

## Bloor Homes – Sandleford Park East

### Stakeholder Liaison Group – Draft Meeting Minutes – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

#### Design Code

Date: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Time: 4:30 – 6.00pm

Venue: Newbury Rugby Club

#### Attendees:

#### Project Team:

- Rebecca Fenn-Tripp (RFT) – Planning Director, Bloor Homes
- James DeHavilland (JD) – Urban designer, Stantec
- Sam Kelly (SK) – Ecologist, Tetra Tech
- Louise Hingley (LH) – Communications & engagement, Cratus Group

#### Group Members:

- Holly Gray (HG) – Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)
- Mark Betkowski (MB) – Falklands Doctors Surgery
- Tony Hammond (TH) – Say No to Sandleford
- Peter Lambert (PL) – Newbury Rugby Club
- Tobias Miles Mallowan (TM) – Newbury Town Council
- Cllr David Marsh (DM) – West Berkshire Council
- Liz Pope (LP) – Eastfield Doctors Surgery

#### Apologies:

- Cllr Patrick Clark (PC) – West Berkshire Council
- Cllr Adrian Abbs (AA) – West Berkshire Council
- Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – West Berkshire Council
- James King (JK) – Park House School

## 1. Introductions

- The group made introductions.
- LH explained the purpose of the group and read through the Terms of Reference, which had been circulated before the meeting – *copies were provided on the day*.
- TH asked who had been invited to be a part of the Stakeholder Liaison Group and why the Terms of Reference noted that meetings would take place up to submission of the first Reserved Matters application. RFT noted that, as stated in the document, it is intended that meetings will continue beyond the first Reserved Matters application, subject to members of the group being happy to continue. LH committed to providing a list of those who had been invited.
- HG asked whether documents like management plans are confidential.
- **Response:** SK confirmed that management plans are not confidential for consultees but are redacted for use on the public planning portal for reasons centred around badger sett locations only. SK agreed to forward a non-redacted version of woodland management plan to HG.

## 2. Planning process so far

- RFT explained that outline planning permission had been secured in 2022 for homes and supporting infrastructure. RFT noted that full access to the country park would be provided for new and existing residents. RFT also noted that the management of the sensitive woodland areas had been debated at length during the inquiry and that the plans do not encourage access to any of the woodland areas. RFT explained what was covered by the outline approval, the Inquiry process and noted that the next steps had involved updating the technical information and discharging conditions of the outline consent. Bloor Homes and the technical team had been working with West Berkshire officers since the grant of the outline (without prejudice).
- RFT committed to sharing a copy of the Unilateral Understanding with members of the Stakeholder Liaison Group via West Berkshire Council's (WBC) website.
- RFT explained the programme ahead, with an Infrastructure Reserved Matters application targeted for submission in the Autumn and the first phase towards the end of the year.
- RFT noted that Bloor Homes and the technical team is committed to engagement. RFT outlined the timetable with development expected to start in 2025 - circa 120 homes would be built per year, via two construction outlets in the site. RFT stated that it would be circa a 10-year programme.

- RFT stated that Bloor Homes would be engaging with neighbours opposite the two proposed (as approved at outline stage) accesses on Monks Lane.
- DM noted that when Bloor and the ward councillors had met previously, Bloor had stated that the site would accommodate 800 homes, rather than 1,000 homes. He asked if this was still the case.
- **Response:** RFT confirmed that around 800 homes was most likely because of the technical constraints and woodland buffers on the site.
- TM queried the implications of the development for Highwood Copse Primary School.
- **Response:** RFT noted that Bloor were aware of Highwood Copse Primary School, but the school serves a different catchment area to the development. A primary school is committed to under the outline consent (land and financial contributions to be provided by Bloor - WBC to deliver said facility).
- TM noted that during the Sandleford Park West (SPW) application there had been questions about the capacity of Falkland Primary School.
- DM noted that there were declining school rolls in the area, including at Falkland Primary School.

