

**Delivering local housing for local people
Braishfield public consultation
Braishfield village hall**

A development of nine affordable homes for people with a strong local connection to Braishfield is proposed in the parish.

A consultation event was held in Braishfield Village Hall from 3.00pm – 7.30pm on Monday 8th July 2013 and Wednesday 7th August 2013.

The event was supported by staff from Test Valley Borough Council, Hyde Housing Group and Community Action Hampshire.

The primary purpose of the event was to display the plans of the proposed development, meet the local residents and listen to their concerns or suggestions and to invite written comments on the development proposal. The secondary purpose was to collect further information on the local housing need and provide local people with information on how they might apply for a property in the future.

Results

- **Are you in favour of the development and do you think that the proposed location is suitable?**

Prior to the consultation event, a form was posted out to all residents in Braishfield. This form asked residents whether they (a.) are in favour of the development, (b.) think that the proposed location is suitable and (c.) whether they or any members of their family are in housing need. The results are shown in table 1.

Table 1

| | Yes | No | Not answered |
|---|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Are you in favour of a small development of 9 affordable homes in Braishfield? | 23(61%) | 14 (37%) | 1(2%) |
| Do you consider that the proposed location, south of the Wheatsheaf Public House, to be a suitable site for this development? | 19(50%) | 19(50%) | 0 |
| Are you, or a member of your family, likely to be interested in applying for a tenancy of one of the houses when built? | 8(21%) | 29(76%) | 1(3%) |

- **Resident's thoughts on the scheme including the sketch designs for affordable housing**

33 residents have made comments about the proposed development and some have also made comments on the sketch designs for affordable housing. Some residents made these comments before the drop in event, some during the event and some after the event. Comments made before and after the event were sent via email or post.

A copy of all the relevant comment sheets regarding design received will be sent to the developer and architect. This is so that the many suggestions made or concerns expressed can be carefully considered as part of the design process. It is anticipated that, where possible, suggestions can be incorporated into the scheme to minimise the impact the development will have on existing residents.

The table of results has been ordered to show first the most important issues to residents, regardless of whether they are supportive or in objection. This then continues down to the issues that were least commented on. A total of nine individual topics were raised through the consultation.

1. Housing need

Test Valley Borough Council(TVBC) provided up to date information about local housing need and these figures were accepted by most residents who attended the exhibition however, some residents do not accept the information on numbers.

15 respondents are concerned that the local housing need in Braishfield could be met by the developments in Abbotswood and Romsey. However, many people who we spoke to at the exhibition recognised that a rural exception site is an appropriate solution for local housing need and that to lose local people who are active in Braishfield would be a sad loss.

Many residents think the scheme is well thought out and local affordable homes are required providing that strict criteria are enforced to ensure that only local people will benefit. Officers who attended the exhibition were able to reassure many local people that the affordable homes will go to local people.

2. Housing mix

Current housing need figures show 7 applicants in need of a one bedroom property and 4 in need of a two bedroom property in Braishfield. One resident explains that although he has a local connection to Braishfield, he has not registered for a property as he requires a one bed and he does not see any one beds being built. He explains that there is a demand for one bedroom properties in Braishfield and single people have just as much of a right to continue living in their community as families.

3. Sustainability

Some residents state that the development is a good idea but others are worried by the risk of further development and that the development would not be for local people. A Section 106 Agreement will ensure that homes will be for local people and remain so in perpetuity and this development is consistent with the original housing need survey. Due to the development being an 'exception' site, it will not set any precedent for building outside of the development boundary.

Some residents raise concern about the capacity for additional families in the local school. One suggests that it is necessary to liaise with the local primary school. However, it is unclear whether the school at present is full with children from the catchment area, i.e. Braishfield or if they are having to go further outside of the catchment area.

4. Layout

Some residents have explained that development on the site is contrary to the Village Design Statement which emphasises the importance of the village's dispersed nature. Some suggest scattering the properties around the village. This approach would not be viable for Hyde Housing Group and nine affordable homes is a small development which is in proportion to Braishfield.

5. Location

Some residents explain that it is important that the affordable homes are integrated into the community and not separate from it. Some residents are concerned that the site is too detached from the rest of the village.

Some residents question the choice of site. At the exhibition, two people actively promoted an alternative site that had previously been rejected.

At the exhibition, most people were curious but comforted that the scale of development had a relatively low impact. Rumours suggest we are building all over the field, in the middle, etc. The exhibition helped to clarify the misinformation that is being rumoured.

6. Design

The design layout and elevations were liked by all people we spoke to at the exhibition but one resident has explained that she would like to see modern architecture.

7. Traffic

Some residents are worried that a scheme will lead to an increase in traffic but this is only a small scheme of nine units and many tenants will probably already be living in Braishfield so will not add to the traffic.

8. Access

One resident is concerned that some tenants may rely on public transport and Braishfield does not have a regular public transport network. This is a concern which is often raised by residents. Many residents need younger relatives close by to provide valuable care and support as they get older but many young people are unable to afford properties in their community. This means that many older residents are isolated in their community, unable to use their car anymore and unable to rely on public transport. This scheme will help young people with a local connection to the village live in Braishfield, close to older family members, thus ensuring that older residents are not completely isolated.

9. The consultation process

Some residents feel that 'yes/no' questions suggest that the opinion of local residents is black and white. Rural affordable housing is a complex issue and many feel that we should have given residents more of an opportunity to explain reasons why they support or do not support the scheme in Braishfield.

