCI contains information with regard to what is expected of applicants by way of consultation and community engagement for significant planning applications. Although no particular methodology is prescribed, the SCI mentions that developers should engage with the local community prior to submission of a planning application.

*Where planning applications are likely to be of significant interest to the wider community the Council will encourage applicants to undertake community consultation exercises them before submitting the application. Applicants will then be encouraged to submit a Consultation Statement setting out how the community's views were sought and how any feedback obtained has influenced the application.*

*Applicants have a key role to play in engaging with local communities and helping them to understand what is proposed, hearing concerns and engaging in dialogue to resolve issues.*



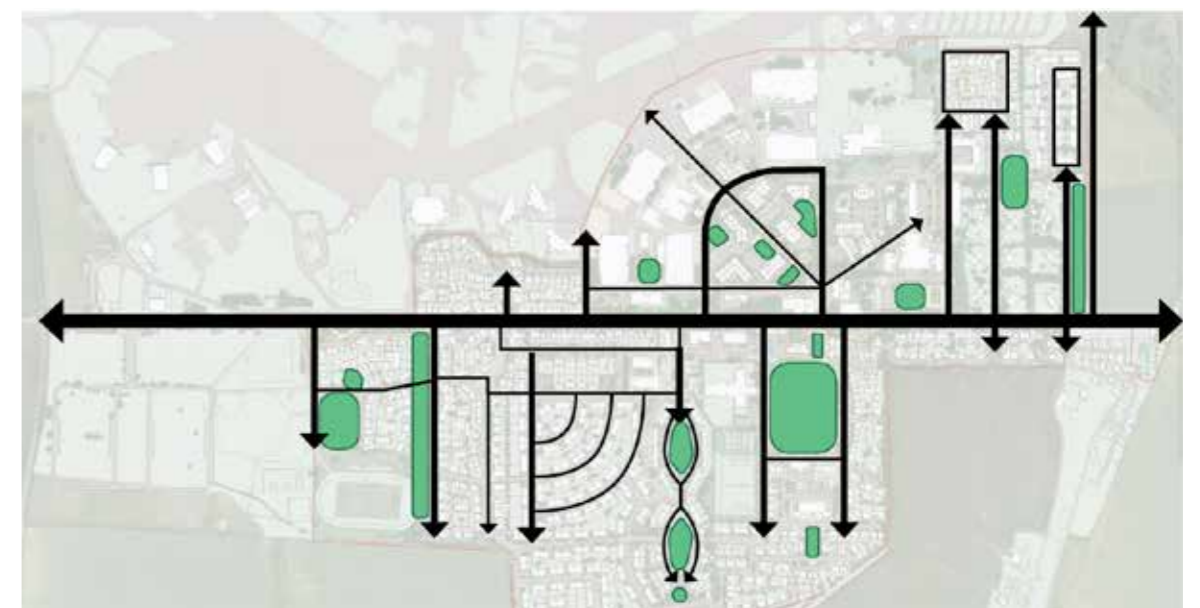
# 3. We have responded to this by...

**Involving local representatives:** Pye Homes met with members of Upper Heyford Parish Council and has been in contact with the area's ward councillors on Cherwell District Council;

**Involving residents:** A newsletter was sent to 620 properties in Upper Heyford and Heyford Park explaining the plans and how to comment. Representatives of the Heyford Park Residents Association were contacted and attended the meeting with Upper Heyford Parish Council;

**Encouraging feedback:** Attached to the newsletter was a feedback postcard that residents could return via freepost with their opinions and suggestions. This newsletter also invited residents to a public exhibition held at Upper Heyford Village Hall on 5th March between 15:00 - 19:00. A Freephone information line and email address which residents could use to make contact with Pye Homes was also provided on all consultation materials. Comments could also be submitted via the consultation website or email;

**Engaging online:** A consultation website – [www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk](http://www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk) – was set up with information about the proposals. The website was publicised through the newsletter. Visitors were encouraged to submit feedback online.



