



**SUMMARY
REPRESENTATIONS IN
ADVANCE OF
CONSULTATION ON
LPP2**

**LAND TO THE EAST OF
HIGHBRIDGE ROAD,
COLDEN COMMON
(SHLAA SITE REF: 1874)**

**LOCAL PLAN PART 2 –
DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT &
ALLOCATIONS**

**WELBECK STRATEGIC
LAND LLP**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document is submitted on behalf of Welbeck Strategic Land LLP in response to Commonview's invitation for written representations. It follows and supplements the written representations that were submitted to Commonview and the Council on 6 September 2013.
- 1.2 Since that time, Commonview has published its proposed development strategy which supports the location of all new housing development on the B3354 Main Road on the east side of the village. This strategy was endorsed by the Parish Council on 2 October 2013 and formally submitted to Winchester City Council (WCC), in advance of formal consultation on Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) in 2014.
- 1.3 Land to the East of Highbridge Road is not selected as a preferred site by Commonview in its proposed Development Strategy. The summary reasons for excluding the site are: (i) least favoured site in residents' survey; (ii) highly sensitive landscape impact (with cross reference made to the September 2013 WCC draft Landscape Assessment); and (iii) inconsistent with strategy for development to the east of the village. We are confident that these issues can be addressed.
- 1.4 These representations set out our basis for recommending that the settlement boundary should be amended to incorporate land to the East of Highbridge Road for development comprising new housing and community parkland.
- 1.5 Welbeck Strategic Land LLP's team of specialist consultants have carried out a wide range of technical assessments and consultations on matters relating to landscape impact, highways & access, built heritage & archaeology, ecology, trees, flood risk, drainage and utilities. This process has confirmed that appropriately designed development can be accommodated satisfactorily and appropriately on the site.
- 1.6 Welbeck Strategic Land LLP has been promoting the land for development since October 2009 and undertaken extensive community engagement with local stakeholders. The design of the proposed development has evolved in response to issues raised by the local community during this time.

2.0 MERITS OF ALLOCATING THE SITE & PROPOSED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

2.1 The allocation of the site for future development is in accordance with adopted planning policy and guidance, including the Colden Common Village Design Statement, for the reasons set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

2.2 Paragraph 61 - securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

2.3 Paragraph 70 - planning decisions should ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

2.4 Paragraph 73 promotes the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.

2.5 Paragraph 75 seeks protection of, and enhancements to, public rights of way, including adding links to existing rights of way networks.

2.6 Paragraph 126 - opportunities should be taken to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of place.

The saved policies of the Winchester District Local Plan Review - July 2006

2.7 Policy DP3 (General Design Criteria) – development should provide for ease of movement and local permeability.

- 2.8 Policy T2 (Development access) - new development that requires new access should avoid interference with the safety, function and character of the road network.

Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy - March 2013

- 2.9 Policy DS1 (Development Strategy & Principles) - supports development that serves local needs in the most sustainable and accessible locations; promotes the vitality and viability of communities; and maintains their rural character and individual settlement identity.
- 2.10 Policy CP15 (Green Infrastructure) - supports development which provides a net gain of well managed, multifunctional green infrastructure which addresses deficits in local green infrastructure provision; provides a high quality public realm for the local community; and encourages public access to and within the natural environment.

Colden Common Village Design Statement - December 2012

- 2.11 Page 9 - those travelling along the 'triangle' of roads which broadly contain the developed part of the village can remain unaware of the proximity of the large area of housing contained within that triangle.
- 2.12 Page 11 - the Green is identified as a space which many see as "the natural centre of the village with paths connecting to the school, the community centre and the shops".
- 2.13 Page 11/Map D - important existing trees and hedges which contribute to the character of the village should be retained.
- 2.14 Chapter 5 - a matter of some concern for local residents is the amount of heavy traffic using the Main Road (B3354 on the eastern side of the village) and the congestion which develops at peak periods. Highbridge Road (B3335 on the western side of the village) forms a boundary to the west of the developed area

of Colden Common. The problem of safely accessing the recently built Kiln Lane footpath from Highbridge Road is yet to be resolved.

