

Standing Conference on New Community North of Fareham

Perspectives on the new community - Note 1 Greenspace infrastructure and the wider landscape setting (Note of workshop on 20 November 2012)

Summary

*The location of the new community close to the South Downs National Park and other major conservation sites makes it important both to get the landscape setting right but also to create a new green gateway. It should bring into being one or more greenspace “**star attractions**” which will not only satisfy the day to day needs of residents but be good enough to attract visitors from Fareham and the wider area. In particular:*

- (i) “**Star attraction**” options include a new path/cycleway network running from Fareham Common to Wickham West Walk and from Knowle west to Botley Woods and east to Creech. **Investment in better woodland management in these areas** would improve their appeal subject to their SSSI status. A “**gateway**” **countryside centre** provided as part of the development gain could draw in visitors and potential walkers/cyclists (see paras 8-13);*
- (ii) Given the wider landscape settings, the priority in handling of green space across the areas of built development should be a series of **smaller spaces within housing areas to be developed as community gardens, managed and designed by local residents, and in the central area (adjoining the district centre) a multiple use space including a tranquil area**, well screened by new planting given the (motorway)noise issues affecting the site. Given the rising height of the site – and views south east to the Spinnaker Tower – it could include a viewing platform or tower (see paras 14-21);*
- (iii) **The southern gateway**, where the new community will be most visible to Fareham and the motorway, offers an opportunity for green noise barriers and to use **at least part of the area for SUDS to take surface water drainage and run off in creating a wetlands environmental feature**. It could be the “starting off point” for east west pedestrian/cycle-way/bridal-way links crossing across the motorway and to connect east and west from the Wallington Valley / Portsdown Hill to the Meon Valley and Botley Woods (see paras 22-31).*

- 1. Introduction to the series of Perspective** This is the first of a series of notes to record the emerging views of the Standing Conference on aspects of the new community north of Fareham, as outlined in Fareham Borough Council’s adopted core strategy (See the end of this note for a description of what the Standing Conference does). The views expressed in these notes reflect the broad thrust of discussion in the Standing Conference and not the

views of any one organisation. See the full health warning at the end of this Note.

- 2. The wider landscape setting, the greenspace principles and green infrastructure** are key considerations at the start of planning for a new community. This is particularly the case at Fareham given the proximity to outstanding landscapes such as those included in the South Downs National Park, conservation sites of European significance, existing woodland which is highly valued and the need to handle sensitively links to surrounding communities. Given this sensitive green setting there needs to be a strong set of principles which determine how greenspace is provided, managed and added to throughout the development and along (and adjoining) its boundaries. In particular the new development will need to bring into being one or more greenspace “star attractions” which will not only satisfy the day to day needs of residents but be good enough to attract wider visitors and so relieve pressure on the most pressured conservation areas nearby, for example on the coast. An example of this would be joint work with neighbouring authorities and owners to improve access to areas of woodland adjoining and beyond the site where investment is needed to make the most of their potential.
- 3.** The handling and high quality design of greenspace within and along the boundaries of the development are equally important. Trees, spaces for play, cultivation and gardens are all vital not only to the attractiveness of the development but to the health and well being of those who live there. The Standing Conference has acknowledged the attraction of building on Garden City principles. However if the development as a whole is to be economically viable choices on use of space need to be made. The Standing Conference visit to Poundbury illustrated that a traditional “market town” character of development is feasible while achieving still high densities (around 35 dwellings per hectare in Poundbury phase 1 – broadly comparable to the current expectation for Fareham), together with attractive greenspace although with small gardens .
- 4.** The Standing Conference has begun its process of contributing to this stage of planning for the new community (preparation of the Area action Plan and supporting documents including an indicative masterplan) by holding a workshop discussion on 3 critical aspects of greenspace. It considered 3 topic areas:

 - (i) The setting and links to the wider landscape/conservation area around the site;
 - (ii) The handling of greenspace across the areas of built development;
 - (iii) The “gateway” area to the south linking to Fareham.

