

NEWSLETTER

On Wednesday 7th September, Archstone Land held a public exhibition at Fairford Community Centre on their proposals to develop land west of Fairford for housing.

The land is proposed for development in the context of the emerging Cotswold District Core Strategy (Local Plan) which when adopted will set out how the District will grow over the next 20 years. As part of the background work for the Core Strategy, the Council has confirmed a current and future need to provide new homes for the District. The new homes are needed to provide for new households and to allow communities to grow sufficiently to help maintain and develop local services and facilities, and to enable affordable housing to be provided.

The public exhibition included a draft masterplan which illustrated how the site could accommodate 125 new homes and provided information on the proposals in the context of the town.

The exhibition was well attended with some 215 members of the public visiting during the afternoon and evening. People attending the exhibition were able to

view information presented on boards and were asked to complete a comments form to provide their views on the proposals. Archstone Land's consultant team covering planning, masterplanning/design, transport and flooding, and ecology and landscape were on hand for discussion and to answer any questions. Archstone Land are grateful to all those who took the time to visit the exhibition and provide their comments.

FEEDBACK

To date a total of 48 people have provided their written comments. From questions and discussion during the event and the written comments provided certain key themes have emerged. Listed below is a summary of the most common comments received along with Archstone Land's initial response.

Proposed Access from the Cirencester Road (A417)

People expressed concern about the speed of traffic entering the town from the West and the location of the proposed access and the bend in the road at the bottom of the hill. Clarke Bond transport consultants have

been appointed by Archstone Land and have been looking at the proposed access in detail in consultation with the District and County Councils. Following the comments received from the public, Clarke Bond has designed an alternative option located to the east of Home Farm to provide a safer access to the site. This access is located 120 metres further away from the bend in the Cirencester Road (210 metres in total).

In addition, the proposals include providing an entrance feature with rumble strips located on the Cirencester Road to the west of the site to mark the approach to the town and encourage traffic to slow.





Construction Traffic

There is some concern about the potential impact of construction traffic on the town. Management of construction traffic is normally controlled by attaching a condition to a planning permission requiring the management of construction traffic to be agreed with the Council. For instance, the agreed management could ensure that construction vehicles must access and leave using the western approach to the town, thereby avoiding the town centre or by regulating the delivery times and construction working so that they are outside of rush hour periods.

Mill Lane

Comments were also made in regard to the narrowness of Mill Lane, its use as a rat run and it being a route to the school from the site. Clarke Bond is looking at a scheme to provide some betterment to the route whilst maintaining its rural feel.

The Capacity of Local Schools and Health Facilities

People have questioned how the families from the new development would be accommodated by the existing schools and health centre.

We are still at a relatively early stage in our discussions with the District and County Councils about possible contributions towards improvements to local infrastructure, which is standard practice for planning applications. Typically, the Council's will review existing capacity of local schools (primary and secondary) and healthcare services and if appropriate new development will be required to make financial contributions towards improvements to allow for any additional capacity needed for the new residents. Clearly these discussions will need to include Farmors academy school.

We have received an initial response from the Hillary Cottage doctors' surgery who have indicated that they are confident that with some reconfiguration of the existing layout they would have ample room to house an additional GP if required (which could manage up to 1000-2000 patients).

Affordable Housing

There is clear interest in the proposed affordable housing with questions about its accessibility and affordability for local people. A representative of the Bromford Group who are a specialist affordable housing provider

attended the public exhibition and we have provided them with a copy of the comments received.

The draft masterplan indicates a variety of houses types from 2-5 bedroom. The affordable element will comprise a mix of shared ownership and rented homes. The affordability of the shared ownership homes will in part be dependant on the market value of the homes provided, which will vary depending on the size of unit. The rented homes will be affordable to people on lower incomes.

It is proposed that there would be a local connection clause within the Section 106 Agreement which would give a priority for those people registered for affordable housing with a connection to Fairford and surrounding parishes.

Drainage and Flooding

Understandably given the recent flooding of the town in 2007, people asked whether the proposed development would flood or contribute towards flooding of the surrounding area.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as defined in Planning Policy guidance, being an area with a low risk of fluvial flooding (less than 1:1000 years) as is therefore acceptable for development. The drainage scheme will be designed in accordance with national standards, current best practice and in consultation with the Environment Agency to ensure that it does not increase the likelihood or contribute to flooding elsewhere in Fairford.

Parking for Allotments

Some people were interested in the allotments and asked if some associated car parking could be provided. We confirm that the scheme could accommodate some allocated parking for the allotments.

Landscaping Between Betterton's Close

Residents of Betterton's Close were keen to understand the boundary treatment between the proposed development and the rear of there properties. The draft masterplan has been designed to respect the privacy of the adjacent properties in Betterton's Close and the scheme allows for a generous landscaped screen. The landscaping would probably consist of native species typical of the area. In addition, in light of residents' comments, we are also reviewing the masterplan to increase the distance between the proposed houses and the rear of the existing properties in Betterton's Close.

THE NEXT STEPS

In terms of the timeframe, Archstone Land is still finalising the proposals and the comments received will help to inform this work. Archstone Land will continue to inform the Town Council of their progress in working towards a planning application. In the meantime we would like to thank you for your interest in our proposals and look forward to discussing them with you further in the future. If you have any further comments on the proposals please email us at fairford@bartonwillmore.co.uk.