

Statement of Community Involvement



Land east of Ashingdon Road, Rochford.

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Consultation Guidance	4
3.0	The Consultation Process	7
4.0	Pre-Application Meetings.....	10
5.0	Member/Local Stakeholder Meetings.....	14
6.0	Post Exhibition Consultation	16
7.0	Responses from the Public	18
8.0	Post Exhibition Resident Communications	30
9.0	Changes as a result of Consultation	31
10.0	Conclusion.....	33

Appendices

Appendix A	Members Briefing Boards
Appendix B	Exhibition Flyer
Appendix C	Plan Showing Properties sent the Exhibition Flyer
Appendix D	Covering Letter to Members
Appendix E	Exhibition Presentation Material
Appendix F	Exhibition Response Form
Appendix G	Photographs of the Exhibition
Appendix H	Road Improvements and Tree Planting Proposals Document
Appendix I	Final Masterplan

Validation

This report has been prepared by Optimis Consulting Limited in collaboration with the client and where necessary other professionals. This report is only considered acceptable for use once signed by the Project Director from Optimis Consulting Limited as follows; and at all other times shall be considered to be in draft only.

Project Manager (<i>written by</i>): Name: Natasha Abbott Signed: NA Position: Planning and Development Consultant Date: 10th December 2019	Project Director (<i>checked by</i>): Name: Justin Wickersham Signed: JW Position: Managing Director Date: 10th December 2019
--	--

 justin@optimis-consulting.co.uk
 [01234 330 624](tel:01234330624)
 [07912 161 105](tel:07912161105)

 www.optimis-consulting.co.uk
 [16 St Cuthbert's Street, BEDFORD. MK40 3JG](#)
 [@OptimisInfo](#)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report is prepared on behalf of Bloor Homes Limited in relation to a planning application on land east of Ashingdon Road, Rochford. This report summarises details of the stakeholder engagement that has taken place prior to the submission of the application. The proposed development is for:

“An outline planning application for the demolition of numbers 148 and 150 Ashingdon Road and the development of 665 residential dwellings (C3), a community facility (D1), open space and associated infrastructure including flood storage and surface water drainage attenuation, with all matters unreserved for 233 residential dwellings comprising Phase 1 of the proposals, and all other matters reserved except for access and layout.”

- 1.2 The approach taken to the stakeholder engagement has been mindful of the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), the Rochford Statement of Community Involvement (July 2016) and the adopted Rochford Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations Plan (2014). It is also prepared following on-going dialogue with Officers of the Council through Pre-application guidance.
- 1.3 The Allocations Plan specifically advises that this site should accommodate the appropriate youth facilities and community facilities for this development. It is furthermore stipulated that the type of youth facilities required to accompany the development should be determined in consultation with the local community and specifically young people and agreed at the planning application stage with the Local Planning Authority and other stakeholders.
- 1.4 In light of the relevant guidance, the applicant has engaged with Rochford District Council through a pre-application advice request and entered into a Planning Performance Agreement, to ensure engagement through a series of pre-application meetings prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 1.5 Prior to the submission of the hybrid (part outline/part detailed) planning application the applicant has engaged with officers at Rochford District Council and Essex County Council, Local Councillors and Ward Members, the Parish Council’s and other local stakeholders. In addition, a public exhibition was organised to present the proposals to local residents to listen to their comments and assist their understanding of the project.
- 1.6 Several changes to the original proposals have been made as a result of this constructive dialogue.

2.0 Consultation Guidance

- 2.1 There is both national and local guidance with respect to the undertaking of engagement prior to the submission of an application. This section outlines the most relevant aspects of this guidance.

National Guidance

- 2.2 Government policy and guidance encourages community engagement with the planning system, both in the context of developing local plans and informing specific development proposals.
- 2.3 This section provides a brief overview of key policy and guidance and how this has informed the approach to pre-application community engagement for the purpose of developing proposals for the application site.
- 2.4 Nationally, the most relevant guidance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019; together with the Localism Act 2011. The NPPF states in Paragraph 39:

*“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and **improved outcomes for the community.**”*

- 2.5 Furthermore, the consequence of early engagement delivers benefits for all as paragraph 41 states:

*“The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. **This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.**”*

- 2.6 When considering design solutions in projects, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states:

*“Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. **Applications that can demonstrate early proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.**”*

- 2.7 The Localism Act (2011), strengthens the role of local communities in planning by introducing a requirement for developers to consult with local communities. This is intended to give local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to proposals.

Local Guidance

- 2.8 Rochford District Council sets out their aspirations for community involvement within their Statement of Community involvement. This document states that the purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to set out the principles for engaging and consulting with local communities – including residents, organisations and businesses – and other interested parties on planning matters.
- 2.9 Rochford’s Statement of Community Involvement is broken down into a number of sections, with the most relevant being the following, with these outlined in turn below:
- Pre-Application Advice;
 - Pre-Application Consultation; and
 - Planning Performance Agreements.

Pre-application Advice

- 2.10 The Council offers a chargeable pre-application advice service, which *“enables applicants to discuss their proposals with officers, understand how policies and guidance would be applied, and identify where any specialist input would be required early on in the process before submitting a formal planning application.”* These pre-application services aim to ensure valid; quality applications are submitted with a higher chance of a positive outcome.
- 2.11 Pre-application advice is encouraged for major development proposals, with the service including both meetings and written advice. Additional urban design advice is also available with this provided by Essex County Council Place Services. Members can be involved in pre-application discussions for minor, major or strategic development proposals.
- 2.12 The pre-application *“advice will be based on the case officer's professional judgement and will not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regard to any future planning applications. Any views or opinions expressed, are given without prejudice to the consideration by the Council of any formal planning application, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity. Although the case officer may indicate the likely outcome of a formal planning application, no guarantees can or will be given about the decision that will be made on any such application.”*
- 2.13 Public consultation by the Local Planning Authority is not undertaken for pre-application advice, as *“this avoids unproductive involvement for local communities as no formal planning application has been submitted at this stage.”*

Pre-Application Consultation

- 2.14 The Statement of Community Involvement notes that consultation with the local community is encouraged for major development applications in particular. This consultation is at the applicant’s discretion and can be undertaken prior to pre-application advice or prior to the applications submission. Results of any public engagement should be provided to the Local Planning Authority with a planning application.

2.15 Local community consultation prior to the applications submission has numerous benefits including:

- *“Providing local communities with accurate information on a proposal before a formal application is submitted;*
- *Enabling local concerns and objections to be identified early in the process and be addressed, where possible;*
- *Providing an opportunity for local communities to discuss proposals with the applicant (for example at public meetings);*
- *Potentially avoiding the need to revise and / or resubmit proposals at an advanced stage;*
- *Encouraging a transparent and inclusive application process;*
- *Assisting in the submission of better quality applications.”*

2.16 Pre-application engagement with local communities is supported by the Council however they are not normally involved. Nevertheless, advice can be sought from the Council by the application on effective engagement techniques prior to submission.