5. The approach in each case was to look at why each of the above area/aspects was important, consider its potential and how it could be designed to get the best prospect for making it a “star quality” green attraction for residents and visitors. The discussion also considered what types of benefit it could provide, how it could be provided at least cost , who might be best placed to provide or manage the asset and what action could be taken quickly once a decision on the project was made. Clearly more work will be needed on each of these – the point of the discussion was to provide pointers and a sense of priorities and opportunities.
6. The workshop on 20 November 2012 (see programme at B) was informed by expert presentations by Hampshire County Council, Hants and IOW Wildlife Trust and an independent greenspace consultant, as well as an update on Fareham Borough Council’s planning work in preparing the AAP and indicative masterplan.
7. Some of the issues raised went wider than greenspace issues and will be included in the forthcoming workshop on Quality of Place and masterplanning. Governance is another major issue which the Standing Conference will need to return to in a separate event.

Topic 1 The wider landscape and conservation setting and the scope to create better links and networks

8. Why is this issue important and what is the potential?
The new community is at the interface between the area of development along the coastal strip of South Hampshire and the outstanding landscapes and conservation areas to the north. These include the South Downs National Park and Wickham Common, Creech Woods to the north, the Meon Valley and Botley Woods to the west. However some of these areas such as Botley Woods could benefit from more investment and management to be more accessible and allow a greater range of recreational uses and some of that could be funded from development, although it will be important not to damage or reduce their SSSI status. The new community needs to make creative use of these great assets on its border if it is to have a good relationship with its setting and reduce outward travel to other attractions.
9. What could be created?
The new community could be the driving force in opening up long distance recreational trails which can be accessed from the edge of Fareham (which currently has few footpaths leading directly to the countryside) and which create a new path/cycleway network running from Fareham Common to

Wickham West Walk and from Knowle west to Botley Woods and east to Creech. Investment in better woodland management in these areas would improve their appeal and the need for this is a priority within the Forest of Bere project (see Annex A for references). A “gateway” countryside centre provided as part of the development gain could draw in visitors and potential walkers/cyclists (a similar scheme was prepared as a possible Hampshire County Council bid for Millennium funding – see examples – incorporating a traditional crafts centre to provide training in for example woodland related crafts and charcoal burning).

10. What are its benefits?

Action to increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling routes in and around the new community will contribute to reducing pressure on the road network, and will help reduce pressures on other conservation areas where visitor pressure is too high (likely to be a formal requirement by Natural England). There is also scope to use the network to strengthen links with local farmers and food producers and benefit from joint promotion with the neighbouring authorities and the National Park.

11. How could it best be managed, by whom and at least cost ?

An investment partnership with neighbouring authorities and landowners (in particular Winchester CC and Hants CC) to create a co-ordinated package of improvements will be essential to delivery. The landowners and developers of the new community would need to provide some of the access and investment together with other major developments such as those in Winchester district, eg north of Whiteley). Negotiations will be needed in particular with Hampshire County Council and Forestry Enterprises, managers of Botley Woods and Whiteley Pastures, and a long term plan for safeguarding the network drawn up.

12. What action could be taken quickly to help enable this to happen?

An immediate step is to make a study of existing ownerships and potential path options in areas where links are missing or of poor quality. Better signage and information for existing routes of good quality will help increase awareness and potential future usage.

13. There is also a concern that more needs to be done now to take a cumulative view of the impacts of the range of major new developments proposed in South Hampshire – not only north of Fareham, but north of Whiteley, West of Waterlooville and so on. The local authorities and the conservation agencies need to review the adequacy of work so far and demonstrate a joined up approach on this issue.

Topic 2 Handling of greenspace within the development, particularly the central area

14. Why is this issue important and what is the potential?

The way space is handled in the developed area of the new community will be critical to its success in terms of providing a place that is distinctive, welcoming, safe and easy to move around. It also needs to be adaptable and resource efficient. The decision on how much and what type of greenspace is needed and deliverable within the developed area has to start with an analysis of existing provision around the periphery of the site (including any deficiencies in type of space already available), and of the expected population in terms of overall numbers and age profile (eg how much family housing/ expected child population will help determine area of play space).