# 4. Involving local representatives

## Meeting with Upper Heyford Parish Council & Heyford Park Residents' Association

Debbie Jones (West Waddy ADP) and Daniel Hayman (Meeting Place Communications) met with members of Upper Heyford Parish Council, Chris Mullineux (Chairman, Heyford Park Residents' Association) & Timothy Bigelow (Vice Chair, Residents Association) on 12th February 2015. Topics discussed included:

- **The evolution of the design and the creation of the final plan;**
- **The parish council's preference not to see the development of green field sites, but acknowledgement that this site was one of the most preferred in the area if green field development was necessary;**
- **Sewage services;**
- **Location of recycling areas and salt bins;**
- **Connectivity with the wider Heyford Park developments;**
- **The access onto Camp Road;**
- **The proposals for bungalows;**
- **Affordable housing;**
- **Drainage;**
- **Wider traffic improvements in the area.**

## Contact with Cherwell District Councillors

Both Cllr James McNamara and Cllr Mike Kerford-Byrnes, ward councillors for the site were contacted and provided with materials relating to the proposals.

## Meeting with The Dorchester Group

On 4th March 2015 Stuart Wright (Pye Homes), Debbie Jones (West Waddy ADP), John Ashton (West Waddy ADP) and Daniel Hayman (Meeting Place Communications) met with representatives of The Dorchester Group, who are redeveloping the former United States Air Force base that lies immediately to the west of Pye Homes' site. During the meeting the plans for this redeveloped were discussed as was The Dorchester Group's views on the proposals by Pye Homes.



# 5. Involving residents

A newsletter was sent out to 620 local residents close to the site. The two sided A4 newsletter included details of the scheme, a location plan, site layout and key statistics. It also included a freepost feedback card allowing residents to respond free of charge by post to the consultation. Those who wanted to write more were invited to use our freepost address or comment on the website.

The freephone information line, email and website were all identified as part of the newsletter.

