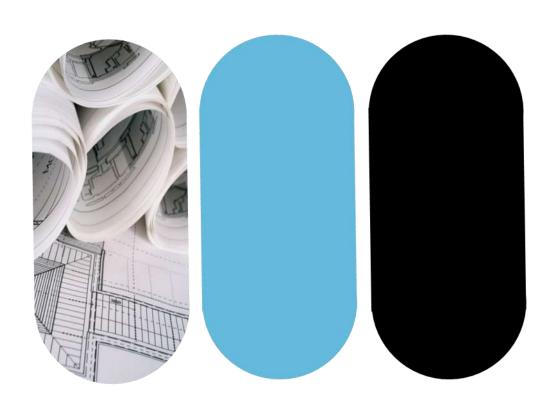


Bellway Homes Limited

Statement of Community Involvement

Land East of A6, Rushden

May 2022





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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Marrons Planning on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited ("the Applicant"), and forms part of their outline planning application for development of land to the east of the A6 in Rushden for residential use.
- 1.2 The proposed description of development for the planning application is:

"Outline planning application for the erection of up to 450 dwellings, a community / retail / and or health facility, improvement works to the existing A6 / Bedford Road roundabout including provision of shared pedestrian / cycle access, parking, landscaping, drainage features, open space, and associated infrastructure, with all matters reserved except for vehicular access into the site from A6/Bedford Road".

- 1.3 The planning application relates to a draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan Part 2 for the East Northamptonshire District (Policy EN28 'Land east of the A6/ Bedford Road, Rushden' refers).
- 1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF" or "the Framework") acknowledges there is no statutory requirement for developers to carry out consultation before submitting planning applications. Instead, paragraphs 39-42 encourage pre-application engagement between developers, local authorities, the local community and statutory and non-statutory consultees, on a voluntary basis.
- 1.5 In particular, Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states, "Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."



- 1.6 The Applicant has proactively engaged with the East Northamptonshire Council (as was) and the newly formed North Northamptonshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority. The Applicant has also engaged with Rushden Town Council, the local community and other stakeholders.
- 1.7 The various strands of consultation and associated feedback have informed the proposed development and the Illustrative Masterplan, which has been subject to several design iterations.
- 1.8 The purpose of this SCI is to demonstrate how the proposed development has been informed by pre-application consultation. It provides an overview of the consultation undertaken, the information shared, and opportunities given for feedback.
- 1.9 In particular, the SCI summarises the feedback received and how these comments have been considered in preparing the outline planning application.



2. DISCUSSIONS WITH RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

- 2.1 The application site falls within the administrative boundaries of Rushden Town Council, which has a role in commenting on planning applications submitted to North Northamptonshire Council.
- 2.2 The Applicant has liaised closely with the Town Council in this capacity from early 2020. This took the form of an introductory meeting, when Bellway presented and sought feedback on their initial proposals.
- 2.3 Regular update meetings have been held, the most recent of which was on 2nd February 2022, prior to the outline planning application submission. The Town Council has been kept informed of the evolving scheme design and planning application drafting. They were also informed of the planned public consultation and as part of this, commented on the proposed leaflet delivery area.
- 2.4 Discussions have included the Town Council's own outline planning application for a new rugby club house and four playing pitches (planning application reference 20/01174/FUL), on agricultural land immediately adjacent to the site. This application is currently under consideration by North Northamptonshire Council.
- 2.5 The Town Council's proposals are not dependent on the Bellway scheme, but access would be taken from the existing roundabout on the A6 / Bedford Road and through the Bellway site. As such, the discussions have focussed on how to ensure that both developments are deliverable, and how they might be co-ordinated.
- 2.6 The proposed rugby club facilities would be funded by the redevelopment of the existing rugby club site to the west of the A6 for a residential development. An outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings (planning application reference 20/01160/OUT) has been submitted for the redevelopment of that site. At the time of submission, a decision on that application is also still pending.



3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 In light of the position with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic at the time, it was decided to hold the public consultation online, rather than to host a physical consultation event.
- 3.2 The public consultation exercise was carried out in the late summer / early autumn of 2021, with the emerging proposals hosted on a dedicated project website, and an opportunity for local people and stakeholders to comment.
- 3.3 The consultation was publicised via a leaflet drop to local residents. A copy of the leaflet is contained in Appendix 1 of the SCI and details of the final distribution area (refined in response to comments from the Town Council) can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 The Town Council was also made aware of the consultation and invited to share the details with interested parties.
- 3.5 The website address 'http://www.landeastofrushden.co.uk' was used to share information about the site and the proposed development. This included some of the background to the draft allocation in the emerging Part 2 Local Plan, the technical work carried out by the Applicant to understand site opportunities and constraints, and the emerging Illustrative Masterplan.
- 3.6 The following drawings and documents were hosted on the website:
 - Consultation Leaflet
 - Site Vision Document
 - Draft Concept Masterplan
 - Draft Illustrative Masterplan
- 3.7 All of the plans and documents were available to download as PDF files, so they could be saved for later viewing and easily shared electronically.