2.17 It is also outlined that *“applicants should also consider consulting organisations such as Essex County Council (as the highways and education authority, and urban design advisor to the Council), Heritage England, the Environment Agency and Natural England for advice depending on the development being proposed.”*

Planning Performance Agreements

2.18 The Council will enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) for some applications. This is an agreement to set out the process and the timescales for the consideration of larger, more complex proposals through submission to determination.

2.19 *“A PPA can include information on community involvement such as techniques for engaging with affected communities and how their views will be incorporated. Once a PPA has been entered into, the statutory time limit for the determination of the planning application no longer applies.”*

3.0 The Consultation Process

- 3.1 The objective of the consultation process was to convey the key principles of the proposed residential development and to invite the Local Planning Authority, County Council, stakeholders and local residents to view the proposals and provide their comments on the proposals at the time of presentation. The applicant's profession team attended to listen to any comments that were made.
- 3.2 Throughout the consultation process, various different methods were undertaken to ensure effective consultation with the relevant parties. Pre-submission consultation was undertaken with all parties, to allow potential amendments during the scheme's preparation.
- 3.3 The following outlines a summary of the measures undertaken:

Consultation with Rochford District Council at Pre-application Stage

- 3.4 To assist the preparation of the planning application, Bloor Homes has submitted a pre-application request to Rochford District Council (RDC), as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), together with Essex County Council (ECC), as the authority responsible for urban design, landscape, highways and flooding.
- 3.5 The pre-application submission (LPA Ref. PA/19/00040/PREAPP) enabled seven pre-application meetings with both RDC and ECC. These pre-application meetings were held on:
- 4th April 2019
 - 10th May 2019
 - 7th June 2019
 - 12th July 2019
 - 31st July 2019
 - 20th August 2019
 - 12th September 2019

- 3.6 Minutes of the pre-application meetings were prepared following each meeting and were circulated to the planning officer for agreement. A summary of the pre-application meetings is provided below.
- 3.7 In addition to the pre-application meetings, various technical consultants have had specialised, individual meetings in order to discuss and agree their respective technical matters with the relevant officer at ECC.
- 3.8 The applicant, Bloor Homes, has additionally entered into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Local Authority, which was finalised and signed in June 2019. This was primarily entered into in order to allow the swift and timely decision of the application, and to allow further technical meetings to be undertaken.

(a) Members Briefing – including Ward Councillors

- 3.9 The applicant and various members of the project team attended two briefing sessions with members on the 13th June 2019 and the 3rd July 2019. Ward Councillors from Hawkwell East and Roche North and

Rural were invited to these sessions alongside the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Planning. These sessions were arranged with Rochford District Council.

- 3.10 These sessions included a presentation from the project team on the development of the proposals, and the current directional thinking of the scheme. **Appendix A** outlines the boards presented at these presentations. Members subsequently outlined their views on the developing scheme with questions also being asked of the project team.
- 3.11 Section 5 outlines the main outcomes of these meetings.

(b) Engagement with Stakeholders

- 3.12 As part of the scheme development the applicants engaged with both Holt Farm Junior School and Holt Farm Infant Schools on 11th July 2019. In addition, the applicants met with The King Edmunds School on the 19th July 2019. The main discussion points of the meetings were:

- Road access to the site
- Congestion and other traffic related concerns
- The tree outside the Holt Farm School
- Sustainable transport access to the schools (both pedestrian and cycleways)
- New nursery provision
- School capacity
- Access to the site for construction

- 3.13 A contact group has additionally been established with local Parish Council (Rochford, Ashingdon and Hawkwell) with an inaugural meeting taking place on the 17th September 2019. A summary is contained in Section 5.

(c) Neighbour Notification

- 3.14 Between 8th and 9th July 2019, circa 2,800 flyers' (**Appendix B**) were delivered to the residents in the local area as detailed on the plan contained within **Appendix C**.
- 3.15 In order to broaden the audience, the flyer was also posted on the Rochford and Hawkwell Parish Council websites. Additionally, the invitation was located on Rochford Parish Council's Facebook Page to further increase the audience.
- 3.16 The flyer outlined the proposal to develop the land to the east of Ashingdon Road for residential development consisting of circa. 665 new homes and invited local residents to a public exhibition on Wednesday 16th July 2019 at the Rochford Hotel, between 14:00 to 20:00.
- 3.17 In addition to the delivery of the invitations to the local residents, selected stakeholders were invited separately via the post with a covering letter accompanying the invitations (**Appendix D**). This invitation letter informed the stakeholders of the impending public exhibition and invited them to an introductory session between 13:00 and 14:00 prior to the main event.

- 3.18 These letters were delivered to:
- Rochford District Council Ward Councillors;
 - Rochford Parish Council Clerk and Councillors;
 - Hawkwell Parish Council Clerk and Councillors;
 - Ashingdon Parish Council Clerk; and
 - Local Schools (Holt Farm, King Edmunds, Watermans, St. Teresa's).

(d) Public Exhibition

- 3.19 The public exhibition was held on Tuesday 16th July 2019, between the hours of 14:00 to 20:00 with an introductory session for stakeholders held between 13:00 and 14:00. The exhibition displayed a range of material including copies of illustrative plans and Computer-Generated Images (**Appendix E**). The exhibition was staffed by the developer (Bloor Homes) and representatives from the project team; who were available to explain the proposals, listen to comments and answer any questions.
- 3.20 Visitors were invited to provide their comments on the response form (**Appendix F**) provided at the exhibition. These forms additionally asked for contact details for further updates to be provided in due course. The responses could have been complete at the event or returned by post or email. Responses were requested by the 26th July 2019. Furthermore, a dedicated email address was provided for additional comments.
- 3.21 A dedicated website (www.bloorinashingdon.com) was produced to outline information related to the proposed development for the public. The website included the boards showcased at the exhibition, a feedback form and a frequently asked questions section.
- 3.22 Photographs of the Public Exhibition were taken and can be found in **Appendix G**.

4.0 Pre-Application Meetings

4.1 Seven pre-application meetings were held with both Rochford DC and Essex CC. A broad range of matters were covered in these meetings, with the meeting outcomes assisting the applicant with the preparation of the hybrid application.

4.2 A summary of with the pre-application minutes is outlined below.

Pre-Application Meeting 1 – 4th April 2019

4.3 The initial pre-application meeting was undertaken with both officers from Rochford District Council and Essex County Council Urban Design.

4.4 NHS: Ensure that a health assessment is submitted with the application whilst also participating in consultation with the NHS/CCG prior to application submission.

4.5 Design Code: A design code would also be required as part of the application, to ensure consistency throughout the phases, with respect to architectural styles.

4.6 Housing Numbers: The figure of 665 dwellings was discussed with there being no specific concerns over the delivery of this number of dwellings, subject to the proposed scheme being a technically compliant proposal.

4.7 Building Heights: Conversations were held regarding building heights on the site. Three-storey dwellings were said to be acceptable, with bungalows additionally being deemed acceptable for the site.

Pre-Application Meeting 2 – 10th May 2019

4.8 The second pre-application meeting was held in May 2019 with officers from Rochford District Council and Essex County Council Urban Design being present.

