

**Report on Final Consultation of the Development Brief for  
the Former Castle Hill Middle School, Haverhill  
Barley Homes (Group) Ltd**

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 West Suffolk Councils require that all local plan allocated housing sites are supported by concept statements/development briefs or master plans. The document required depends on the complexity and size of the site.
- 1.2 The Castle Hill Middle School site in Haverhill is allocated in Policy HV5(c) of the Local Plan for a housing development of around 25 dwellings. After discussions with the Council, it was decided that for this site, a Development Brief was appropriate.
- 1.3 This Report has been prepared by Ingleton Wood LLP on behalf of Barley Homes (Group) Ltd following an extensive consultation on the draft Development Brief for the former Castle Hill Middle School site in Haverhill.
- 1.4 The draft Development Brief was prepared in conjunction with St Edmundsbury Borough Council with work commencing on the document in late 2017. Following an initial consultation event on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and extensive engagement with the local community and key stakeholders, a draft Development Brief for the site was created in October 2018.
- 1.5 Following agreement on the principles of the draft Development Brief with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the draft was officially subject to consultation for the period between 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018. Within this period, a consultation event was held at the Haverhill Arts Centre on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The results of this final consultation exercise were reviewed and the final Development Brief was issued to St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018.
- 1.6 This document outlines the details of the consultation that was undertaken on the draft Development Brief and the subsequent revisions that were made prior to the submission of the final Development Brief for adoption.

## 2.0 Consultation Publicity

- 2.1 It was agreed that a final public consultation event should be held for members of the local community and key stakeholders to review the draft Development Brief and provide any further comments for consideration prior to its submission for adoption. The public exhibition was arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018.
- 2.2 Flyers advertising the event were delivered to via Royal Mail to 641 residents located within the vicinity of the site. The map outlining the extent of publicity in this area is contained in Appendix A. A copy of the flyer is contained in Appendix B. The flyers were posted on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018.
- 2.3 The event was also advertised in the Haverhill Echo that was published and distributed within Haverhill on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018. A copy of the advert proof is contained in Appendix C.
- 2.4 The event was publicised on the Barley Homes (Group) website via the following link: <https://barleyhomesgroup.co.uk/developments/castle-hill-middle-school/>. St Edmundsbury Borough Council also advertised consultation on the Development Brief via their website at: <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/Consultations/castlehilldevelopmentbriefconsultation.cfm>.
- 2.5 Local Members were advised of the consultation via emails sent on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018 to the following Borough Councillors and Town Councillors relevant to Haverhill: Cllr Bramwell, Cllr Brown, Cllr Burns, Cllr Byrne, Cllr Crooks, Cllr Fox (Paula), Cllr Fox (Quillon), Cllr Hanlon, Cllr Marks, Cllr Mason, Cllr McManus, Cllr Pilley, Cllr Roach (David), Cllr Roach (Sue), Cllr Robins, Cllr Smith, Cllr Turner, Cllr Williams, Cllr Yang. Invitation letters were also posted to the addresses publicly available for these Councillors. The clerk of the Town Council was notified of the consultation via email on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018.
- 2.6 In addition to members of the local community and elected Members, key stakeholders were advised of the consultation event via email on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018. The list of key stakeholders was obtained from St Edmundsbury Borough Council directly and contained details of stakeholders such as statutory authorities and community interest groups.

### **3.0 Consultation Event**

- 3.1 The consultation event was held between 3pm and 7pm on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in The Studio of the Haverhill Arts Centre.
- 3.2 Exhibition boards were displayed to visitors at the event and are contained at Appendix D. Two sets of these boards were available for viewing within the room.
- 3.3 The exhibition boards comprise four separate boards to outline the key principles of the Development Brief and the process for arriving at the draft that was being consulted on. The first board provided context of the site. The second draft summarised some of the key outcomes from the public consultation of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The third board is a visual aid that outlines the site constraints and a potential development strategy for the housing site. The final board depicts conclusions of the draft Development Brief in showing the opportunities plan and the recommendations for the site.
- 3.4 Copies of the full draft Development Brief were also available at the event for attendees to read in full.
- 3.5 Members of the design and planning team who prepared the draft Development Brief, as well as representatives from Barley Homes (Group), were available to answer questions and discuss the document in more detail.
- 3.6 A total of 18 people signed the consultation register. However, further attendees were present at the event but elected not to sign the register on entry.
- 3.7 Questionnaires were available at the event with a comment box for surveys to be returned on the day. Attendees were also invited to return questionnaires by way of post or email before 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018, if this was a preferred method. A copy of the questionnaire provided on the day is contained in Appendix E.