- 2.15 Page 19 - new development should preserve, and where possible enhance, access to the countryside and consideration should be given to safety issues on rural lanes where the needs of pedestrians and equestrians conflict with those of other users.
- 2.16 The proposed scheme has been developed to accord with these design principles and guidance.

WCC Landscape Character Assessment - March 2004

- 2.17 Page 164 - conserving the nucleated form of Colden Common and integrating new development within the surrounding landscape.

Commentary

- 2.18 The allocation and proposed development of the site would accord with the adopted planning policy and guidance set out above and would supply a range of community benefits as summarised below.
- 2.19 Land to the East of Highbridge Road is the most sustainable location for new development in Colden Common, over any other potential development site, because of its proximity to the village centre and local bus stops, including the primary school, community centre, food store and post office.
- 2.20 It offers the best opportunity to integrate sustainable development and future occupants of new housing into Colden Common, maintaining the nucleated pattern of development within the 'triangle' of roads which broadly contain the developed part of the village.

- 2.21 Development of the site would provide a natural extension to the village and would be flanked by Highbridge Road, which creates a defensible settlement boundary behind a peripheral screen of trees and hedgerow.
- 2.22 Welbeck Strategic Land LLP's proposals would transform approximately 45% of the site from private land to new parkland, which would provide a highly valuable community resource and destination in terms of recreation, biodiversity, education, heritage, well-designed place-making, and inter-connectivity between the village, countryside and South Downs National Park. It would also secure an expansive 'buffer' between built form in the village and the countryside to the west and south, maintaining the rural character and identity of the village.
- 2.23 Public access to what is currently private land will enable a greater appreciation of the Grade II* listed Brambridge House, land within Brambridge Park and the avenue of lime trees from higher ground.
- 2.24 Enhanced pedestrian and cycle paths into and through the site will provide for ease of movement and local permeability.
- 2.25 The development proposals include multifunctional green infrastructure comprising equipped children's and young people's play space, parkland and recreation facilities; informal green space; and natural green space. It would be of a high quality design and would include recreational, educational and ecological enhancement features and facilities, including outdoor gym equipment, fitness stations, a nature trail, wildlife and heritage interpretation boards, a community orchard, bird/bat boxes, log piles, reptile refuges, insect boxes, and the provision of nectar rich flowers within wildflower grassland.
- 2.26 The existing Public Right of Way on the southern boundary of the site would be upgraded to provide dedicated pedestrian, cycle and bridleway use; and safe dedicated access to the recently built Kiln Lane footpath would be provided along Highbridge Road.

- 2.27 All 27 individual trees that are protected by the Tree Preservation Order and the majority of existing hedgerows would be retained as part of the development proposals. Any minor loss of hedgerow for access into the site would be mitigated by a high quality landscape scheme, including new tree and hedgerow planting.
- 2.28 The proposals would help to balance new development between the east and west of the village and avoid loading all new housing in one area. Development of the site would avoid pedestrians having to cross Main Road to access the village centre; would enable traffic to head towards Winchester, Eastleigh, Southampton, the M3 and M27 without having to use residential streets in the village; and would avoid adding to the concerns of local residents in terms of heavy traffic and congestion on Main Road.
- 2.29 40% affordable housing and a wide choice of homes for a range of household sizes would be provided in the proposed residential development area, in accordance with Local Plan Part 1 policies CP2 and CP3.
- 2.30 Welbeck Strategic Land LLP is committed to making financial contributions to local infrastructure and services. The exact nature of these contributions is subject to further discussion but we are aware that the need for a new community centre; healthcare provision; new classrooms; improved street lighting and drainage improvements are key issues for the local community.

3.0 EXCLUSION OF THE SITE FROM SELECTION

3.1 We participated in the Commonview Community Engagement Day on the 21st of July 2013. The key issues of concern that were raised were the proposed access from Spring Lane; the provision of community facilities; and the loss of access to the site for recreational use.