15. Another key issue is how the character of spaces should change and develop across the site and the workshop discussed how a gradation of character from naturalistic on the edges of the development to more formal towards the centre might be appropriate. The sloping nature of the site could be used to create some subtle but effective landform which helped reduce impact of noise and views of development from the south, (eg a series of stepped spaces protected by earth mounding). As the site is largely devoid of original vegetation, there is the potential for the scheme to reintroduce hedgerows and woodland into the landscape structure, linking to the Forest of Bere character.

16. What could be created?

While recognising that the final location of the district centre is still to be confirmed, the central area will be particularly important in establishing character and there is a strong case for giving this priority in getting the project underway. The workshop considered the alternative approaches – whether this location would work best with a large green space at its heart work (which could work against creating a successful dense, busy centre), or whether should there be a string of smaller spaces with different functions - potentially following the line of the gas pipe which can't be built on in any case. Given the attractions of major landscape areas to the west and north, the workshop inclined towards the latter view although it was agreed that there needed to be as a minimum a central space that could provide the function of a community events space and a formal central destination. Just as important was the need to provide a series of smaller spaces within housing areas with potential to be developed as community gardens, managed and designed by local residents.

17. The greatest potential of a central area in the new community therefore would be less in creating an additional landscape area and more in providing a multiple use space including a tranquil area, possibly with public or community

gardens, well to the north within the site and well screened by new planting given the (motorway)noise issues affecting the site. Given the rising height of the site – and views south east to the Spinnaker Tower – it could include a viewing platform or tower, and make a feature of the landscape heritage of the site as a whole. The idea of setting up one of the spaces in the developed area with a horticultural employment training and landscape heritage centre as a focus was also discussed - and the idea of including a tree nursery as part of this - potentially with the existing nearby nursery.

18. Wickham provided an example of a successful busy, central area around its square and also illustrated the need to get parking right – failure to provide it adequately would create tensions and reduce attractiveness to visitors. Another potential problem area in current experience was failure to think long term when designing planting and management – something attractive in years 3-7 could become an overgrown threat to light at 10-15.

19. What are its benefits?

This would be a destination space giving shape and character to the plan for the new community and provide a focus for events to help build the new community. There is also potential to involve the new residents in the final design of this and other neighbourhood spaces by looking at a model of phased implementation (and some funding delayed to support this).

20. How could it best be managed, by whom and at least cost ?

This will be a keynote area in giving character and identity and should be provided early on possibly through planning gain as part of the proposed district centre development. It would be a natural asset to move quickly to community governance providing a satisfactory endowment or revenue generating capacity is identified as part of the planning gain package. Some funding could be held back to work with residents to create spaces that meet their needs after they have moved in. This process also helps build community cohesion.

21. What action could be taken quickly to help enable this to happen?

It would greatly help the success of this element of the new community if planting could begin as soon as possible after a decision to proceed and without waiting for the rest of development to begin. The high profile and special character of the central space would also justify an early public space/building design competition to generate interesting ways of achieving this (see Annex for a viewing platform example in Lancashire).

Topic 3: The southern gateway

22. Why is this issue important and what is the potential?

The southern gateway is the area where (subject to the outcome of the AAP and masterplanning work) the new community will link most strongly to Fareham and where those living in Fareham and/or travelling on the M27 will see the new community most clearly. It is also potentially a key starting point for the network of long distance walking and cycling routes discussed in Topic 1 above. For all these reasons getting the right approach in this area will be critical to the success of the new community project.

23. However there are major constraints on this part of the site. The southern boundary of the main central area of the new community is low lying, damp and dominated by the M27 on an embankment. The area is likely to be required in part for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). To the west the area is a 'buffer zone' for Funtley. On the other side of the M27, Fareham Common is an important greenspace for existing Fareham residents although access to it is quite limited. A key issue in the southern area is that the visual impact of the new community viewed from the north edge of Fareham is at a much higher level. The provision of high visual quality to any new development along the southern edge of the new community will therefore be as important for existing residents as those with an interest in the new community.

