

LAND ADJOINING FAIRFIELD, SOUTH BRENT

RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED DURING COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This brief note sets out how the developers (Cavanna Homes/Trand) have addressed key matters raised during the consultation period. It has been prepared at the request of Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) and the Development Brief Stakeholder Group.

As it will be appreciated, the two public exhibitions and the three stakeholder meetings generated much debate in the local community and identified a wide variety of different issues and points for consideration. It would be difficult to provide a definitive response to each of these points. Accordingly, we have reviewed the comments made during the consultation period and focussed upon those that raised the most responses.

For ease of reference, these have been grouped into the main topic areas:

Sustainability

The local community expressed a desire for the development to be sustainable in terms of its layout, design and the affordability of the individual buildings over their lifetime.

The development will give consideration to building both the market and affordable homes to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes Standard, but this may result in the need to reduce other planning obligations such as affordable housing.

The houses will be orientated, where possible, to have a southerly aspect to increase and improve solar gain. Energy efficient appliances and building materials will also be used to reduce the 'running costs' of the individual properties. Additionally, local labour sources and building materials will be used where this is a feasible option.

Some members of the local community have expressed the requirement to provide for Code 5 or 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes Standard. However, this would undoubtedly have implications for the financial viability of the development and preclude contributions that the developers can make to other elements of infrastructure such as affordable housing. Accordingly, it was considered that to achieve a 'balanced' development the proposed approach is correct.

Exeter – Crossing Points and Speed Reduction

A chief concern of the local community has been to secure crossing points across Exeter Road. Comments received from people who attended stated that, due to the lack of crossing points, it was difficult to cross Exeter Road and that this situation was exacerbated during peak hours due to the level of traffic. Concern was raised, in particular, about school children who had to cross the road to access the primary school and the bus stops for secondary school. The speed of vehicles using Exeter Road was also mentioned.

The local perceived need for a crossing point is acknowledged. However, the calculation process required to justify a new controlled crossing is strictly defined to ensure the support of the highway authority. The calculations are based on the level of traffic along the road and the existing number of people crossing the road in a given hour. The result along Exeter Road does not currently meet

the value required to justify a new controlled facility, and the results still fall far short even when the likely pedestrian flows from the proposed scheme are accounted for.

Given this, the development will consider the potential to introduce new uncontrolled crossing points along Exeter Road, which will also help reduce speed. The form of these measures is yet to be defined but could include the narrowing of the road at the gateway of the village and use of different coloured surface treatments.

A meeting is being arranged with the local highways authority, DNPA Officers and the representatives from the local community to discuss this issue and agree the measures required.

Access point through Fairfield

It is understood that the access to Fairfield (and the proposed access point to the western part of the development site) is frequently used by local children as an informal area of play space. There is concern in the local community about the potential for conflict given the increased number of vehicles that will use this access with the new development.

In response, only the western part of the site will utilise this access. There will be no through route from Fairfield to the eastern part of the site. This matter has been raised with the local highway agency. They are content that the western part of the site can be adequately served through this access. In terms of the potential conflict with local children, this issue will be addressed during the detailed design stage and Trand can confirm that careful design consideration will be given to addressing the new access at Fairfield and its use by existing residents.

Local Needs Housing

The need to provide for affordable housing is set out in the Development Plan, and was reflected in discussions held during the stakeholder meeting and at the public exhibition. There was a groundswell of opinion that the new development as part of the affordable housing element would need to provide living accommodation for those locally that were in a need and those with links to the village that have been forced to move away. In regard to the type of houses needed, a mixed response was received ranging from 1 bed properties to family housing.

As set out in the Development Brief, the applications that will follow will be underpinned by the results from the Local Needs Housing Assessment. This assessment will inform the number, tenure and type of affordable housing units to be delivered on site. It will provide for an appropriate mix of social rented, intermediate and discounted open market housing.

Design

The proposed layout of the site was an important consideration for the local community. It noted that the internal roads of the site could not be used as a 'shortcut' or 'rat run' and that there were existing layouts within the villages that should be considered as good examples.

The local community's views on the design of the buildings was also taken at the second Public Exhibition, where different examples of vernacular were shown and the public asked to indicate which types they preferred.

There will be no singular vehicular route through the proposed development. The western portion of the site will be accessed through Fairfield, whilst the eastern triangular parcel of land will be served

by a new dedicated access point onto Exeter Road. In effect, this will result in two 'cul-de-sac' arrangements. The only link between the different parts of the site is via pedestrian/cycle link.

The vernacular and appearance of the individual units will be informed by the views expressed at the Public Exhibition. Although there are two developers on site, the purpose of the Development Brief is to encourage a comprehensive approach; therefore, each developer's design will be different but will be in conformity with the design principles set out in the Brief.

Self-Build

A number of attendees at the public exhibition queried whether self-build plots could be incorporated or form part of the affordable housing element. This would be under the auspices of a Community Land Trust (CLT).

Consideration has been given to allocating a small number of sites for Self Build purposes. However, it is understood that the proposed CLT for South Brent is in its early stages of formation and would not be in a position to properly engage with this development due to the timescale involved. For this reason, it is proposed that there will be no self-build plots on site. However, the developers may consider the option of an offsite financial contribution towards other self-build projects, but this may result in the need to reduce other planning obligations such as affordable housing.

Development Impact on Community

During the consultation period, wider matters were raised as part of the discussion about the Development Brief. For instance, the impact that the development may have on the village centre and whether there is potential that it would increase vehicular parking generally around the settlement.

In these terms, it is considered that the development will have a positive impact on the village. It will help support the facilities in the village such as the local shops through the increased trade.

There will be impact on local facilities like the primary school but these will be mitigated through the use of planning obligations attached to the planning permission. The proposed development is unlikely to have an impact on the availability of parking within the village centre. Each unit on site will be served by dedicated parking spaces in accordance with their size and the necessary local authority parking guidelines.

Landscape, Ecology and Open Space

The retention of existing vegetation, high levels of new landscaping and areas of dedicated open space were identified as being requirements for the new development. The local community also wanted to see native species planted on site and consideration given to the introduction of fruit trees or a community orchard.

The former railway embankment that forms the eastern boundary to the site will be incorporated into the application site and will be allocated for landscaping purposes. It will provide opportunities for creative play and recreation. There will be a footpath linking Palstone Lane with Exeter Road. The proposed planting will be focussed on native species to encourage wildlife habitats to develop and provide for ecological enhancement.

Within the development, there will be a series of meaningful small green spaces that will have a natural design with appropriate planting, which will include fruit trees (where practical). The open space will also link with the existing provision at Fairfield. Key wildlife habitats within the site will be retained and enhanced such as the Devon-bank hedgerows (except where pedestrian routes are being proposed through the hedge); woodland copse (some trees will need to be felled to create the vehicular access from Exeter Road into the site); and ecological 'corridor' associated with the Primrose Line. This will be supported by the creation of 'green corridors' through the site. The retained and created habitats will be managed under an appropriate landscape and ecology management plan, which will be designed to maintain the landscape, amenity and ecological value of the site.

In terms of open space, discussions will be held with DNPA regarding the need to make off-site contributions via planning obligations.