- 3.8 Those accessing the website could leave comments using a dedicated online form. The feedback form asked three main questions to help process the comments received and included an opportunity for people to leave further comments. The questions were as follows:
 - Q1. 'Do you have any comments on the concept masterplan?'
 - Q2. 'Do you have any suggestions on how the masterplans could be improved?'
 - Q3. 'Are there any other opportunities or constraints, which we may have overlooked?'
 - Q4. 'If you have any further comments, please detail them here'.
- 3.9 Comments were invited from the date that the website went live on 24th September 2021. The deadline for comments was the 15th October 2021. Subsequently, a change to the likely application submission date saw the consultation deadline extended, until the 30th November 2021.
- 3.10 In addition to using the website form, comments could also be submitted to Marrons Planning directly, using the e-mail address: 'rushden@marrons-planning.co.uk'.
- 3.11 All of the comments made, whether submitted via the website form or via separate e-mail, were received into the same dedicated e-mail inbox. This ensured that all of the feedback was captured and could be considered together.
- 3.12 The public consultation website remains online as a source of information, with the various documents still available to download. The website will be updated to make clear that any comments on the outline planning application once made should be submitted to the local planning authority.



4 SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

4.1 In total, 19 individual comments were received during the consultation.

Table 4.1 below summarises the comments.

Table 4.1 – Summary of Consultation Comments / Response

Comment	Response
Principle of Development / Loc	cation
One resident expressed concern at the loss of Green Belt to accommodate the proposed development.	The site is not part of the designated Green Belt, but is an undeveloped green field site. In terms of the principle of development, the land is a proposed allocation in the emerging Part 2 Local Plan.
	Through the preparation of the Local Plan, the application site has been identified as a sustainable location to help deliver the housing requirement set out in the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy.
Air Quality	
Some comments raised concerns that air quality in the area is already poor and that more homes and traffic will have a negative effect.	This is considered in the Environmental Statement (Air Quality Chapter). The primary source of air pollution near to the site is from vehicles travelling on the local road network, particularly the adjacent A6.
	All residential areas proposed on-site are set back at least 25 metres from the A6, which reduces the potential exposure of future occupants to pollutant emissions from vehicles travelling on the A6.
	Furthermore, retaining existing trees and hedgerows will help to reduce pollutant concentrations.
Clarity sought on air quality proposals having regard to the incineration plant located circa 1 mile from the southern boundary.	Air quality has been considered as part of the Environmental Statement submitted with the outline application, and the impact of the proposed development assessed having regard to baseline conditions.



Comment	Response
	The existing air quality conditions near to the site have been established using background concentration estimates and local monitoring data. This baseline work did not identify any pollutants above the relevant standards.
Flood Risk	
Concern that the drainage ditch within the site often overflows and causes flooding. Observation that flooding issues related to the drainage ditch are often exacerbated by poor drainage beneath the A6.	The current flooding experienced at the western boundary of the site relates to the culvert beneath the A6, and clearance works by the Local Highway Authority. This is a maintenance issue. A Flood Risk Assessment, informed by hydraulic modelling, has been carried
	out to understand the surface water flood risk. It is acknowledged that within the site, some areas around the brook do flood, and development would avoid the worst affected areas.
	A Surface Water Drainage Strategy is proposed which includes a number of attenuation basins and permeable paving which will reduce the existing flood risk to ensure the development is safe from flooding. The detailed drainage proposals can be secured via planning conditions.
Highways and Accessibility	
Concern at lack of public transport services locally, as the existing bus route is not well served.	Opportunities for enhancing connectivity by bus to / from the site have been explored.
Suggestion that a bus-turning circle near to the proposed shop would be advantageous.	No us turning area is proposed, but the development has been designed so that buses can be routed through the site.
One respondent was concerned that the only realistic pedestrian access into the site will be via the A6 trunk road. They suggested a pedestrian footbridge should be provided.	A new footway / cycleway will be provided along the A6/Bedford Road to connect with existing footway provision on Rushden Road. A toucan crossing is proposed to help pedestrians cross the A6. It is not proposed to provide a footbridge.