24. The main challenge in the 'southern' area as a whole is the adverse impact of motorway noise for both existing and new properties. Any reduction in noise which could be achieved through the development would be beneficial to existing and new residents. Re-surfacing with low noise tarmac might be the most beneficial because many properties are higher than the motorway and noise could not easily be reduced by acoustic screens or earth bunds.

25. The need to use at least part of the area for SUDS to take at least some of the surface water drainage and run off from the new community could be quite helpful in creating a wetlands environmental feature over a significant area (eg 5 ha) in this location but the exact requirements are a matter for further assessment. The workshop discussed this issue and it was pointed out that some of the new requirements on SUDS are not yet in force and they may not be the only option - use can be made of discharge to rivers. Further information on current SUDS issues is available from CIRIA (see Annex B).

26. What could be created?

The principal opportunity in this area is to create a new "Gateway" feature of high visual quality as seen from the motorway and from properties at a higher level on the north edge of Fareham. There are several possible approaches

but the 'gateway' could be buildings of exceptionally high quality softened by tree planting and perhaps set in lakes/reed beds/wetlands perhaps featuring boardwalks to protect the wetland. (See the Annex for potential examples of this approach including Abbey Wood, Bristol).

27. Secondly the area could play an important role as the "starting off point" for east west pedestrian/cycle-way/bridle-way connections within and beyond the site, signposted and surfaced to link existing pedestrian/bridle-ways crossing across the motorway and to connect east and west from the Wallington Valley / Portsdown Hill to the Meon Valley and Botley Woods (as in Topic 1).
28. South of the motorway in the area known as Fareham Common the 'star attraction' would be to retain the area as undeveloped open land as a 'buffer' or 'open gap' between Fareham and the new community. Making the area public open space would provide benefits for existing residents on the northern edge of Fareham provided there was no additional built development.
29. What are its benefits?
Many of the recommendations above would benefit both existing and new residents in terms of health, amenity and reduction of noise nuisance.
30. How could it best be managed, by whom and at least cost ? It is considered that high visual quality along boundaries is essential to attract high quality businesses and meet environmental impact assessment guidance and so should be included in the developer's costs. Off-site benefits may be the responsibility of other agencies.
31. What action could be taken quickly to help enable this to happen?
Improving and sign posting rights of way and tree planting on boundaries could be started in advance of major development. Investigating the feasibility of long distance rights of way connections could be undertaken now. Improving the motorway surface has been long requested and the new community proposals provide an opportunity to re-invigorate the bid.

Henry Cleary

Chair Standing Conference on New Community

28.11.12

Note on the Standing Conference The Standing Conference has been established by Fareham Borough Council to bring together the views of

interested bodies in and around Fareham including community groups affected by the development, partner authorities, housing providers, business and community organisations and those responsible for major services such as education and transport. The Standing Conference also includes landowner representatives and has an independent chair. Its work is intended to be an input to the preparation of detailed policies and plans by Fareham Borough Council for the new community and to inform the delivery arrangements which will involve many of the partners.

Health warning on the views expressed in these notes based on the Standing Conference workshops and meetings. They are intended to provide a summary of the Conference's take on priorities, opportunities and concerns. They do not bind or restrict any of the parties represented in making a formal input as individuals or organisations to the statutory and other consultations which will take place on the project and unless stated otherwise they do not represent a formal position by Fareham Borough Council. It is also likely that the Standing Conference will need to continue to review and develop its thinking on these topics as the project is taken forward. At the time of this discussion no decision had been taken on the exact boundaries of the area to be taken forward in the AAP – on which Fareham Borough Council had set out 4 broad options in its July consultation (housing range 7,250 - 5,400).

ANNEX A List of examples referred to in workshop(as an aid to further discussion)

- (i) Overall context and the wider landscape setting. Map of Forest of Bere, formerly a Royal hunting forest and later used to provide timber for shipbuilding, showing remaining woodland and other conservation sites. The NCNF is in the centre of the southern edge.