4.9 PPA: The terms of the PPA were agreed between the applicant and LPA, with the staged payments of the scheme additionally agreed.

4.10 Housing Mix: The mix of housing on site needs to be in accordance with the SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment).

4.11 Play Spaces: The site needs to provide the opportunity for good quality play spaces to be delivered.

4.12 Character Areas: There needs to be a discernible difference between the opposing areas on site, with this not just being a continuation from the street scene. Reassurances need to be gained to show there will be a difference in the local areas.

4.13 Affordable Housing: Confirmation that 35% affordable housing will be provided as part of the application.

Pre-Application Meeting 3– 7th June 2019

- 4.14 The third pre-application meeting was held with Rochford District Council and Essex County Council Highways and Urban Design. This meeting had a more pronounced focus on highways, with the summary listed below.
- 4.15 Site Access: In principle, ECC Highways were happy with the proposed site access, and the amendments to the existing highway which are being proposed to accommodate the access and mitigate the impacts.
- 4.16 Internal Road Layout: The proposed widths of roads and the internal junction configurations would need to be agreed with ECC. Notwithstanding this, crossroads are not deemed acceptable with Highways.
- 4.17 Street Tree: The removal of the street tree to accommodate the site access, has been considered acceptable in principle by ECC.
- 4.18 Affordable Housing: Affordable Housing clusters of 12 – 20 dwellings would be considered acceptable within the development.

Pre-Application Meeting 4 – 12th July 2019

- 4.19 Officers from Rochford DC alongside Essex CC Flooding, Drainage, Urban Design and Landscaping were present at the fourth pre-application meeting.
- 4.20 Drainage: Calculations should be provided to support the application which indicates how many properties will be taken out of flood risk as a result of the proposed drainage works.
- 4.21 Open/Play Spaces: Clear, distinguishable boundaries should be located between the differing aspects of play/open space within the eastern boundary. Drainage depressions throughout the site could be utilised for other play equipment. Additionally, the inclusion of the mountain bike track is something that can be utilised by all and weaved into the natural environment.
- 4.22 Secondary Access: Access from Percy Cottis Road will need to ensure a convoluted route in order to avoid a rat-run. The dwellings could be realigned off this access point to allow a view to the landscaped square from Rochford Garden Way.
- 4.23 Dwellings: Need to ensure the continuation of the building line around the landscaped square. Higher densities of dwellings could also be located on loop roads within the layout.
- 4.24 Scheme Design: The application should be supported by a Design Code and 3 different character areas; however, the community facility could potentially become a fourth.

Pre-Application Meeting 5 – 31st July 2019

- 4.25 Officers from Rochford DC met with the project team in order to discuss concerns that had been raised in respect to the access point onto Ashingdon Road, and the removal of the street tree to facilitate this.
- 4.26 Highways: Road safety is key to the proposals, with it being ensured that the Road Safety Audit is available on the website.
- 4.27 Street Tree: Officers are satisfied that the tree cannot be retained in this position as the removal would accommodate the site access. Four potential strands of tree improvements are suggested to mitigate the removal.
- 4.28 S106 Contributions: The requested contributions are likely to be towards the NHS, Highways improvements, Education, Affordable Housing and SANG mitigation (at £122.30 a dwelling).

Pre-Application Meeting 6 – 20th August 2019

- 4.29 The sixth pre-application meeting was held with officers from both Rochford District Council and Essex County Council Urban Design and Landscaping.
- 4.30 Amenity Space: The community and private amenity spaces proposed onsite must meet numerical standards as per Rochford's guidance.
- 4.31 Open/Play Space: It needs to be ensured that the areas surrounding the potential mountain bike trail are the most important and need to be useable. Need to justify the LEAP+ with the proposed facilities being preferential to those of a NEAP.
- 4.32 Landscaping: Would consider the value of advanced planting. Primary and secondary species of tree on primary access route should be provided with underground anchoring. Increased planting is required around LEAP+.
- 4.33 Affordable Housing: The application submission requires an Affordable Housing Plan which will be tied into the S106. All apartments onsite will be affordable units with all affordable dwellings designed as tenure blind.

Pre-Application Meeting 7 – 12th September 2019

- 4.34 Officers from Rochford District Council and Essex County Council Urban Design and Landscaping were present at the seventh pre-application meeting.
- 4.35 Landscaping: A landscaping strategy will be included as part of the hybrid application. The central landscaped square should be a formal environment with boundaries defined by parkland railings or hedge planting. Could provide the inclusion of a central tree within the landscaped square with the views down the entrance avenue. Potential to include public art in the view up from Percy Cottis Road, to draw

people in. Need to ensure that the entrance boulevard is grand with there being substantial tree planning and stand out features on these house types, for example, chimneys.

- 4.36 Parking: There should be clear differentiation in visitor parking areas with landscaping being used to soften parking courts. The school drop off spaces will be shared use and will be on a first come first served basis.
- 4.37 Affordable Housing: The materials provided on the affordable housing dwellings need further detail to ensure these are tenure blind. Need to ensure that landscaping is utilised to create appropriate amenity space for affordable dwellings. The proposed mix of units additionally need to ensure that the provision satisfies the housing officers requirements.

5.0 Member/Local Stakeholder Meetings

- 5.1 There have been various meetings with both members and local stakeholders. These meetings have helped understand the views of the elected members on various different aspects, whilst providing clarification on certain points to members. Speaking to the local stakeholders also allowed their concerns to be heard whilst additionally understanding any aspects that are favourable towards the proposals.

Members Briefing 1 – 13th June 2019

- 5.2 Four ward members attended the presentation, alongside three officers from Rochford DC and the project team.
- 5.3 Affordable Housing: Members wanted 3/4-bedroom dwellings to be considered for affordable housing to cater for the perceived demand. Pepper potting of the affordable units was also requested to be provided. It was acknowledged that an uplift in dwellings would result in an increased number of affordable housing units.
- 5.4 Green Spaces: Members wanted clarification on the maintenance of the green spaces once built with assurances sought that these would be managed appropriately. Management companies were suggested to be created to manage these facilities, with a cap on the charges being suggested.
- 5.5 Road Network: Members noted how traffic mitigation would need to be imposed within the wider area, with Hall Road and Golden Cross junctions being the major pinch points.
- 5.6 Further items that members would like to see considered:
- Play equipment and adult gym facilities in green spaces;
 - Inclusion of bungalows and lifetime homes;
 - BT super-fast broadband; and
 - Charging points for electric and hybrid vehicles.

Members Briefing 2 – 3rd July 2019

- 5.7 Three ward members were present at the second presentation, alongside the attendance of three officers from Rochford DC and the project team.
- 5.8 Site Access: Concerns were raised on the location of the access point opposite the Holt Farm schools. Members were not convinced local schools would be happy with this arrangement. Members accepted that the provision of the on-site school drop off/pick up area would ease congestion, in addition to the provision of new homes reducing the catchment area with the same effects.
- 5.9 Housing Mix: Support was expressed by both members and officers in respect to the mix of affordable and market housing to be provided.