3.2 Commonview's summary reasons for excluding the site, following their own analysis of questionnaire feedback from the Engagement Day, are: (i) least favoured site in residents' survey; (ii) highly sensitive landscape impact (with cross reference made to the September 2013 WCC draft Landscape Assessment); and (iii) inconsistent with the strategy for development to the east of the village. We are confident that these issues can be addressed.

Vehicular Access

3.3 A number of residents expressed concern with the proposed vehicular access into the site from Spring Lane (which was shown on an indicative layout plan at the Engagement Day), due to the width of the road, particularly when cars are parked on it.

3.4 Vehicular access is now proposed from Highbridge Road following further dialogue with Hampshire County Council's local highway authority.

Loss of Access to the Site for Recreational Use

3.5 A number of people at the Community Engagement Event commented that if the land was to be developed, they would no longer be able to use it for activities such as walking the dog and sledging. This is reflected in Commonview's assessment of the questionnaire responses, where it is confirmed that respondents stated that the development would impact on the parish footpath network.

3.6 The land, with the exception of the public right of way, is private land with no public right of access, a fact which may not be well known by consultation

respondents. The proposals include approximately 3.05 hectares of publicly accessible community parkland (45% of the site), which will be gifted by the landowners to ensure that the land is available to the local community in perpetuity. Significant enhancements and additions to the parish footpath network are proposed, as set out above.

- 3.7 The parkland will make a significant contribution to community facilities in the village, as will financial contributions in respect of planning obligations.

Landscape Impact

- 3.8 The Council's draft Landscape Appraisal for Colden Common, which is not adopted planning policy or guidance and has not been subject to public consultation, was issued into the public domain during Commonview's consultation period and is posted on the Commonview website alongside the proposed village development strategy.
- 3.9 The Council's draft Landscape Appraisal is work in progress and adopts a strategic-level approach for assessing inherent landscape sensitivity rather than a detailed appraisal of the proposed development, set within its landscape context, which includes neighbouring built development. For example, 45% of the proposed development site is new community parkland, but this is not taken into account within the draft appraisal. These issues are identified in a critique of the appraisal that was undertaken by Scarp Landscape Architecture Ltd, which is contained within the previous representations submitted on 6 September 2013.
- 3.10 The critique expresses concern about the draft conclusion that land to the east of Highbridge Road is 'a highly sensitive location (due to overlooking of the South Downs National Park/Itchen Valley) in terms of adverse visual impact on the historic setting of Brambridge Park, Itchen Valley and the South Downs National Park on the high ground along the settlement edge', as this conclusion inadvertently gives the reader a misleading impression of the sensitivity of the land to the east of Highbridge Road to accommodate development.

- 3.11 We believe that new housing development can be delivered on the site and designed to respect local landscape sensitivities; maximise opportunities in landscape and visual terms; and successfully integrates into the local landscape.

Least favoured site in resident's survey

- 3.12 It is difficult to quantify to what extent the indicative development proposals presented in July 2013 (that have now been revised in response to feedback received); the perception of some residents that the site is publicly accessible land; and the conclusions of the Council's draft Landscape Appraisal contributed to questionnaire responses. These responses would have influenced Commonview's conclusion that the land is the least favoured site in the resident's survey and further still that its selection is inconsistent with the strategy for development to the east of the village.
- 3.13 In addition, the Commonview survey questionnaire was poorly designed and confusing. It posed a number of statements with an option to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree, with questions provided on some topics and technical considerations but not others. For example, issues such as access, highways and the ability to provide high quality public open space were not included.
- 3.14 The soundness of Commonview's proposed Development Strategy for the village is therefore questionable.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Land to the East of Highbridge Road represents a logical natural extension to Colden Common. The site is best placed to deliver much needed new housing, parkland and other substantial community benefits.
- 4.2 In accordance with the key principle of Sustainable Development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, land to the east of Highbridge Road should be supported for inclusion as a preferred development site.
- 4.3 We respectfully request that Commonview and the Parish Council re-considers its proposed development strategy in light of the above.

Cgms