**FREEPOST  
MPC FEEDBACK**

**Number  
of feedback  
postcards  
received: 15**

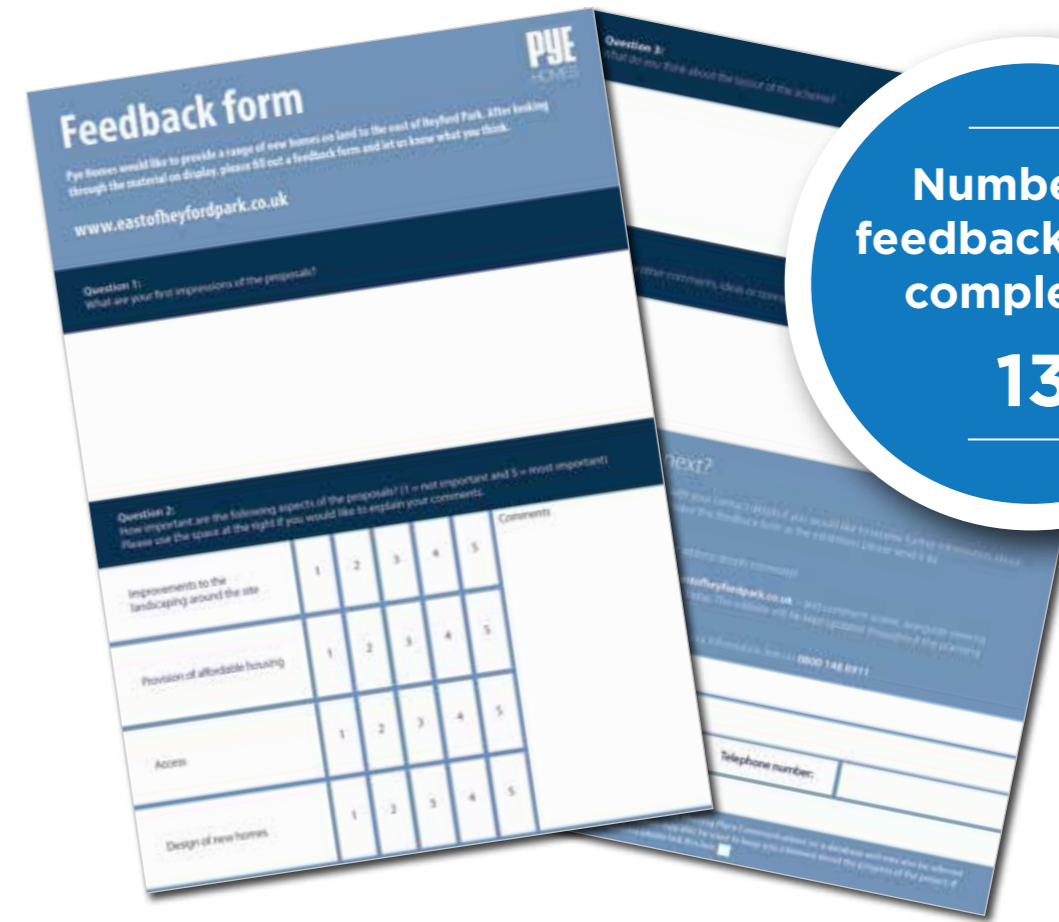
**Number of  
newsletters sent:  
620**



# 6. Public exhibition

Residents and stakeholders were invited to attend a public drop-in session held at Upper Heyford Village Hall on Thursday 5th March 2015 15:00 – 19:00 to view the proposals and chat to the project team.

- The exhibition was held on a weekday and in the evening to accommodate those who may be busy at the weekend or who wanted to attend after work;
- Local residents were invited to the exhibition via a newsletter which was sent to 620 homes;
- Approximately 33 people attended the exhibition event;



Number of feedback forms completed: **13**

Number of visitors: **33**



# Exhibition boards:

Land east of Heyford Park  
www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk

## Welcome




This exhibition outlines proposals by Pye Homes for around 70 new homes, off Camp Road to the east of Heyford Park. The development would deliver a range of family homes (both private and affordable) in a well-designed new development.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on the proposals, how they could be improved and if there are any local issues or circumstances you feel the development should reflect.

Members of the team are on hand to answer any questions you might have. You can let us know your thoughts by completing one of our feedback forms and dropping it into the ballot box provided. Alternatively, you can visit our consultation website at [www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk](http://www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk) or call our information line on 0800 148 8911.

Land east of Heyford Park  
www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk


## Background



There is a growing need for new homes in Cherwell, to reflect this the council has been looking at increasing the number of homes brought forward as part of its Local Plan, including the allocation at the former USAF air base here at Upper Heyford. The draft Local Plan is looking at allocating an additional 1,600 on top of the previously permitted 761 new homes and is being considered by a Planning Inspector.

Pye Homes would like to bring forward an application for around 70 new family homes, ranging from the detached to the terraced and including bungalows, on land east of Larsen Road, north of Camp Road. With wider proposals to deliver community facilities on the site including a new primary school, improved public transport and open space within walking distance, the proposals could help to deliver a sustainable and well located development.

Our team have looked in detail at the history of the base and how it has grown and matured over the years, in order to create a scheme which seeks to reflect the order and structure which has been developed.



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## Proposals



Pye Homes has put together proposals for the development of around 70 new homes with landscaped open space. The layout of the new homes, above, shows how these might be set out, seeking to reflect its setting on the eastern edge of Heyford Park, the rising nature of the land and the structure of surrounding areas of development.

The proposals would include:

- A range of new homes, including detached, terraced, starter homes and bungalows;
- 40% affordable – including those for rent and shared ownership, managed by a Housing Association;
- Contributions towards local facilities and services such as education, public transport and sporting facilities;
- Enhanced landscaping and a new children's play area as part of the public open space.