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/pdf/hbic/10-Forest-of-Bere-BOA.pdf>

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/recreation.nsf/LUWebDocsByKey/EnglandHampshireBere>

<http://www.hants.gov.uk/rh/countryside/access/forestofbere.pdf>

The Hants and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have commissioned a valuable report on the potential of the Forest of Bere sites. A copy will be circulated on request. Swanwick Lakes are an example of the creation of major new green asset through development gain by Fareham Borough Council

https://www.fareham.gov.uk/discover_local.../swanwicklake.aspx

Example of Forest/Woodland Gateway - a low visual impact building suitable for sensitive sites which would be attractive and could act as a focal point for education training

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/country_parks/stover_country_park/interpretation_centre.htm

- (ii) Greenspace within development and central area, examples of viewing platform project (Lancashire) <http://www.midpenninearts.org.uk/panopticons>

Busy central area space – for a small scale illustration: <http://www.habhousing.co.uk>

Major green central area space

http://www.hart.gov.uk/elvetham_heath_lnr_management_plan_2006_-_2011-3.pdf

<http://www.elvethamheathforum.info/>

- (iii) Southern Gateway, examples of major new landscape features as part of new employment included Abbey Road Bristol, IBM Portsmouth and Weston Road, Guildford. On SUDS current CIRIA guidance <http://www.susdrain.org/delivering-suds/using-suds/adoption-and-maintenance-of-suds/adoption/SuDS-adoption-in-England-and-Wales.html>

Annex B – List of Workshop Attendees Chair Henry Cleary

Fareham Borough Council Cllr Sean Woodward, Cllr Keith Evans, Cllr Mrs Bryant, Cllr Mrs Trott, Richard Jolley, Selina Crocombe, Nigel Green, Lucy Packer, Alison Brook, Mike Tartaglia-Kershaw

Hampshire County Council	David Carman
Hants IOW wildlife Trust	Clive Chatters
Greenspace consultant	Nicole Collomb
Winchester City Council	Damian Offer
Radian Housing	Andrea Smith
Fareham Society	Brenda Clapperton MBE, Maureen Sygrove
Wallington Residents	David Walton
Wickham residents	Michael Carter
Knowle residents	Sheila Chambers
Christians Together, Fareham	Mary-Anne Field
Buckland Estates	David Griffiths, David Hughes
BST (Benge) Estates	Charlie Hughes, John Haxworth
LDA (consultants to Fareham Borough Council)	Paul Connolly

Annex C Programme Standing Conference on New Community north of Fareham – Greenspace Workshop, 20th November, Ferneham Hall, Fareham

Purpose: To determine the views of the standing conference on the priorities for new greenspace to be provided as part of the new community so that it relates well to neighbouring communities, creates an asset for the wider area and meets the needs and aspirations of its residents. The workshop will discuss options for the type, amount and broad location of greenspace, how it might be provided and contribute its recommendations to the detailed work to create the Area Action Plan and indicative masterplan now getting underway.

Programme

09.15 Welcome and arrangements for the day – Henry Cleary, Chair of the standing Conference

09.25 Opening presentations on the countryside, conservation and the context:

- David Carman, Environmental Initiatives Manager, Hampshire County Council
“The Fareham new community – making the most of green infrastructure”

- Clive Chatters, Head of Conservation, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
“Fresh air and exercise, wildlife and people in Fareham’s future”

- Nigel Green, Design Adviser, Fareham Borough Council “The site of the new community – what are the constraints and where are we with work to prepare the AAP”

10. 40 Questions and discussion

11.10 Coffee break

11.30 Nicole Collomb, Parks and Greenspaces consultant “New approaches to greenspace and what works!”

11.50 Split into 3 workshops on different aspects of the new community

12.40 Lunch break

13.30 Leave Ferneham Hall for visit to site of new community by coach

14.30 Ferneham Hall - Complete workshop reports

15.00 Tea break

15.20 Present reports followed by discussion with specialist speakers

16.00 Prepare outline recommendations

16.30 – 17.00 Discussion of recommendations and Conclusions