Please see Table 2 below for the comments made by local residents regarding the proposed development in Braishfield:

Table 2

| Type of comment | Comments from consultation | Support/ Suggestions | Concerns/ Objections | Total |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Housing need | Do not think that Braishfield needs affordable homes due to schemes in Abbotswood and Romsey | | 16 | 16 |
| Sustainability | Development would lead to further development of the surrounding land | | 13 | 13 |
| Housing need | Supports the idea of building affordable homes in the parish | 10 | | 10 |
| Housing need | Concern about whether the homes should remain affordable for local people | | 6 | 6 |
| Sustainability | Concern about agricultural/Greenfield land being used for development | | 6 | 6 |
| Layout | Do not like the development being clumped together, a much better approach would be to scatter the homes through the village | | 6 | 6 |
| Sustainability | The proposal does not conform to the Village Design Statement | | 5 | 5 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|----------|
| Housing need | Concern about the actual level of local housing need – current figures may be misleading | | 4 | 4 |
| Location | Site is too far away – it is not part of the village | | 4 | 4 |
| Sustainability | Impact on local facilities | | 3 | 3 |
| Sustainability | Concern around the capacity in the village school for more residents | | 3 | 3 |
| Design | Happy with the design | 3 | | 3 |
| Housing need | Support as long as the homes are allocated for local people in housing need | 3 | | |
| Sustainability | Residents will have better access to services if they live in some of the other schemes being developed elsewhere | | 2 | 2 |
| Traffic | Increase in traffic | | 2 | 2 |
| The consultation process | 'Yes/No' questions suggest that the opinion of local residents are either black or white | | 2 | 2 |
| Housing mix | Make sure that the specification of the homes is matched to the local housing need esp for one beds | 2 | | 2 |
| Sustainability | We are not an isolated community in danger of losing its young people, we are essentially a commuter village and many have moved to the area within a single generation | | 2 | 2 |
| Sustainability | The site is currently an important vista | | 2 | 2 |
| Layout | Should the proposal be sited further south and away from the Wheatsheaf pub? Noise complaints affecting business | | 2 | 2 |
| Sustainability | Liaison with the local primary school is essential to ensure there are spaces | 1 | | 1 |
| Housing need | What about residents who want to downsize? These homes do not meet their needs | | 1 | 1 |
| Housing need | There needs to be a cut off point re local housing need (set out in S106) | 1 | | 1 |
| Location | The village is already close to Romsey, we do not want it to get any closer | | 1 | 1 |
| Design | A variety of building styles is also important and should be preserved – one design should not be allowed to dominate | | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Layout | The site should not be close to exiting open market homes | | 1 | 1 |
| Design | I would rather see modern architecture | 1 | | 1 |
| Design | Enough land should be provided for gardens, front and back | 1 | | 1 |
| Design | Do not want to see any street lighting incorporated into the scheme to avoid light pollution | 1 | | 1 |
| Design | The style, build, quality needs to be representative of the rest of the village | 1 | | 1 |
| Traffic | This proposal is better than the previous one due to traffic issues | 1 | | 1 |
| Housing mix | Rent only is a good idea | 1 | | 1 |
| Housing mix | The lack of shared equity option reduces people's choices | 1 | | 1 |
| Traffic | Parking must be banned in the vicinity of the proposal to ensure clear sight lines for cars moving in and out of the site, also to ensure there is no hazard on Braishfield road. | 1 | | 1 |
| Access | There is no footpath on the Wheatsheaf public house side of the road; this will be a hazard | 1 | | 1 |
| Access | Affordable housing need suggests that some residents will not have their own means of transport. There is no regular public transport in the parish | | 1 | 1 |
| Housing need | Need more clarification on the criteria set for those who are eligible | 1 | | 1 |
| Housing need | We disagree with the premise that people with strong connections should live there. | | 1 | 1 |
| Housing need | We already have 11 council houses that are rented out. | | 1 | 1 |
| The consultation process | The Parish Council should arrange a public meeting where the results of the survey are made public | 1 | | 1 |
| The consultation process | No such evidence of housing need was made available at the exhibition. | | 1 | 1 |
| Housing need | The housing need survey is out of date. | | 1 | 1 |

Conclusion

Any type of housing development will impact on local residents. The purpose of the two consultation events was to ascertain these areas of concern so that the impact can be minimised.

The two events were generally well received. Around 100 people attended both events and under half chose to leave their written comments. This suggests that many questions were answered at the two events.

The consultation events illustrated the fact that affordable housing is an important issue to many residents in the parish.

61% of respondents in table 1 would support an affordable housing development in the village. This result shows that many residents feel that it is important that affordable homes are built to give local people on low and modest incomes the opportunity to continue living in their community.

What happens next?

Hyde Housing Group and their architect will now consider the suggestions, issues and concerns raised by local residents in this report and continue to work up the design proposals into a planning application. This will include further discussions with Housing Development Officers at Test Valley Borough Council. The Parish Council will also continue to be consulted.

If planning consent is granted and the other consents required for the development are granted, then Test Valley Borough Council will enter into legal agreements with all parties that will control the occupation of the units for local people.

Test Valley Borough Council, Hyde Housing Group and the Community Action Hampshire wishes to express their sincere thanks to the Parish Council and the community for their continuing support throughout this project.