Land east of Heyford Park  
www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk

## A tailored scheme

Carefully managing drainage

The site will carefully manage rainwater on-site, so that it flows into neighbouring watercourses and the local drainage network at the same rate that rainwater drains from the site currently.

This uses a range of different methods to slow down and retain water in designated areas on-site, so that it can trickle off-site in a managed way. The site is not within the flood plain.



Building a community

Pye Homes has a strong reputation for tackling issues quickly and communicating effectively with neighbours when developing new homes. Specialising in developments within small villages and towns, Pye Homes works closely with neighbouring residents to minimise disruption and tackle issues quickly.

Community infrastructure and utilities

As part of the planning application, Pye Homes will be required to make contributions towards local facilities which are either on-site already or planned as part of the wider development at Heyford Park.

Pye Homes is currently investigating issues such as sewage and local utilities, seeking to work with the providers on delivering a scheme that can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.

Pye Homes will also work closely with the communities where it develops, often offering its expertise and occasional man-power to tackle local projects as well as encouraging new residents to use and support local facilities from the moment they move in.

Land east of Heyford Park  
www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk

## A tailored scheme

Managing traffic speed and flows

The access to the development would be taken from Camp Road, with suitable visibility splays to ensure a clear view of the road by those entering and exiting the development. The proposals would also seek to fit in with wider changes to Camp Road as part of the broader scheme.

Off street parking, in garages and on driveways and courtyards, will be included as part of the development. Traffic generation from the development has been carefully modeled and is based on measured traffic movements – so we can get a good idea of when the peak flows are and what contributions the development would make to these.

Improving habitats

As it is, the land is currently a fairly poor habitat for wildlife. The proposals would seek to maintain those habitats that already exist as well as encourage diversity with the creation of new habitats within gardens and open spaces.

The hedgerows surrounding the site will be thickened up with native species and regular, active management. Native species like Hawthorn will create a food source for local wildlife as well as creating an attractive edge to the development.



Land east of Heyford Park  
www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk

## Next steps

This exhibition is the first stage of the consultation, an application will then be submitted formally to the Cherwell District Council who will review the scheme and put the plans to their Planning Committee.

The council will also undertake a formal consultation with statutory bodies and neighbouring properties.

An application is likely to be submitted by the end of March.

You can let us know what you think of the scheme and if you have any suggestions / improvements by completing our feedback form here today or by returning it to:

**FREEPOST, MPC FEEDBACK**

You can also complete a form online at [www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk](http://www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk)

Or call our information line on 0800 148 8911

Our website will be kept updated with the latest news and updates on the application.



Thank you for coming

# 7. Engaging online

Online feedback form

The dedicated website – [www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk](http://www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk) – was created for the consultation. This website gives details of the proposals and allows visitors to download copies of consultation materials as well as to submit feedback electronically and via email. This website will be further developed as the application progresses.