- 5.10 Design: Members required the consideration of a good mix of distinctive styles on the proposed dwellings with not just one or two housing types being delivered.
- 5.11 Affordable Housing: Members assumed that affordable homes should be weighted more towards 3 and 4-bedroom units, with Officers to take advice from Andrew Badger (Housing Officer). Reassurances were additionally offered that the scheme would be tenure blind.

Stakeholder Briefing – Holt Farm Junior and Infant Schools – 11th July 2019

- 5.12 Members of the project team met with the Head Teachers of both Holt Farm Junior and Infant schools, alongside the Chair of Governors for Holt Farm Infant School.
- 5.13 Access: Concerns were raised over the reduction in the size of the pavement outside the school, as it is already considered too narrow due to the addition of a cycle lane. Other potential access points including Sapwoods were raised with ownership issues and insufficient width discounting these as a possibility.
- 5.14 Parking: The addition of the school drop-off/pick up was discussed with attendees noting that without enforcement parents are likely to park on the new access road.
- 5.15 Construction: Fear over the disruption from the site construction was expressed with assurances given that this was being considered currently, however, access will most likely be through Brays Lane.
- 5.16 Affordable Housing: The affordable housing mix was discussed, alongside the issue of housing being used by London Borough tenants. Reassurances was given that local people would be given priority were given, with the S106 agreement securing this.

6.0 Post Exhibition Consultation

Stakeholder Briefing – The King Edmund School – 19th July 2019

- 6.1 Members of the project team met with the Head Teacher and Business Manager of The King Edmund School.
- 6.2 Consultation: The project team advised that consultation was in the early stages with the duration of the summer being used to consider feedback. King Edmund School raised concerns that the consultation period runs over the summer holidays.
- 6.3 Site Access: Issues with the congestion on Ashingdon Road was raised, with the project team advising that a priority junction would be created, and several off-site roundabout improvements will be implemented to ease traffic flow.
- 6.4 Schools: The project team confirmed that no primary school would be built onsite, although Essex County Council Education Department were looking at options to increase capacity at local schools. The creation of a pre-school/nursery was discussed with the possibility to secure funding to provide a nursery in the locality.

Stakeholder Briefing – Parish Council Contact Group – 17th September 2019

- 6.5 Members of the project team met with the Parish Councillor Representatives and Members.
- 6.6 Site Access: The location of the access opposite Holt Farm Schools alongside the increased traffic flow on Ashingdon Road were cited as major concerns by Parish Councillors. Furthermore, questions were raised as to why the Sapwoods access isn't proposed. Additional concerns were expressed over the secondary access from Percy Cottis Road, with the project team stating only a small portion of the development are anticipated to utilise this access.
- 6.7 Housing Numbers: A query was raised over the proposed development providing 665 dwellings as opposed to numbers in accordance with the Allocations Plan.
- 6.8 Street Tree: Mitigation options were discussed with respect to the oak tree. Councillors appeared supportive of the prospective tree mitigation methods. The potential location of a Community Orchard was considered with suggestions that the felled oak timber should be used at Holt Farm School.
- 6.9 Community Facilities: Parish Councillors expressed that allotments are not a priority. Concerns were additionally expressed that in the eventuality no operator could be sourced for the community facility that Bloor could build more homes in this locality. The Councillors were reassured that policy dictates that a community facility must be provided onsite.

Stakeholder Briefing – Holt Farm Junior and Infant Schools – 26th September 2019

- 6.10 Members of the project team met with the Head Teachers and Chair of Governors of The Holt Farm Schools.
- 6.11 Consultation: It was advised by the project team that the summer was used to collate feedback and revise the development proposals. The changes outlined in the ‘Road Improvements and Tree Planting Proposals’ document was explained to the school representatives. Concerns were raised over how sustainable transport links to the school could be improved.
- 6.12 Access: Congestion on Ashingdon Road was raised, and the project team advised a priority junction would be created and several roundabout improvements will be implemented to ease traffic flow.

Distribution of ‘Road Improvements and Tree Planting Proposals’ to District Councillors – 27th September 2019

- 6.13 The road improvements document was distributed to all District Councillors (**Appendix H**).

7.0 Responses from the Public

- 7.1 The exhibition was very well attended, with a total of 416 people in attendance
- 7.2 227 of those that attended the exhibition completed the comment cards available on the day, or the online feedback form. This equates to 55% of those in attendance completing a comment card and outlining their thoughts on the proposals.
- 7.3 In addition, it is noted that 45% of the attendees did not complete a response form.
- 7.4 Although the online feedback form is available up until the date of submission, only the comments up to the 26th July 2019 were taken into consideration for the data analysis. All responses received were read, with the appropriate comments considered by the relevant consultants. Emails were additionally received through the Bloor HQ website.
- 7.5 Individuals from the local Parish Councils additionally attended the event. This allowed for these key individuals to have their questions answered by the developer and consultants working on the project, ensuring their involvement in the process, prior to their specific stakeholder meetings.
- 7.6 The section below outlines each of the questions asked on the feedback forms and discusses the results of each of these questions in turn.

Responses to Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1

- 7.7 Question 1 asked whether *“the proposed development, which would include 35% affordable housing, would make a significant contribution to providing new homes required in Rochford?”* Respondents outlined the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with this statement.
- 7.8 Of the 227 respondent of the feedback form, 205 people responded to Question 1. Figure 1 graphically depicts the results.
- 7.9 56% of people that completed a response strongly disagreed that the development would make a significant contribution to providing new homes in Rochford.
- 7.10 Notwithstanding this, 4% of respondents strongly agreed and 12% agreed with this question and thought the development of this site would make a significant contribution to the provision of the new homes required within Rochford.