Comment	Response
Request that footpaths provided also be cycle routes and that they connect with Newton Road north of the site.	The treatment of the footpaths will be considered at the reserved matters stage. However, the Illustrative Masterplan envisages connections beyond the site.
Request that the public footpath near the A6 be improved (it can get very muddy).	The proposals envisage the public footpath will be incorporated in the development within an area of public open space. The precise details would be developed at the reserved matters stage.
Concern about whether the A6 will be able to cope with the additional traffic generated by	A Transport Assessment has been prepared which assesses the impact of the development.
the development.	Traffic modelling suggests the development will generate modest vehicular movements during the morning and evening peak. All nearby junctions are forecast to operate within capacity during these times.
Concern that only one access is planned into the site – a second access onto the A6 should be provided in case of blockages.	The Transport Assessment confirms that only one access into the site is required. The access is to be modified and includes some flaring of the A6 northern and southern arms to increase capacity at the roundabout. The proposed improvements will be subject to an independent road safety audit.
Concern that the proposed roundabout is not large enough – traffic controls may be needed to ensure traffic flows smoothly.	The Transport Assessment concludes that the existing roundabout will provide a safe access into the site.
	An improved arm will be provided on the eastern side of the roundabout and there will be some flaring on the A6 northern and southern arms to increase capacity. There is no need for traffic signals at the roundabout.
	The proposed improvements will be subject to an independent road safety audit.



Comment	Response
One person asked what highway improvements are planned to address additional traffic heading towards Bedford.	There are no specific proposals to address additional traffic heading towards Bedford. All junctions in the vicinity of the site are expected to operate within capacity, including at peak times.
Request that the scheme provide sufficient car parking, with suggestion that the rugby club parking should be self-contained.	Car parking will be integrated into the proposed development. This will be considered further at reserved matters stage.
	The proposed community facility is being promoted by the Town Council and is separate to the Bellway proposals. As a detailed application, it must demonstrate that sufficient car parking provision will be made within the site.
Biodiversity	
Provision needs to be made for bat, birds and hedgehogs, which access the northern part of the site.	The landscape proposals provide opportunities to create new biodiversity rich habitats that can contribute towards biodiversity net gain overall.
Current field margins play an important role for wildlife including insects. Nettles and thistles make an important contribution to wildlife and should be allowed to flourish.	The existing field margins would be removed as part of the proposed development. The Environmental Statement (Biodiversity Chapter) assesses the arable and field margins as being of 'low conservation value'. The proposed development would have a positive impact on biodiversity overall.
Landscape and Visual	
One respondent was concerned that Rushden would merge with adjoining towns.	The proposal is to develop land immediately adjacent to the built up edge of Rushden.
One resident was concerned at the loss of land separating Rushden from the next town.	The extent of the site and the proposed development will not cause Rushden to merge with neighbouring towns.



Comment	Response
The green infrastructure will require financial inputs for maintenance, care and upkeep.	The upkeep and maintenance of new areas of open space will be secured via a Management Company. The maintenance will be funded via a service charge payable by new residents. This could be secured through a Section 106 agreement.
Trees	
One respondent was concerned that the Ash trees lining the drainage ditch are under attack from Ash dieback disease.	An Arboricultural Survey has been undertaken, which noted that the trees on either side of the watercourse running through the site comprised primarily ash, also hawthorn, blackthorn and elder.
	The survey did not find evidence of disease and the trees are identified for retention, mainly due to their landscaping value.
Further suggestion that trees planted should include a range of British varieties.	The Arboricultural Survey recommends that to maximise the biodiversity value of the scheme, native species or varieties should be specified. This will be taken forward in the landscaping proposals at the reserved matters stage.
Clarity sought on air quality / tree planting proposals.	It is recognised that tree planting can have a positive impact on air quality. The precise tree planting proposals will be addressed at the reserved matters stage.
Community and Amenity	
Some residents were concerned that no education facilities were being proposed and commented that existing schools were already full.	The proposed development is not a strategic site, and does not generate sufficient pupils to warrant a primary school on site. Subject to confirmation of need, improvements to schools that serve the area can be addressed as part of the section 106 agreement.
One resident commented that fibre broadband should be included in the scheme from the outset.	The suggestion is noted. The precise requirements for broadband will be determined later as part of the construction phase.



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Comment	Response
Residents also commented that further / improved medical provision was needed, because existing services were poor.	The proposed development is not a strategic site. The proposed development includes for a community / retail and / or health facility, in accordance with Policy EN28 of the draft part 2 Local Plan.
	The precise use of the facility will be determined later, at the Reserved Matters stage.
One resident suggested that the scheme should include a shop, as 'large shopping provision' was poor.	The proposed development is not a strategic site. The proposals include for a community / retail and / or health facility, in accordance with Policy EN28 of the draft part 2 Local Plan.
	The precise use of the facility will be determined later, at the Reserved Matters stage.
One resident commented that environmental benefits for the local community should be included in the proposed development.	The proposed development provides new areas of public open space as well as further green infrastructure corridors through and around the new homes.
One resident welcomed the outdoor spaces planned, and commented that areas are needed for football, cricket, hockey and archery.	The site is not a strategic housing site and so is not necessary to provide onsite sports pitch provision. Financial contributions will be made to support existing sports pitch provision locally.
Housing Mix	
Some responses sought information on the mix and type on housing to be provided.	The precise housing mix will be determined at the reserved matters stage. The houses will be designed to provide a mix of homes with larger and smaller sized properties.
Miscellaneous	
One resident noted that green power provision did not seem to be included in the plan.	These matters would be dealt with at reserved matters stage.
One response stated that dog bins were required.	This can be addressed at the reserved matters stage. It will form part of the detailed landscaping proposals.