Number of visits to the website:  
**91**

Number of pages viewed on average:  
**3**

% of views from a mobile or tablet device:  
**30%**

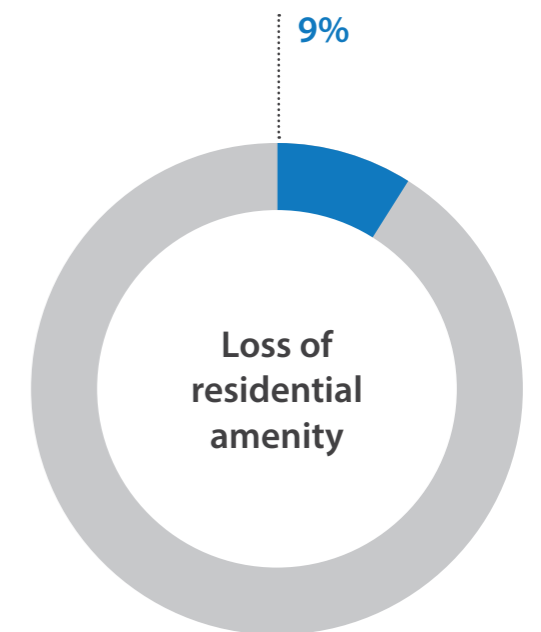
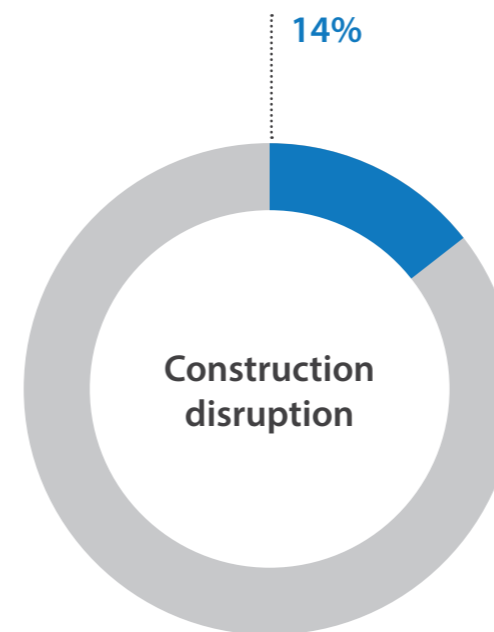
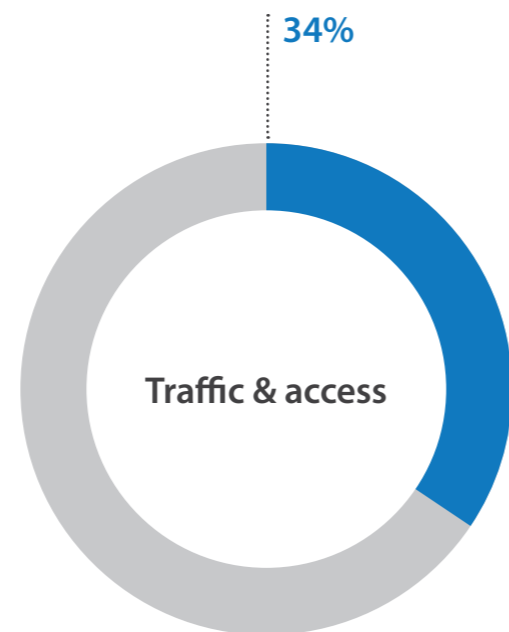
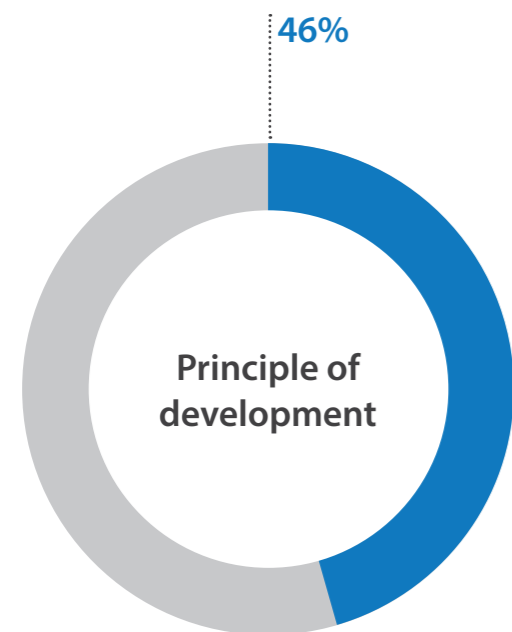
Length of stay on website:  
**2 minutes**



# 8. Summary of Feedback



Pye Homes was keen to give local residents and stakeholders the maximum opportunity to provide feedback. The comments received have been analysed and separated into the following categories below, with the figures noting the percentage of responses that mentioned each topic. A sample group of the comments received have also been detailed overleaf.