## 4.0 Feedback Results

- 4.1 A total of six questionnaires were completed and returned at the event. One further response was received via email following the event. As a result, analysis is made on the basis of these seven responses to the draft Development Brief proposals and a summary of these comments is contained in Appendix F.
- 4.2 Question one asked attendees whether they felt all of the constraints on the site had been identified. The majority of respondents (57%) said yes. Comments raised in respect of this question related primarily to the access to the site, car parking, the recreational use of the open space and the drainage of the open space.
- 4.3 Question two asked whether all of the opportunities for the site had been identified. The majority of respondents (43%) said no, however, two people (29%) didn't respond to the question. The comments in response to this question related solely to the open space element of the site. One person considered that the open space would be better used for more housing. Two respondents wanted to see additional commitment within the Development Brief to specific uses such as playing pitches for the Rugby Club or educational uses for nearby schools.
- 4.4 Question three asked for views on the draft design principles for the housing site that were set out within Section 4.0 of the draft document. The majority of respondents (71%) agreed. Comments in response to this question related to the access from Chivers Road and street lighting.
- 4.5 Question four asked respondents whether they agreed with the draft recommendations. Three people (43%) stated that they agreed and three people (43%) also had no response. Only one person (14%) stated that they did not agree. In the comments section, reference was made to the need to provide off-site highways improvements to the junction between Chivers Road and Camps Road and to provide traffic calming measures on Chivers Road.
- 4.6 Question five asked if any further recommendations are required. Three people (43%) felt further recommendations were required. Two people (26%) felt no further recommendations were required and two people didn't respond. The comments in response to this question related to seeking clarification on the open space uses, car parking and off-site traffic generation.
- 4.7 A final box on the consultation questionnaire asked for any further comments. These comments varied in nature, but predominantly referred to:
- The use of the open space for sports facilities;
  - Car parking provision;
  - Maintaining access to the forest area for St Felix School;
  - Address crime in the area;
  - Avoiding School Lane for access; and
  - Commitments for adoption of the open space.

## 5.0 Conclusions and Final Revisions

- 5.1 The consultation period ended on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018. Following this, the draft Development Brief was reviewed in order to consider the feedback. Wherever possible, revisions were subsequently made.
- 5.2 In relation to the open space, some respondents made comment that they felt the opportunities for this part of the site are vague. Ultimately, the Development Brief is a guide for what could be acceptable on this site and is not a mechanism for securing a specific type of development. Notwithstanding this, a valid point was made in the comment section of Question 2 that stated:

*“The Forest School site currently used by St Felix School is a great resource but has suffered greatly from security issues since the closure and demolition of Castle Hill School. This would be a great opportunity to develop this area further, for the possible benefit of other schools, preschools and community groups.”*

- 5.3 Recommendation 6 already relates to the Forest School site used by St Felix School and reference to its importance is included throughout the document. Whilst it is not the duty of the Development Brief to secure this part of the open space for a specific use, it is considered that any future development should seek to enhance and protect existing uses wherever possible. As a result of this comment the following statement is added to Recommendation 6 within the final Development Brief in order to strengthen the recommendation:

*“Proposals for the open space should be mindful of this adjacent ‘forest school’ and should ensure its operation is not compromised. Proposals that would allow this area to thrive further should be encouraged.”*

- 5.4 Comments in relation to car parking were made in response to questions 1 and 5 and within the further comments section. St Edmundsbury Borough Council will determine future planning applications on the site with consideration to their adopted planning policies. Provision of car parking spaces will be considered at this stage. However, for the avoidance of doubt, a new Recommendation 14 has been added to the Development Brief to state:

*“Parking for the housing site should be provided in accordance with the adopted Parking Standards.”*

- 5.5 It is noted that a number of respondents referred to existing off-site highways issues within questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 as well as within the further comments section. It is not within the remit of the Development Brief to guide development of off-site highways works. However, future proposals can and should seek to ensure access into the site for housing is safe and appropriate. Accordingly, for the avoidance of doubt, a new Recommendation 15 has been added to the Development Brief to state:

*“Vehicular access to the housing site should be taken from Chivers Road exclusively. Adequate visibility must be achieved to ensure this access is safe.”*

- 5.6 Comments were also raised at the final consultation event by Councillor Burns, Ward Member for Haverhill East, suggesting an extension of the eastern boundary of the residential site to incorporate additional residential units. Accordingly, the inclusion of such land for residential use would be contrary to the adopted Policy HV5c of the Haverhill Vision 2031, which the Development Brief is required to accord to. As such, this recommendation was not carried forward within the final Development Brief.
- 5.7 The final Development Brief has been revised in order to incorporate the above revisions. This final document was submitted to Chris Rand, Principal Planning Officer at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018 in order to commence having the Development Brief adopted as a guide for future development of this site.