### 3. Design Code

- JD began the presentation. The presentation showed the image of the illustrative masterplan. JD explained that this version of the masterplan is purely for illustrative purposes and that Bloor currently only have permission for the parameters of the site.
- JD explained that as the development team gathers more information about a site, there is a better understanding of what is deliverable.
- JD explained that the Design Code is an umbrella document which all the Reserved Matters applications must adhere to. He noted that the team has been developing the Code in conjunction with West Berkshire Council via a number of workshops (without prejudice). The Code sets the aesthetics and details for properties and the public realm, including the location of key spaces and the interfaces with the woodland. The Code also sets out the materials and palette of plant choices to use in Reserved Matters applications. The Reserved Matters applications will set out the full details in terms of layout, materials, landscaping and detailed appearance.
- JD showed the Regulating Legibility Plan.
- DM asked whether the Design Code had taken account of the best orientation for renewable energy.

- **Response:** RFT confirmed that optimum orientation of renewable energy sources is a planning requirement that Bloor must address.
- DM asked whether the Design Code included the Valley Crossing.
- **Response:** RFT stated that the Valley Crossing was subject to a separate discharge of condition process.
- JD noted that the Design Code excludes the Country Park and the green infrastructure.
- PL noted that his understanding was that the Design Code is the coding / menu for the rest of the plans.
- JD agreed that this would be a fair assessment.
- PL asked whether the Design Code was subject to public comment.
- **Response:** RFT noted that submission of the Design Code is subject to a discharge of condition application, which has different notification requirements to a standard planning application.
- JD noted that the Design Code plays an important part in identifying key public spaces and showed a plan of the proposed approach to such on the site.
- MB asked what an Extra Care facility is and the role of local GP surgeries in looking after people living in an Extra Care facility. MB noted that Falkland Grange Care Home requires the use of 1.5 local nurses and The Priory Hospital requires use of 1 local doctor per week. He noted that Extra Care facilities have huge implications on health care provision and that local GP surgeries had not received Section 106 contributions from other developments in the area.
- **Response:** RFT stated that the provision of such a facility is subject to need.
- TH reiterated that, having worked with Registered Providers, the distribution of Section 106 contributions is the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority. He stated that he believed Section 106 payments should be based on capital, not revenue.
- **Response:** RFT noted that she would follow up with Bob Dray (Head of Development and Planning, WBC) about Section 106 contributions not reaching local health care services, as it is the responsibility of West Berkshire Council to ensure that local communities receive the contributions towards increased provision. She confirmed that the Section 106 contributions are fixed for Sandford Park East.
- MB commented that it costs £30,000 to convert one practice room into a clinical room.
- RFT asked whether the owners of the building had commented on the SPE planning application historically as this is the stage to shape infrastructure requirements, which are now agreed under the consent.

- MB stated he did know whether the owners of the building had commented on the planning application.
- DM asked if the new Eastfield GP Surgery will cater for the demand at Sandleford Park East.
- LP and MB confirmed that Eastfield Surgery would cater for demand from new residents, it was however a case of ensuring adequate staffing and funding.
- JD moved to the next slide which showed a plan of the Gorse link.
- HG asked if there was already a management plan for the Gorse link.
- **Response:** JD noted that there was not a management plan yet as there was further work to be done before a management plan could be developed but the species to be included will be agreed in advance.
- HG asked if she could look at the management plan as it is being drafted, as the site is within an area of wildlife importance.
- **Response:** SK confirmed she would be happy to share a copy of the plan with HG for comment, once drafted.
- JD then showed the masterplan and explained that all plots were arranged based on the updated technical information.
- TH asked for more detail on the 15-metre buffer around the ancient woodlands. He asked where the 15 metres started and ended.
- **Response:** JD explained the approach to the buffer.
- HG asked whether the fencing is a true buffer and whether the development team will be encouraging movement in that area.
- **Response:** JD stated that our objective is not to encourage movement in that area.
- HG noted that it is preferable not to encourage movement in that area because there are species which are vulnerable to disturbance from recreation and dogs, and it has been a problem at Greenham Common and would undermine the buffer if not managed correctly.
- TH added he was going to bring up the issue of cats rather than dogs – as cats had caused issues at Crooks Copse.
- TH asked whether there would be a wildlife tunnel so wildlife could avoid crossing the road and additionally, whether there would be hedgehog holes.
- **Response:** RFT stated that such matters would all be considered as part of the management plan.
- JD continued with the presentation, showing an image of how a small amount of courtyard parking could look and explaining how it could work.