# 8. Summary of Feedback

## List of sample comments:

*Pye Homes build lovely well planned houses. We feel quite sure that this will be a sensitively thought through development which will work well in the proposed site. We have no objection to the scheme*

*We are looking to buy in the area as we are currently in rented but want to stay in the area and want to consider all options. We really like the proposed site plan and would be very interested*

*Needs more visitors parking*

*Strongly opposed to greenfield development*

*Enough homes already being built*

*Have no objections*

*Overall concept impressive*

*Nice looking development, but traffic concerns*

*Use the adjacent brownfield site first.*

*Seems like it would add to the growing community well seems much more appealing than the other developments*

*There should be no more destruction of agricultural land, until all the brown field surfaces in the whole region have been used for development. In this case, clearly the old USAF base offers much more space to be developed before this green field should even be considered*

*There is simply not the infrastructure to cope with yet more: development should be confined to already urban settlements where the infrastructure exists. The roads between Heyford and Oxford simply cannot cope with such a potential increase in traffic*

*We are looking to buy in the area as we are currently in rented but want to stay in the area and want to consider all options. We really like the proposed site plan and would be very interested*

# 9. Responding to feedback

## Principle of development

*Some respondents thought the new homes should be located on a brownfield site, with the vast majority suggesting somewhere on the adjacent former United States Airforce Base.*

### **Applicant's response:**

Although a significant number of new homes and associated facilities are being delivered on the adjacent United States Air Force base, there is a growing need for new homes in Cherwell, to reflect this the council has been looking at increasing the number of homes brought forward as part of its Local Plan, including the allocation at the former USAF air base at Upper Heyford. The draft Local Plan is looking at allocating an additional 1,600 on top of the previously permitted 761 new homes and is being considered by a Planning Inspector. Delivery of a small number of homes outside of the base area will lessen the need to build on Cold War areas of the base, which have heritage value.

Pye Homes' proposals have been designed to mimic the geometric development structure of the nearby brownfield site and also retain and improve the existing hedgerows on the site boundaries in order to screen the site, thus minimising the impact on the Green Belt.

## Traffic and access

*There was a feeling amongst some residents that local roads did not have the capacity for further traffic. Another issue raised was the belief that the vehicular access to the site was unsuitable because, despite the road being straight, there was a slight dip immediately to the east, which some respondents thought would hinder visibility.*

### **Applicant's response:**

The access to the development would be taken from Camp Road, with suitable visibility splays to ensure a clear view of the road by those entering and exiting the development. The proposed access junction is situated at the top of the slight hill on Camp Road, meaning drivers exiting the junction have a clear unobstructed either way. The slope of dip is very shallow, meaning that vehicles turning into the proposed access junction would be clearly visible to all road users.

The proposals would also seek to fit in with wider changes to Camp Road as part of the broader development at the former United States Air Force base..

## Construction disruption

*A few residents, although not necessarily objecting to Pye Homes' proposals, expressed concern about possible disruption during construction of any new homes. Local people are acutely aware of such issues due to the ongoing construction on the adjacent former United States Air Force base. Respondents requested, if Pye Homes were to get permission and built the new homes, that they ensure nearby roads are kept clean and contractors' vehicles park in designated areas etc.*

### **Applicant's response:**

Pye Homes strive to be good neighbours during construction. Our teams use initiatives such as dust suppression and wheel/road cleaning, as well as ensuring working on-site is strictly limited to defined operating hours. A designated site manager will liaise with local residents to ensure that any problems or issues that arise are addressed promptly.

## Loss of residential amenity

*Some respondents, particularly those who lived in the immediate vicinity of the site, worried that Pye Homes' proposals, combined with the wider development occurring at the former United States Air Force base, would be detrimental to their residential amenity.*

### **Applicant's response:**

Pye Homes notes that many of these comments were received from those living in the Heyford Leys Camping Park (HLCP), which is situated immediately south of the site. In order to minimise the impact on HLCP the site layout was designed with green space and only a small number of new homes along the southern border. Boundary landscaping will also be enhanced following comments.