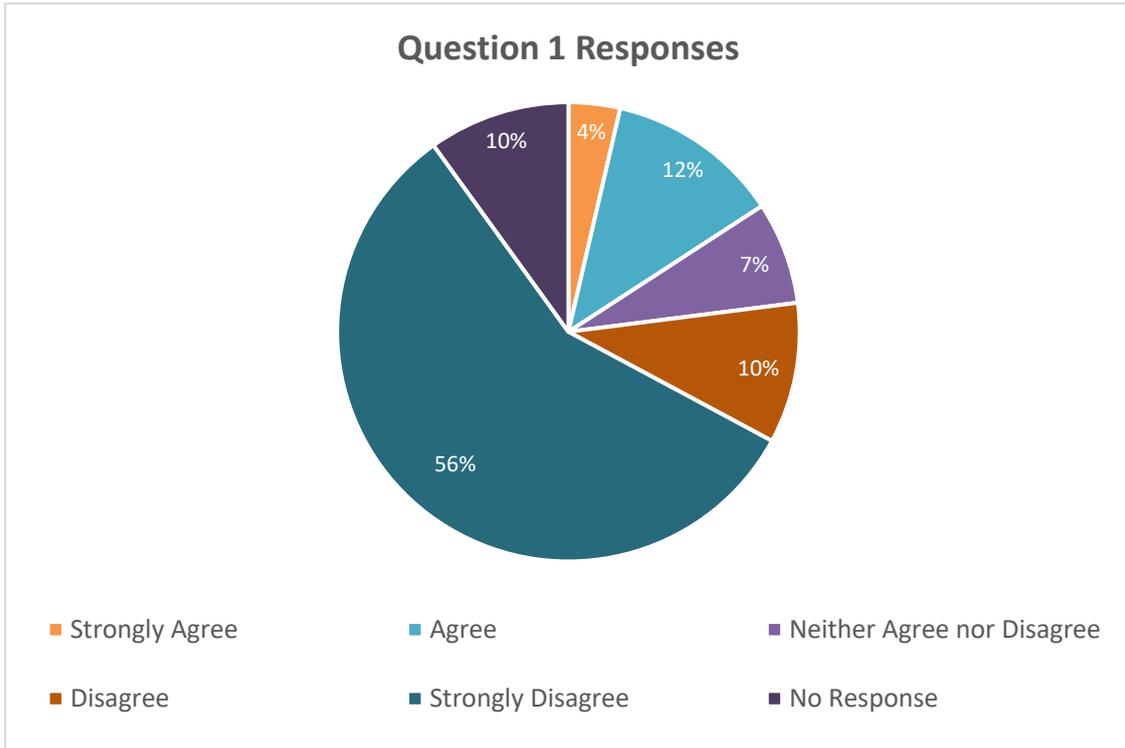


Figure 1: Pie Chart showing the answers to Question 1

Question 2

- 7.11 Question 2 asked whether *“the proposals would represent a high-quality sustainable development?”*. Respondents had to outline the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with this statement.
- 7.12 207 of the 227 questionnaire respondents answered this question, with the results illustrated in Figure 2.

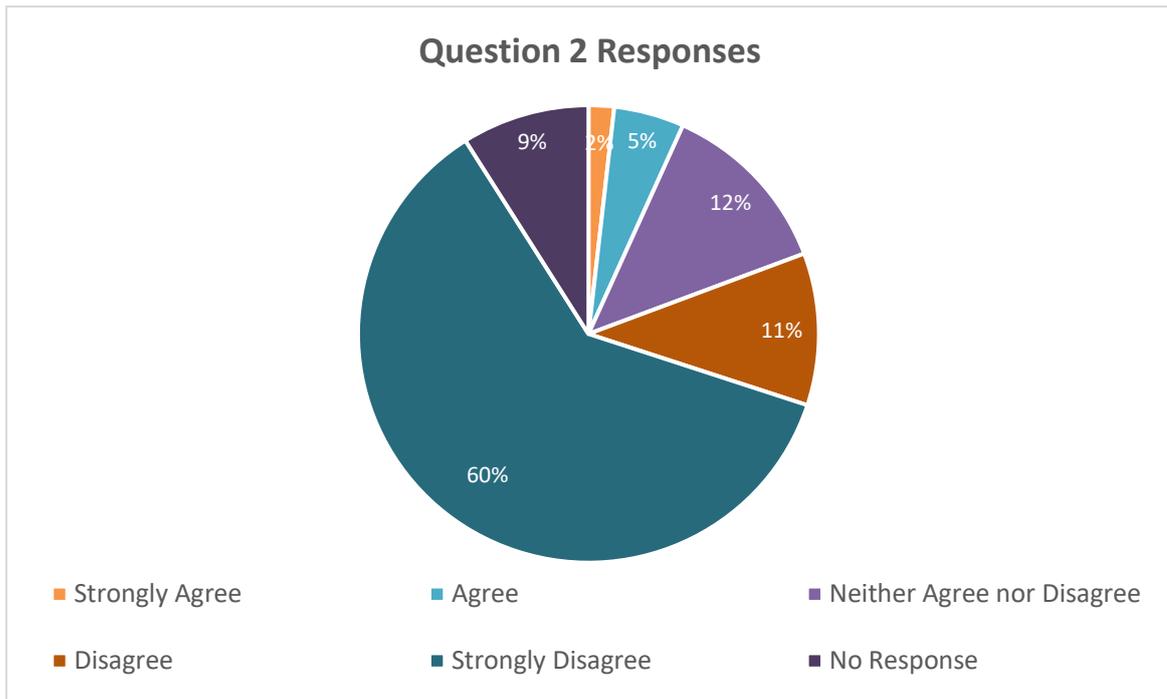


Figure 2: Pie Chart showing the answers to Question 2

7.13 The results for this question show a general agreement between all respondents that the proposals would not represent a high-quality sustainable development. 71% of the respondents answered that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this question. Several of the respondents additionally wrote comments next to this question.

Question 3

7.14 Question 3 asked that *“in respect of the following please rate the following from 1 – 5 (with 1 being the most important) to be considered as part of the application?”* The relevant options for this question were: New Homes; Community/Youth/Nursery Facility; Open Space and Landscaping; Allotments; and Flood Alleviation.

7.15 Figure 3 below outlines the results ascertained from this question.

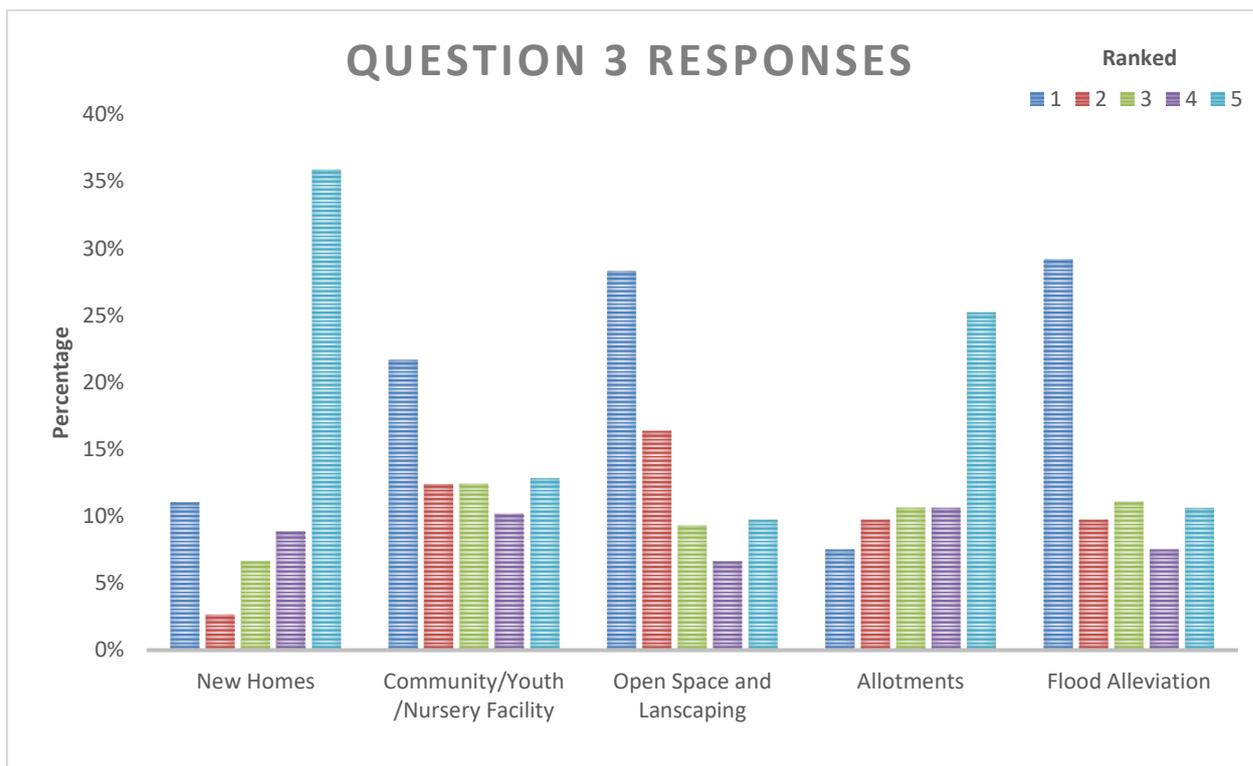


Figure 3: Bar Chart outlining the Question 3 responses and associated proportions

7.16 The responses to Question 3 indicate that open space and landscaping (28%), and flood alleviation (29%) were considered to be the most important elements of the application proposals.

7.17 New Homes were outlined by the respondents to be ranked of the lowest importance, with 36% of people ranking these in fifth. Notwithstanding this, within the New Homes category, the second largest ranking was first, with this outlining the importance that homes should be provided on this site.

7.18 A substantial number of participants (27%) ranked allotments in fifth, with this therefore not understood to be a priority for the local residents, with only 8% of people ranking this as their priority.

7.19 The provision of a community facility was consistently ranked with each of these categories.

7.20 Table 1 below outlines the ranking percentage for each category in relation to the overall data set, with this correlating to the above Figure 3.

Table 1: Table outlining the responses to Question 3 showing the appropriate percentages

	New Homes	Community/ Youth/Nursery Facility	Open Space and Landscaping	Allotments	Flood Alleviation
1	11%	22%	29%	8%	30%
2	5%	24%	32%	19%	19%
3	13%	25%	19%	21%	22%
4	20%	23%	15%	24%	17%
5	38%	14%	10%	27%	11%

Responses to Open Ended Questions

7.21 In addition to the closed questions that were asked of the respondents, open ended questions were also included on the feedback form in order for the attendees to provide any comments that they wanted to express.

Question 4

7.22 Question 4 stated that “*Rochford Council would like to see the provision of retail / youth / community facilities on this site. Please advise which of these facilities, or other you would wish to see incorporated into the proposals?*”

7.23 Table 2 includes a summary of the responses for Question 4.

Table 2: Table outlining the summary of responses provided in Question 4

Schools	Doctors	Hospital
Nursery	Police/Fire Station	Local Supermarket/Convenience Store
Playing fields	Garden centre	Pond
Bypass	Dentist	Bank
Skateboard ramp	Cake shop	Gym
Allotments	Children play areas	Green spaces

7.24 This wide range of answers indicates that there are a variety of potential facilities that the residents of Rochford would like to see included within the proposed development. Although unfortunately some of these do not fall under the category of retail, youth and community or are not suitable.

7.25 74 of the respondents outlined that they wanted to see school facilities being constructed on the application site, with additional respondents noting that they wanted pre-school and nursery facilities to be located on the site.

7.26 67 of the respondents also stated that they wished for there to be a Doctors surgery provided on the site within the proposed community facility building. In addition to this, 5 further respondents wanted there to be a hospital located on the site. This shows that the potential impacts on the local health service is a key concern of the local residents.

7.27 It should be noted that 13 of the respondents listed that they would wish for there to be play spaces or allotments located on the site.

Question 5

7.28 Finally, we asked for any additional comments that the attendees had on the development proposals. There were a number of reoccurring themes within the comments that we received. These included: Highways issues including traffic on Ashingdon Road and the access point, drainage concerns, the availability of doctors and schools in the area and the cumulative effect of the development occurring in Rochford.

7.29 A summary of the comments and concerns raised with these responses is summarised below, with the responses of the applicant, and project team listed in addition:

Comments	Applicant's Response
<i>The local area of Rochford does not need any more housing, especially with the current development at Hall Road.</i>	This site has been allocated within the Allocations Plan which was adopted by Rochford District Council in 2014. Therefore, the Council has decided that this site is vital for the delivery of housing within the District especially with the contribution that the site makes to the Five-Year Housing Land Supply.
<i>Green Belt land is disappearing, why not look at building on brownfield sites.</i>	This site has been allocated as a Green Belt release site, and the site is no longer classified as Green Belt.
<i>Main concern is the additional 160 houses which are being provided above those proposed in the Core Strategy.</i>	665 dwellings are proposed, with this being determined through the design evolution of the scheme showing that these dwellings could be comfortably accommodated. Furthermore, the proposed scheme will be compliant with the SHMA for the area whilst assisting the LPA with the delivery of required housing for the District.
<i>The proposed development could lead to an overdevelopment of the site in relation to the amount of green space.</i>	The proposed green spaces on the site are an important feature of the proposals. Both formal and informal spaces are created on the edge of the development as well as integrated throughout the residential areas. The level of provision is in accordance with the Development Plan.
<i>The proposed access road onto Ashingdon Road opposite the Holt Farm schools is an issue. There has got to be an alternative access point.</i>	The location and form of the proposed access has been agreed in principle with County Highways and has been subject to an independent Road Safety Audit, and no issues were raised.

	<p>The access is positioned just north of the existing toucan crossing so that residents can walk from the site and cross Ashingdon Road safely to access the school and bus stop. The access road position enables ease of access to the proposed school pick-up/drop-off for parents/carers and provides a connection to the school via a short walk using the toucan crossing.</p>
<p><i>The access point opposite Holt Farm Schools is not acceptable and will cause a detrimental impact on the safety of the school children.</i></p>	<p>As above, the proposed access has been subject to an independent Road Safety Audit, and no issues were raised.</p> <p>As part of the access junction works it is proposed to provide a pedestrian island at the toucan crossing to improve safety, as well as upgrading the crossing controls/detectors. It is also proposed to replace the existing guard railing either side of Ashingdon Road in the vicinity of the school with new high visibility guard railing to improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers. To further enhance road safety, additional school warning signage is proposed on both approaches to the school to make drivers even more aware of the presence of school children.</p>
<p><i>The proposed entrance will impact the visibility and increase the risk of injury to particularly young children.</i></p>	<p>The proposed site access junction is designed with standard levels of visibility. As above, we propose to replace the existing guard railing with new high visibility guard railing to improve visibility between pedestrians and drivers.</p>
<p><i>The secondary access off of Percy Cottis Road is not suitable.</i></p>	<p>The proposed access has been agreed in principle with County Highways and has been subject to an independent Road Safety Audit, and no issues were raised in terms of its suitability or safety as a secondary access.</p> <p>The internal road layout is designed to provide a convoluted and traffic calmed route in order to limit vehicle movement via Percy Cottis Road.</p>
<p><i>The proposed development would lead to an increased bus service, especially as the no. 8 bus has been reduced.</i></p>	<p>It is proposed to provide a financial contribution to ECC for bus service enhancements through a S106. The appropriate service enhancements will be subject to further discussions with ECC following submission of the application.</p>