APPENDIX 1 CONSULTATION LEAFLET



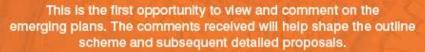
Proposals for LAND EAST OF THE A6, RUSHDEN ushden Primo Academy Proposed Rubgy Club







Proposals for LAND EAST OF THE A6, RUSHDEN



The consultation is being held online and further information, including the emerging plans and interactive comments form, can viewed at:

www.landeastofrushden.co.uk

The website will be live from 24th September 2021

BELLWAY HOMES is consulting on emerging proposals to develop land east of the A6 and north of Bedford Road in Rushden.

The land is a proposed allocation in the draft North Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan. The Part 2 Plan aims to deliver on the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) commitment to build 8,400 new homes in the former East Northamptonshire Council area between 2011 and 2031.

The site is a logical extension to the town of Rushden and is a sustainable location for new homes. Bellway's vision is to create an attractive and sustainable community that leaves a positive legacy for current and future residents.

Bellway will be submitting an outline planning application for the development of around 450 homes and supporting infrastructure, including a community facility, at the site.

The emerging proposals emphasise the importance of green spaces and areas of public open space that remain important features of the site.

You will be able to comment on the proposals via the website, or by e-mailing
rushden@marrons-planning.co.uk. The closing date for comments is 15th October 2021.

After that date, Bellway will be working to finalise the initial proposals and their planning application.

The outline application will be made to North Northamptonshire Council later this year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the proposals, please email:

rushden@marrons-planning.co.uk







APPENDIX 2

MAP OF LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION AREA





Area east of Application Site



Area south of Bedford Road



Area west of A6



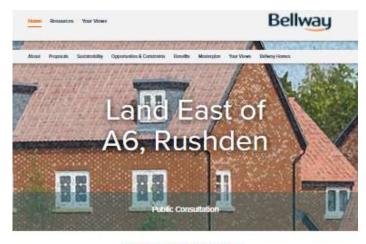
Area south of Bedford Road



APPENDIX 3

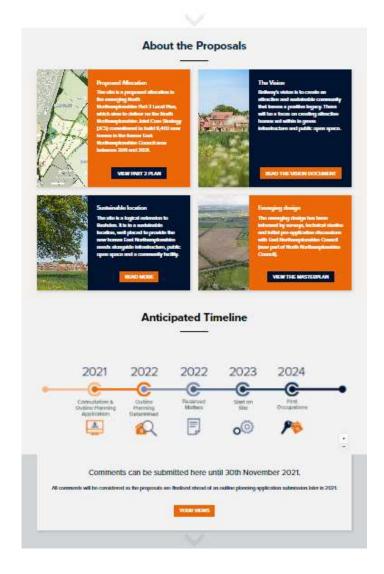
CONSULTATION WEBSITE





Thank you for visiting this website.

Bellway Homes is currently consulting on emerging proposals for the development of land to the east of the A6 and north of Bedford Road, Rushden.













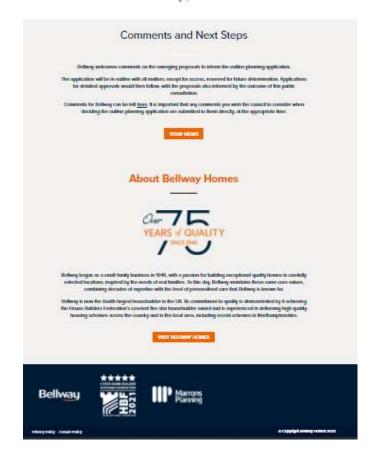














APPENDIX 4

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FORM



Land East of A6, Rushden - Your Views

Thank you for taking the time to visit the consultation website.

This feedback form enables you to give us your views on the emerging proposals and express your thoughts in more detail. Your answers will be taken into account in the formulation of the outline scheme and subsequent detailed proposals.

Please provide your contacts details below if you wish to be kept updated.
Name:
Address:
Email:
1. Do you have any comments on the concept masterplan?
2. Do you have any suggestions on how the emerging scheme could be improved?
3. Are there any other opportunities or constraints, which we may have overlooked?
4. If you have any further comments, please detail them here:
Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.
By submitting this form you agree to us using your information for the purposes of preparing the planning application in relation to Land East of A6 Rushden. We will not share your personal information with third parties.
If you prefer you can e-mail your comments to us via rushden@marrons-planning.co.uk . The deadline for comments is Friday 24 th September 2021