# Appendix: Verbatim Comments

N.B. Anonymised verbatim comments from public exhibition feedback forms and feedback postcards can be found in the 'Downloads' section of [www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk](http://www.eastofheyfordpark.co.uk)

## Comments received via email:

- Just thought we should drop you a line to say that whilst we backed and went along with all planning for Heyford Park within the boundaries of the old American Air Force Base we will strongly oppose any future development outside of those boundaries. We own and operate Heyford Leys Camping Park which is opposite your proposed development East of Larsen Rd and feel it would have an adverse effect upon our camping park business. Secondly we live right opposite in our own private dwelling and don't want to become surrounded with new housing developments. Only thought it right to contact you in advance of your proposal. We will be attending your open day at the village hall;
- I strongly object to this proposal for the following reasons. Bovis and Dorchester Homes are already building approximately 1000 homes on Heyford Park. The disruption from this is causing much anxiety for people who already live here. Our peace and tranquillity has been replaced with the noise of large lorries, heavy plant rumbling around and irritating constant high pitched reversing warning sounds. Generators run constantly throwing out toxic diesel fumes. There is constant dust and mud and to have the addition of 70 more being built is beyond the pale. We, the residents have had enough. Also your proposal is on open farm land and not on the base. There is plenty of brown land for which you can build your 'affordable' homes. Please use this. I find it appalling that the Oxfordshire countryside is being eaten up this way. Also you say there is an 'acute' shortage of new homes and say that the land is not within the flood plain. I would argue that although these homes would not be flooded the sheer impact of overdevelopment is in my view and well known to be having an acute and serious impact in other areas. You are not thinking broadly enough. There is no infrastructure in place. With 1000 houses with at least two cars per dwelling how do authorities think the roads will cope? The A34 is already one of the worst congested roads in England due to over development. Bicester is now a grid locked hell and 70 more homes with let's say 140 cars is 70 too many. I am not a whining NIMBY. My property does not overlook this proposed site. I care for the countryside and the wildlife that needs it so badly.

## Comments received via internet:

- Seems like it would add to the growing community well seems much more appealing than the other developments already family size gardens & open space, keeping hedgerow rather than shoehorn them in making current residents feel secure future at Heyford park working with local community supporting community initiatives, shop community gardens because we have very little facilities, only flimsy promises ;
- This is a greenfield site, when there is a brownfield site next door. You are providing nothing towards infrastructure, but piggy-backing on Dorchester's efforts. You will add to traffic through Middleton Stoney towards Oxford. The site will overlook a recycling and landfill site, with gulls and flies for residents to contend with. All of the above, especially anything towards the provision of some infrastructure instead of just building houses and walking away. Use the adjacent brownfield site first;
  - There should be no more destruction of agricultural land, until all the brown field surfaces in the whole region have been used for development. In this case, clearly the old USAF base offers much more space to be developed before this green field should even be considered;
- I strongly object to any further development on greenfield land: the enormous sites at Heyford Park and Bicester which have yet to be fully built will be more than enough to cope with demand for new housing in this immediate area. There is simply not the infrastructure to cope with yet more: development should be confined to already urban settlements where the infrastructure exists. The roads between Heyford and Oxford simply cannot cope with such a potential increase in traffic. Looking elsewhere: at brownfield sites well away from this area;
- Another scheme to make money. At least 75% of the homes should be affordable, and by affordable I mean ranging between £160 000.00 and £185 000.00 max. There should also be a Government subsidised

deposit scheme, and a guaranteed low interest mortgage rate. This way the sellers will be assured of selling all the homes, and the buyers will be happy with the price. A win/win situation. The building contractors should also only be SMEs. No large companies allowed. I assume Pye is a SME? Make the gardens at least an eighth of an acre. Put your proposed prices in your proposal. Be upfront and transparent. Don't hedge your bets and wait and see whether you can milk some more from the public.



This report was designed by:

