

Standing Conference on New Community North of Fareham

Perspectives on the new community: Note 2: Achieving a quality place and masterplanning the new community (Workshop on 3 December 2012)

- 1. Summary** *The Standing Conference considered the approach to design and layout, probably the most challenging aspect of ensuring that the new community is attractive to residents, desirable to investors and has the potential to go on generating new activities and economic value. Overall **the new community should follow the character and attraction of a traditional Hampshire Market Town delivered in 21st century terms**. In design it would need to be a hybrid having a tight, “historic” centre, built to higher density, while outer areas were less dense and developed to Garden City principles, so softening the borders with the existing landscape.*
- 2.** *To deliver **a characterful and successful district centre** within this overall concept there needs to be **an ambitious mix of uses** to include retail, small offices, work hubs and starter business units, restaurant and hospitality, compatible housing (eg apartments above shops and live/work space), health facilities and one of the schools (possibly the secondary school) with other **employment uses located closeby** to improve footfall, providing design is sensitive. The centre should be **on the BRT network** and function as a place to meet, a focal point with **a “busy” square of human scale** and linked to other enclosed spaces nearby eg communal or formal gardens. The centre would be best located close to but just off the A32 to benefit from passing trade, critical in the early years. Given the long build out period, **high quality interim uses** (eg a high quality leisure facility) should be sought for vacant sites which should be provided to allow for future expansion.*
- 3.** *Work should continue to develop **a range of possible housing types** – from large detached in the outer areas to historic terraces at the centre (including smaller units - a good market for incoming “downsizers” as at Poundbury) and to develop **a design code** to achieve high standards and character. There should be **an easily understood street and path network** radiating from the district centre particularly for cycling and walking, while creating points of variety and surprise, exploiting **vistas** (eg the gas pipeline). The “distant view” was an important design issue externally – the new community would be a small town on a hill for North Fareham and also from the motorway.*
- 4.** *The design should provide for **current car parking standards** (as well as cycling and walking) while being **flexible** for an unknown transport future. There needed to be a standardized approach to **“troublesome” issues** such as bins, cable TV and similar details – those who move in will have to accept the agreed approach/standard from the start.*

5. **The series of Perspective Notes** This is the second 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.
6. **This topic - Achieving a quality place and masterplanning the new community** This is probably the most challenging aspect of successfully creating a new community. Design and layout are not the only ingredients of success but without an inspired and distinctive approach can be a major cause of failure. New communities largely start from scratch - a tougher test than simply adding housing to an existing neighbourhood which already has a history, character and facilities. Even if the new community derives a good deal of its needs and services from nearby Fareham it must be self reliant to a degree and perceived from the start as attractive, desirable and advantageous to attract new residents. Furthermore those advantages need to be sufficiently strong to sustain the loyalty of new residents when, inevitably, not all its services will be in place or fully developed in its first few years. If it can keep that "quality place premium" it will go on attracting new activities and creating economic value until it is mature; if it does not it will slip down the ladder of housing choice. The post war history of major new developments in England includes examples of both.
7. The starting point for this discussion was the joint workshop for Fareham Borough Council and the Standing Conference with presentations from LDA Design on "**What makes a quality place**" in social, economic and environmental terms, the challenge of delivering a new community project over 20-30 years, the relevance of Garden Cities principles and the need to avoid a simplistic approach to densities. LDA's work had indicated – and in subsequent discussion it was generally agreed – that it was not feasible for the new community simply to be a northern extension to Fareham; the motorway as well as the existing urban form meant that it had to be considered as a new settlement. The very strong green setting pointed to applying some of the Garden Cities principles.
8. Following the LDA presentations, discussion in the first workshop brought out some key issues to address and tests of success:
- The relationship with Fareham (in terms of services) needed to be clearer, together with certainty on infrastructure phasing/delivery;
 - The overall "offer" had to be attractive for families over the long term;

- Access to great landscape/the strong green setting needed to be prominent in the design (See also the Standing Conference note on green infrastructure);
- The guiding design theme should be that of a small Hampshire market town. It was likely to need a hybrid approach between the principles of an urban village and the garden city;
- Creating a denser core to the development would allow less density at the periphery softening the borders with the existing landscape;
- Car use had to be designed into the scheme with realism on parking;
- Employment uses should be encouraged particularly through small business units;
- Giving the new community an increased role in its own governance would help build up its strengths(eg by managing community assets).

9. The follow on **Standing Conference Workshop** looked at 2 issues in particular:

- (i) What approach was needed to **deliver a characterful and successful district centre** which would be a distinctive heart of the new development;
- (ii) What approach was needed to the design of the new community in terms of **overall layout and how different types of housing, roads and street were developed.**

10. Building on the earlier discussion, it was generally agreed that **the role of the district centre** would be crucial to the success of the new community. It needed to be not just a retail and services centre but a natural place of meeting, a social destination and have a sufficient cluster of activities and uses to create critical mass to attract and retain service businesses including shops. In design terms the centre needs to be a high point of the masterplan and a clear focus giving pride and identity to the new community as a whole. The masterplan should also provide flexibility for future expansion. (**Note** it was accepted that in addition to the district centre there was scope to build 2 further local centres over the construction period for the full scale new community but these could be 10 or 15 years ahead. The immediate priority was the district centre which would be the main focus for the new community in its early years.)

11. The workshop had a presentation from **Paul Grover, University of Portsmouth**, Department of Architecture to look at quality issues in a range of local areas and at densities more generally. This illustrated issues of layout and identity in 12 areas mainly in and around Fareham, including the western wards as well as older settlements. It showed that while some of the post war developments had green and generously sized housing, the layouts were low density and in many of them it was hard to identify a strong centre or

focus. This was in contrast to the busy and attractive high street areas of the older settlements such as Titchfield, Emsworth and Wickham where a tighter layout and historic buildings provided a focus of interest and enduring economic values, even though densities were high and streets narrow.

12. This could also be seen nationally in the enduring popularity of older market towns as well as historic squares in larger towns and cities. A key reason for this was having a clear and simple “legible” street pattern – ie “you can see how to get to the centre of town without asking”. By contrast more recent developments while providing housing with gardens, and some services had struggled to create a strong place identity or to have a sense of beginning or end. For a new settlement – much more than a suburban extension – it was particularly important for buildings and layout to give you a sense of where you were. Using a variety of different house types – eg from terraced or “mews” housing close to the centre to detached housing around the outer edges was a key means of achieving that and would allow more of the total area to be retained as greenspace. Also important was ensuring a tight street pattern particularly around the centre and (as at Poundbury) using buildings to slow the traffic, not wasteful highway space and signs.
13. At the request of the Chair, the workshop also benefitted from a short summary by Michael Carter on why **Wickham** was now regarded as a highly successful small market town with a thriving range of small shops and a good flow of visitors. Among the factors involved were:
 - Achieving critical mass in the range and variety of small shops, which was self-reinforcing – the more choice, the more visitors;
 - Residents could easily walk into the centre and meet a large range of their basic needs and this encouraged a social meeting place role;
 - The layout of the town centre was helpful – a large rectangular square provided plenty of parking for other visitors but also space for occasional other uses;
 - There were other central attractions such as the meadow area and Meon Valley route just behind the east side of the square;
 - The street plan re-inforced the role of the centre with most routes leading off the square and the layout stood the test of time – plots were redeveloped successfully without losing the historic layout.
14. In discussion reference was also made to aspects of **Poundbury** (see separate note on the recent Standing Conference visit) where a key aim had been to build in the style of a historic Dorset town. In a new development it was not economically viable to replicate the traditional high street with its rows of shop buildings in which investment costs had been written off over centuries of history and rentals were now low. The focus therefore should be on attracting newer types of retailing – restaurants, specialist shops ,

providing market space, as well as a basic all goods store, a pub and a supermarket. Custom from nearby employment areas which had proved the key to retaining and developing the shopping offer. This pointed to the need to locate employment areas close to the town centre as far as was practicable.

15. It was important to learn from **other experience in Hampshire** of recently constructed new communities, particularly in terms of what formed a centre and key facilities in the critical early years phase. In Elvetham Heath, near Fleet, and Valley Park, (started in the mid 80's) just west of Chandlers Ford, the early provision of a school, family friendly pub/restaurant and good local greenspace were key – see References Annex below.
16. In a concluding sub group discussion on this theme the Standing Conference put forward the following **markers for success in planning the new district centre for the new community**:
- (i) There needs to be **an ambitious mix of uses** in the district centre to give it the best prospects of viability and growth. These should include retail, small offices, work hubs and starter business units, restaurant and hospitality, compatible housing eg apartments above shops and live/work space, health facilities and one of the schools (possibly the secondary school);
 - (ii) **Other employment uses should be located closeby** to improve footfall, providing design is sensitive;
 - (iii) The centre needs to feel like a centre, be a place to meet, a focal point with a **“busy” square of human scale** but the right size in relation to the new community and over time link to **other enclosed spaces nearby** eg communal or formal gardens (see Standing Conference note on Green Infrastructure);
 - (iv) The centre needs to be **on the BRT network**;
 - (v) **Location** – on current information probably best located close to but just off the A32 to benefit from passing trade, critical in the early years (**Note** No decision has yet been taken on location of the district centre);
 - (vi) Given the long build out period, **high quality interim uses** should be sought for vacant sites which should be provided to allow for future expansion Eg a high quality leisure facility proving it fitted with the overall design and character vision for the centre.
17. A parallel subgroup looked at what approach was needed to the design of the new community in terms of **overall layout and how different types of housing, roads and street could be developed**. (**Note** It was recognised that no decision had yet been taken on how many character areas would be

proposed in the AAP or where they lie). The Standing conference put forward the following markers for how this area of work should be developed:

- (i) Given this early stage, work should continue on **a range of possible housing types for the new community** – from large detached in the outer areas to historic terraces at the centre, but as this moved forward development of a design code to achieve high standards and character would be highly desirable. Some smaller housing units in central areas made sense (although the demand for apartments may be limited) but it was essential to keep housing in the central area attractive. Poundbury showed that there could be a good market for incoming “downsizers” if the right quality could be achieved;
- (ii) In terms of layout and movement there should be **an easily understood network** eg ways radiating from the district centre particularly for cycling and walking;
- (iii) At the same time the layout design should create points of variety and surprise and exploit any **vistas** that are available (eg along the protected route of the gas pipeline). The “distant view” was an important design issue in the other direction – the new community would be a small town on a hill for those in North Fareham and also in the view from the motorway;
- (iv) In transport terms the design should provide for **current car parking standards** (as well as cycling and walking) while being **flexible** for an unknown transport future (given the 30 year planning horizon);
- (v) As codes and detailed plans were developed there needed to be a standardized approach to **“troublesome” issues** such as bins, cable TV and similar details. Again Poundbury had illustrated the value of addressing this early on (new residents accept the agreed approach).

18. Conclusion The afternoon workshops had identified a range of markers for developing the content of the AAP and indicative masterplan. More generally there was general buy in to the point made earlier that overall **the new community should take as its yardstick the character and attraction of a traditional Hampshire Market Town but delivered in 21st century terms**. In design it would need to be a hybrid having a tight “historic” centre reflecting urban village thinking and outer areas developed to Garden City principles.

19. More work will be needed in due course on housing types, design codes and detailed strategies. In the meantime further consideration by the Standing Conference eg on schools and heritage will be relevant and all the above points will need to be revisited when the draft AAP becomes available.

Henry Cleary, Chair Standing Conference

1. 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.

2. 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).

3. References

(i) **Poundbury – see separate note**

(ii) **Other recent new community projects in Hampshire.** Elvetham Heath, a recent new community near Fleet, is built around a major green central area space, school and family friendly pub/restaurant etc [http://www.hart.gov.uk/elvetham_heath_lnr_management_plan_2006 - 2011-3.pdf](http://www.hart.gov.uk/elvetham_heath_lnr_management_plan_2006_-_2011-3.pdf)
<http://www.elvethamheathforum.info/>

Valley Park, Chandlers Ford new community (started in the mid 80's) just west of Chandlers Ford in South Hampshire (M3, J12). Key features were (also) early provision of a big family pub/restaurant– still locally popular: <http://www.theclevelandbay.co.uk/home.php>
The second was the early establishment of a small supermarket, hairdresser and fish and chip shop – all still there. And a church linked primary school and small doctors surgery and chemist (later greatly enlarged as the community grew). There is a newish business park and

an old industrial park nearby. The railway station came later. It is both an urban extension and a free standing community, full of woodlands managed by The Woodland Trust. There are some beautiful greenways especially along the Monks Brook, parallel to the railway line to Romsey. <http://www.valleyparkvoice.org/>

Annex (i) Workshop Agenda

Standing Conference: workshop on achieving a quality place (pm on 3rd December 2012, to follow the joint presentations and workshops by LDA Design with the full Fareham Borough Council on am of 3rd December)

Venue: Fareham Borough Council – Council Chamber

Purpose: To determine the views of the Standing Conference on principles and approaches needed to achieve a high quality of place in the new community and how that can be reflected in the AAP. This includes looking at experience elsewhere, considering types and density of development, and how to get the best approach in terms of design and character. [Note – the location of the district centre and the number and size of the character areas is not yet determined so the discussion will be about how these issues might be tackled]

Programme

[From 13.30 a sandwich lunch will be available for those also attending the morning presentation and workshop]

14.30 Welcome and purpose of afternoon – Henry Cleary, Chair of Standing Conference

14.40 Paul Grover, Portsmouth University, Department of Architecture and Solent Design Awards “Designing sustainable communities – creating character and marrying private aspiration with common good”

15.15 Workshop groups on:

- (i) Creating success and character in a district centre;
- (ii) Housing types – character in different areas - and approaches to streets/getting about

[Tea break]

16.30 Presentation from groups and questions

16.45 -17.00 Summary and close (draft conclusions to be circulated as before)

(ii) List of standing Conference Workshop Attendees

Chair	Henry Cleary
Fareham Borough Council	Cllr Sean Woodward Cllr John Bryant Cllr Mrs Trott Richard Jolley Selina Crocombe Nigel Green Alison Brook
Hampshire County Council	Cllr Patricia Stallard
Winchester City Council	Steve Tilbury
University of Portsmouth	Paul Grover
Radian Housing	Andrea Smith, Nicola Jane
Landowner	Glynne Benge
Fareham Society	Brenda Clapperton MBE
Wallington Residents	David Walton
Wickham residents	Michael Carter
Knowle residents	Sheila Chambers
Christians Together, Fareham	Mary-Anne Field
PUSH	Stuart Roberts
Hampshire Chamber of Commerce	Kristine Salomon-Olsen
IOD	Grant Harrison
Buckland Estates	David Griffiths, Patrick Clarke (URS)
BST (Benge) Estates	Charlie Hughes,
First Wessex	John Barker
Homes and Communities Agency	Bruce Voss
LDA (consultants to FBC)	Paul Connelly