<p><i>If you could provide some off street drop off/pick up points I am sure parents would welcome that.</i></p>	<p>It is proposed to provide a school drop-off/pick-up as part of the proposed development. These spaces will be located within a short 2-minute walk of Holt Farm School via the toucan crossing. This provision will alleviate existing levels of congestion experienced on Ashingdon Road at school start and finish times.</p>
<p><i>Emergency access vehicles wouldn't stand a chance if they came up against the dustmen.</i></p>	<p>In addition to the vehicular accesses from Ashingdon Road and Percy Cottis Road, an additional point of emergency access is proposed from Ashingdon Road, with this alleviating any concerns about emergency vehicles entering the site. Further, all roads on site are at least 5.5m wide, which is wide enough for a fire tender to pass a refuse vehicle.</p>
<p><i>The amount of traffic on Ashingdon Road now is leading to vast traffic jams, with the development exacerbating this.</i></p>	<p>Although the local highway network is congested at peak times, there is the ability to deliver the proposed development without significant detrimental impacts. This will be delivered by improvements at local junctions to increase capacity and also by delivering a package of measures to encourage residents to use modes of transport other than the private car, which will serve to minimise the vehicle trip generation of the development and reduce its traffic impact.</p>
<p><i>The current infrastructure within the locality, cannot cope with the additional demand from this development.</i></p>	<p>It is proposed to provide improvements to local highway and public transport infrastructure to cater for the additional demand.</p>
<p><i>The Air Quality of the site and the surrounding area is poor.</i></p>	<p>Rochford District Council has one Air Quality Management Area, for exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective, which is located within Rayleigh, not Rochford.</p> <p>Only one monitoring location in Rochford has (on Sutton Road) experienced exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual objective in 2018. However, this was for a roadside site, and not at a location with relevant human exposure. Once distance corrected to the nearest receptor location the Rochford District Council advise that the 2018 concentration was 25.86 (35% below the annual objective).</p>
<p><i>The new development is likely to increase the pollution which is found in our community.</i></p>	<p>The Department for Transport released the Road to Zero Strategy in July 2018 which sets out their aspirations. One of these aspirations is: "We want to see at least 50%, and as many as 70%, of</p>

	<p><i>new car sales and up to 40% of new van sales being ultra-low emission by 2030."</i></p> <p>On the basis the highest monitored nitrogen dioxide concentration at the nearest receptor (highlighted above) is below the annual mean objective, and the Road to Zero Strategy aims to reduce vehicular emissions, it is not anticipated that upon full occupancy the proposed development will cause exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective, and adversely impact human health.</p>
<p><i>The proposed development will lead to flooding, in which one ditch will not alleviate.</i></p>	<p>The proposed drainage strategy will reduce the flow rate that is generated from the site. This is done by directing the water from the roads / houses / drives etc to two large attenuation basins and controlling the rate at which it is released into the Anglian Water Sewer. Anglian Water have confirmed that their existing sewers have adequate capacity for the drainage from the development.</p> <p>There is also a flood alleviation scheme which is separate to the drainage strategy. This flood alleviation scheme focuses on reducing the existing flooding on the site and surrounding areas by providing three flood storage areas. These store the flood water before connecting back into the ditches / watercourse on the site.</p> <p>As a result of this, flood risk on the site and the surrounding areas will decrease.</p>
<p><i>Concerns over the draining of the site, as the current drainage system is old and wont cope with the additional development.</i></p>	<p>Anglian Water have been contacted regarding the proposed development and have confirmed that the existing drainage system has adequate capacity for the proposed foul and surface water drainage.</p>
<p><i>The removal of the beautiful oak tree is devastating.</i></p>	<p>Bloor Homes recognises the importance of the tree and has worked hard with their consultant team to try to find another solution to try to keep it. Unfortunately, there is no option other than to remove it to ensure that the road can be safely realigned. Essex County Council Highways has approved this in principle and understand that the tree will need to be removed. Four different mitigation proposal are offered: Three new street trees to the north of the tree, a community orchard/grove of trees, school tree planting and</p>

	<p>use of the timber for seating/habitat/art. We are, and will continue to do so, engaging with schools and local communities to ensure that the mitigation is what the community want. There will be considerable on-site tree planting as part of the development, but we will be doing more in recognition of the concern about the loss of the tree.</p>
<p><i>The Local schools are at capacity, and won't cope with any new developments</i></p>	<p>Bloor Homes has had discussions with Essex CC Education, and it is likely that a financial contribution will be provided to provide for expansion of local schools to meet demand.</p>
<p><i>Local Doctors surgeries are at capacity and are unable to get appointments for substantial periods of time.</i></p>	<p>Bloor Homes has had discussions with the NHS/CCG, and it is likely that a financial contribution will be provided to expand local surgeries to meet demand.</p>
<p><i>The development could have a detrimental impact on the wildlife and ecology in the area.</i></p>	<p>A range of ecological surveys have been conducted to confirm the presence or likely absence of protected and priority species within the site. Based on the findings of these surveys, a detailed program of ecological mitigation has been developed that seeks to avoid, minimise and lastly compensate for any potential impacts to wildlife as a result of the development. This includes sensitive working methods and timings, retention of existing habitats of ecological value where feasible, integration of bird and bat boxes within the development, and wildlife friendly landscaping within the eastern public open space.</p>
<p><i>Biodiversity of the site will diminish with the loss of slow worms, skylarks, cuckoos and grass snakes amongst others.</i></p>	<p>While individual birds directly associated with arable habitats may be displaced from the site post-development, there is extensive arable habitat to the east that will continue to provide suitable habitat for these species. Given the limited species assemblage recorded on site during breeding bird surveys in 2019, it is considered that loss of on-site arable habitat will not have a significant impact on local breeding bird populations. Retention of existing trees and hedgerow along the eastern boundary, as well as new tree, hedgerow and grassland planting, will continue to provide suitable habitats for a range of bird's species.</p> <p>While slow worms and grass snakes will be translocated from the site prior to</p>

	commencement of construction to ensure these animals are not directly harmed by the development, retention of the hedgerow along the southeast boundary of the site will continue to provide ecological connectivity to the wider environment post-development. A large public open space will be created adjacent to this hedgerow, with wildlife friendly landscaping to be incorporated. This will foster biodiversity on site and allow reptiles as well as other protected species to recolonise the area once construction is completed.
<i>The increased amount of affordable housing within the area will bring higher crime rates to the local area.</i>	Natural surveillance provided by the location of the dwellings, will aid in preventing crime.
<i>The affordable housing that is proposed, we need to make sure that this is genuinely affordable and available for the local residents.</i>	This will be let in accordance with Rochford District Council's policies on renting on to the local people. The applicant will enter into a legal agreement to secure the terms of the affordable housing in consultation with the Council's Housing Officer.
<i>There is a lack of facilities within the surrounding local area.</i>	The increase number of residents within the local area, will lead to their being an increase in services/facilities available as they will be increasingly viable.
<i>The proposed development involves the loss of prime farmland.</i>	The application site is allocated for residential development within the Allocations Plan (2014). The loss of farmland was considered at that stage.
<i>There is no provision for leisure facilities on the site, with nearest playground and park being a significant distance away.</i>	Both public open space and play areas for all ages are proposed on the site, on the eastern boundary. These will be easily accessible by the residents of the proposed development, and the existing residential areas through the pedestrian and cycle links proposed.
<i>Information and surveys regarding pollution, traffic and services should be shared with local residents.</i>	The surveys which have been undertaken by the applicants and their project team will be shared as part of the supporting documentation to the planning application.
<i>Why would residents of Oxford Road, which is primarily bungalows, want three storey dwellings being located at the end of their gardens.</i>	The layout of the development has taken into consideration and is an unreserved matter for the whole site. The Phase 3 layout accommodates an appropriate set back from the residential accommodation on Oxford Road with the

	proposed units not being greater than 2 storeys in height.
<i>Our gardens back onto the development, and we are concerned about losing the view.</i>	The proposed site has been allocated for residential development since the Allocations Plan 2014.
<i>Consider the types of dwellings which are along the perimeter of the site, to ensure that these buildings are not overlooking the existing development.</i>	All the proposed dwellings will accord and comply with the local requirements on the distances from the existing development around the edge of the site.
<i>I'm all for this development.</i>	No comment required.

8.0 *Post Exhibition Resident Communications*

- 8.1 Following the exhibition, residents were kept informed of the proposals and were given the opportunity to ask further questions relating to the development designs.
- 8.2 The website <http://www.bloorinashington.com/> was made live where the exhibition boards could be viewed and a 'FAQs' section was also made available which answered key questions from residents.
- 8.3 Residents could also email in specific enquiries. A summary of responses:
- Why do these houses have to go here?
 - Why are you building on Green Belt land?
 - Why is the development for 665 units?
 - The roads won't cope with all these extra cars on the road.
 - Won't there be road safety issues for children of Holt Farm Primary and Infant School?
 - The ancient old oak tree should be protected.
 - You can't destroy the old oak because of the TPO.
 - The infrastructure isn't designed for this many people.
- 8.4 In October the 'Road Improvements and Tree Planting Proposals' document was emailed to residents who attended the public exhibition and had requested further information on their feedback forms. A total of 125 emails were sent out.

9.0 Changes as a result of Consultation

9.1 Following feedback from residents and discussions with Council Members and Officers, a number of key changes have been made to the masterplan. A summary of the changes is included below:

Masterplan Change	Comment
Removal of crossroads throughout the development, replaced with staggered junctions in line with Essex highways guidance	Local residents expressed concern that crossroads could lead to backed up congestion around the site which could, consequently, affect traffic flow more widely.
Reduction to the number of dwellings accessed off the shared surface roads.	Consultation responses from the exhibition showed resident concern with pedestrians accessing areas where there would be many cars using it too.
South-west pedestrian access changed to an emergency vehicular only/pedestrian/cycle access, with provision of cycle storage racks adjacent to the school drop-off area	A key concern was that emergency vehicles did not have specific access and that there needed to be a strategy for accessing the schools in a safe and co-ordinated way.
Dedicated school drop-off area added with 10 no. car parking spaces	To alleviate congestion along the main road and provide a safe area for children to disembark. Local residents wanted dedicated car parking rather than just sharing the community use building facility. We have engineered such a provision.
Pedestrian/cycle link to the Eastern Parklands moved to the northern side of the central ditch corridor.	The schools expressed a concern that cycle/pedestrian access to the site should be parallel with Ashingdon Road so pupils and staff could access the route. This helps alleviate the perceived loss of cycling access to Holt Farm Schools by reducing the width of the pavement.
Focal landscaped square redesigned with 2.5 storey dwellings, to provide a more formal space and aid legibility and wayfinding	This was undertaken in response to the Essex Design Guide, which local elected Members were very keen on us engaging closely with.
The inclusion of 3 storey apartment blocks (located away from existing properties and site boundaries) within the scheme, providing greater variety in types and sizes of homes available	Residents were not keen on flatted areas of the scheme being close to either Ashingdon Road (specifically raised by residents here) and other boundaries of the site.
Staggered building lines introduced to development along the southern and northern site boundaries, including	Locally elected Members were concerned that the design of the homes would not meet the Essex Design Guide standards. We have worked closely with the EDG to ensure that these fears could be mitigated.

greater variety of terraced and semi-detached units.	
Ensuring all dwellings comply with national space standards	As a result of consultation with elected Members.
Visitor, disabled visitors, motorcycle (PTW's) visitor and cycle visitor parking spaces added	Residents attending the exhibition were very concerned with the lack of parking spaces and the potential for the overspill of cars to be parking on the streets. We have redesigned to accommodate more parking spaces.
Careful consideration given to the landscape treatment around the boundaries of the parking courts with block paving	As a result of Member engagement and subsequent discussions with the Essex Design Guide team at Essex County Council.
Proposed planting of 3 no. street trees along Ashingdon Road, assisting in mitigating the loss of the existing Oak outside Holt Farm Schools	The loss of the oak tree has been a consistent concern for residents, and we hope the planting of additional trees will mitigate this issue. This has been communicated widely with members of the public, local community groups and the Holt Farm Schools.
Inclusion of an orchard south of the allotments, assisting in mitigating the loss of the existing Oak outside Holt Farm Schools	In response to resident's feedback concerning the need for further tree planting in and around the site.
Inclusion of invertebrate habitats and ecological interpretation boards within the Eastern Parklands	Parish councils and ecology groups were keen on ensuring that the site could generate more biodiversity and habitats than is currently on the site. We responded to provide for this.

9.2 The final Masterplan can be found in **Appendix I**.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement provides guidance on the consultation process that should form part of major applications. In terms of consulting with neighbouring properties and local amenity groups, the requirements outlined in this document have been met.
- 10.2 The objective of the consultation process was to convey the key principles of the proposals to develop Land to the east of Ashingdon Road for 665 dwellings, associated infrastructure, a community facility and formal and informal green spaces; and listen to reflect on the feedback.
- 10.3 The process involved delivering approximately 2,800 flyers to properties and businesses within the local area, with this being agreed by the LPA. The flyer provided an outline of the development proposals and also invited stakeholders, local residents and local businesses to attend a public exhibition.
- 10.4 At the public exhibition Bloor Homes and members of the consultant's team were available to explain the proposals and to answer any questions or comments from the public, and stakeholders.
- 10.5 The public exhibition was attended by 416 people, which in our opinion, given the nature of the proposed development, was very well attended.
- 10.6 Of those people who attended the exhibition 227 completed the feedback forms which were provided on the day, and on a dedicated webpage for the proposals. These comments have been summarised and addressed within Section 6 of this document.
- 10.7 Since the public consultation, and during the course of the other stakeholder's engagement, there has been further liaison with the Local Planning Authority, Essex County Council and the respective project consultants to review the proposals as a result of the comments received from local residents.