- TH asked about the approach to visitor parking.
- **Response:** RFT noted that there will be a 'park and stride' approach for the school, a principle that WBC applies as parking for pupils / parents should be encouraged away from the school site, with only staff parking provided on site
- JD showed a conceptual drawing of the layout of the local centre and explained that the details / layout of the local centre will be guided by the commercial interest and the development team will go out to the market to understand the interest in occupation.
- TH asked whether there would be a community facility.
- **Response:** JD pointed to where a community facility could be and explained that the aim of the plan is to show where amenities could be within the local centre and prove that the facilities are the right shapes and sizes to be workable.
- RFT stated that the development would also be liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- JD moved to the next plan which showed a street scene, where RFT explained that the plans aim to reflect the character of Berkshire although finer house type details are not yet known.
- As the presentation concluded, RFT outlined the programme timeline, stating that the Design Code is scheduled for submission in August, with the first Reserved Matters application, in the Autumn, focussing on infrastructure – such as roads and pump stations.

#### 4. Q&A

- TH asked about the purpose of the Country Park, as he noted a lot of people were confused as to whether it would be formalised or more natural – would it be like Wellington Country Park or Snelsmore Country Park? He added that more clarity is needed about who and what the country park is for and the longevity of the temporary car park.
- TM noted that Newbury Town Council is interested in managing the Country Park and had approached West Berkshire Council about this.
- **Response:** RFT explained that the Country Park is intended to be an accessible asset for public use and will not be like Wellington Country Park, which is more formalised / a paid attraction. RFT confirmed that Bloor is keen to identify an entity to manage the park and is liaising with West Berkshire Council. She acknowledged that Bloor would lay out the Country Park but once handed over there will be management / maintenance costs involved in managing the park - however it will be a fantastic community asset.
- HG stated that BBOWT are not anti-development, their primary concern is how the Country Park is managed because they are very conscious of the current

recreational impact on Greenham Common. HG stated that BBOWT do not have funding to provide wardens for the Country Park and that there is a strong argument to keep the park wild with meadows and the like.

- **Response:** RFT confirmed that the intention is to keep the Country Park natural, rather than manicured. She stated there would be mown paths but with lots of natural spaces. RFT added that West Berkshire Council had expressed an interest in managing the Country Park, but this is subject to further approval processes. RFT outlined that the park will achieve a biodiversity net gain, and the council envisages a warden for the park. She stated that the park would be provided through a phased delivery and a permanent formal car park cannot be provided immediately, hence the creation of the temporary car park. Furthermore, that parking for the country park would have a dual use, providing potential parking for the school, local centre and Country Park. RFT noted as a final point that the impact of development on Greenham Common was considered as part of the outline application process and it was concluded that there would be no adverse impact on such.
- TH asked how Bloor will ensure a safe and flowing road network together with developers of Sandleford Park West. He noted the concern that by linking spine roads a 'rat run' is created to Andover Road, as it will be the most convenient route for drivers.
- **Response:** RFT stated that a link with Sandleford Park West has to be provided within 6 years of commencement of development (as a condition of the outline), to provide a sustainable link for the bus. She noted that Bloor is likely to come forward first with this link (in terms of clarifying the location under Reserved matters) and it will be guided by the ecological / arboriculture considerations.
- TH asked about how construction traffic and haul roads would be managed as residents are facing the prospect of two builds – Sandleford Park East and Sandleford Park West.
- **Response:** RFT noted that the Sandleford Park East site will be accessed from Monks Road and Bloor will be engaging with those most impacted.
- TH noted that it will require both developers to work together and that people should have some respite during their week from construction impacts on traffic and noise.
- **Response:** RFT noted that a Construction Management Plan will be provided, which will set out the times that construction can take place, the accesses and other key matters – for approval by WBC
- LH thanked members for attending and confirmed that Bloor is committed to continued engagement, and she will be sharing the minutes of the meeting in due course.
- LH closed the meeting at 6.00pm.

## **5. AOB/ Updates since meeting**

- Whilst it was not covered in the meeting, it is worth noting that Bloor Homes have recently signed up to the *Homes for Nature Commitment*. This major new initiative commits Bloor to provide a bird-nesting brick or box for every new home built, as well as hedgehog highways created as standard on every new Bloor development – including Sandleford Park East. This move represents a major step towards providing more nesting bricks and boxes, required to support swift populations and many more bird species across the country. Bloor will provide annual reporting to track progress and help identify further measures that could be introduced to support other wildlife.