

HILLREED HOMES

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

**IWADE SOUTH WEST SECTOR DEVELOPMENT BRIEF
LAND ADJACENT TO COLESHALL FARM, IWADE, KENT**

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dha planning
Eclipse House, Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road
Maidstone, Kent ME14 3EN

t: 01622 776226 f: 01622 776227

e: info@dhaplanning.co.uk w: www.dhaplanning.co.uk

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1. BACKGROUND

Objective

- 1.1 To interact with people from the Iwade locality or other interested parties with reference to the Hillreed Homes proposal to provide development at Iwade south west sector in line with policy AAP9 of the adopted Local Plan, particularly with regards to the revised Development Brief and Masterplan.

Policy AAP9

- 1.2 Policy AAP9 of the adopted Swale Local Plan 2008 requires that a revised Development Brief will need to be submitted and approved by the Council prior to development of land allocated through the Policy. A Consultation Draft of this revised Brief and Masterplan was submitted to the Council for comment on the 15th August 2008.

2. THE SWALE BOROUGH STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2.1 Swale Borough Council issued a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation earlier this year. This document outlines how the Council propose to involve the local community in planning applications. An Inspector has subsequently found the document to be sound, with expected formal adoption scheduled for the 17th September 2008.
- 2.2 This document states that the Council are keen to involve the community at every stage of the planning process, allowing the public to voice their views and influence the final design. The Council's objectives include giving everyone a voice, and removing barriers to participation, so that the community can shape future development. Public consultation also enables the Council to deal with proposals for development faster and more smoothly when it goes through the formal planning application stage.
- 2.3 The document states that "time taken by a developer earlier in the process may mean that important issues are identified and addressed earlier". Table 4.1 sets standard of consultation for *applications*, with the Iwade proposal falling under the remit of a 'Major Application'. The document outlines the need for displays/exhibitions and community meetings.

3. BACKGROUND CONSULTATION

Iwade Revised Development Brief (Policy AAP9)

- 3.1 With regards to the Development Brief and Masterplan, numerous consultation meetings have been held.
- 3.2 Hillreed Homes have met several times with Alan Best of Swale Borough Council Planning Department to discuss the brief including open space,, specifically on the 14th January 2008 and the 27th February 2008. Also in relation to open space, several meetings have been held with Graeme Tuff of Swale Borough Council, the last meetings having taken place on the 20th March 2008 and 1st October 2008.
- 3.3 Hillreed Homes have been keen to involve Iwade Parish Council in the evolution of the Development Brief and Masterplan. A meeting took place with Parish Councillors on the 1st April 2008, with a wide range of issue discussed including flooding, affordable units and permeability. A round table discussion meeting with Hillreed Homes, DHA Planning, Kent Highways, Parish Councillors and Swale Borough Council officers took place on the 26th June 2008. This meeting proved extremely useful in scoping the desired content of both the Brief and Masterplan. Ideas such as the provision of a changing pavilion and small community facility were mooted by the Parish Council and the Council's Leisure Officer. Traffic and highways were also discussed, as well as the employment area, sustainability and design specification.
- 3.4 Further local consultation was had between Hillreed Homes and Adam Elliot of the Iwade Herons Football Club, with a meeting taking place on the 16th June 2008. In relation to mix and types of housing, Hillreed Homes met with Amicus Housing Association on the 1st May 2008, the preferred Housing Association as advised by Alaine Bunce.

4. METHODOLOGY FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 4.1 As well as meetings as described in Section 3, an exhibition was held at Iwade Village Hall which was central for the community of Iwade and offered the necessary facilities.

Publicity

- 4.2 An exhibition event date of the 10th September was chosen. This date was selected on the basis that most residents would have completed their summer holidays and would thus be available to attend the exhibition. A time of 4.30pm -8.30pm was also chosen to allow a wide range of people to visit when most convenient.
- 4.3 Notices were placed in the KM Newspaper, the Gazette and the Sheerness Times Guardian. The event was also publicised on the village website www.iwadevillage.co.uk. Letters were sent out to the Parish Council, Local Groups and local facilities such as the Church and Public House. Posters were put up around the village for two and a half weeks prior to the exhibition. 2no. banners were put up outside Iwade Village Hall on the day of the exhibition.

Exhibition Event Details

- 4.4 The exhibition itself consisted of 8 exhibition stands with 7no A1 full colour boards, 6no being portrait orientation and 1no being landscape, all fully staffed by representatives from both Hillreed Homes (3no) and DHA Planning (2no). A table was also set up with copies of the Development Brief and Masterplan, with pens and scale rulers provided. Members of the Parish Council also attended as did Planning Officers of Swale Borough Council.



4.5 Copies are attached of the:

- Poster
- Letter
- Newspaper Advert
- Exhibition boards
- Questionnaire

4.6 Numbers of attendees at the exhibition totalled approximately 140.

Questionnaire Responses

- 4.7 A questionnaire was designed to gauge the views of people attending the exhibition. Blank questionnaires were handed out to people as they arrived at the event.
- 4.8 66 questionnaires were filled out. The questionnaire gave people the chance to voice their views on the issues which had been raised by the exhibition, and to comment on key aspects of the proposal through structured questions. The questionnaire also allowed people the chance to make general comments and observations on the proposals as a whole, and to bring our attention to any matters which may have been overlooked.

Questionnaire Results

- 4.9 The results of the questionnaires are presented in Appendix F. This contains counts of the various responses given, as well as summaries of the extended comments received.
- 4.10 The responses from the questionnaires were mixed although predominately positive. Each of the issues raised are addressed and evaluated here.
- 4.11 When respondents were asked whether they were in general agreement with the proposed Masterplan for the site, 40% answered that they were, in principle, supportive of the proposal. 31% were not in agreement, however, many objected to the proposal to develop the land rather than the Masterplan designed for it. Many attendees were unaware of the allocation of the site in the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008, or indeed the background to the allocation. 19% of respondents had significant concerns that would need addressing before they could lend their support, predominantly relating to traffic and parking.

- 4.12 When respondents were asked whether they agreed with the types and positions of open space proposed, 55% were in agreement. 37% were not in agreement, with main concerns being that there was too much emphasis on football provision, and not enough children's play space. Some wanted the recreation ground to be even larger than proposed. Many respondents were not actually aware that the existing recreation field was not in public ownership.
- 4.13 When asked whether the Masterplan provided enough opportunity for walking and cycling, 50% agreed that it did. Some had concerns that there might be too much permeability, encouraging anti social behaviour. 33% of respondents felt that there was not enough opportunity for walking, with some stating concerns that the proposal would not allow dogs to run free. Reference was also made to a link between the development and Meadow Rise, however the Masterplan does not propose this.
- 4.14 36% of respondents thought that there should be more shared ownership properties provided, with the general consensus being that the village already has enough rented homes. Only 3% disagreed, however, 25% withheld an answer or comment. There is a need for some flexibility with the exact split of affordable housing types.
- 4.15 Respondents were asked what type of employment they would like to see in the village. The majority (24%) preferred offices, whilst 16% wanted to see other types of employment such as a restaurant. A total of 17% thought that the village does not require any extra employment as it would not be used.
- 4.16 Hillreed asked whether respondents felt that the proposed employment area was in the right location on the proposed Masterplan. 59% felt that it is in the right location, where it will cause least disruption in traffic terms.

4.17 Finally, respondents were offered the opportunity to make any general points and comments. Some felt that there would not be enough extra capacity in both the local primary school and GP's surgery. Parking proved to be a pertinent issue, as did traffic and the effects of the proposed route through the site. Provision for the elderly was also noted. Some thought the footpath within Open Space 3 unnecessary. Many respondents wanted to see adequate boundary treatment between existing and proposed houses with no overlooking.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Due to the nature of the proposed development it was considered appropriate to obtain the views and attitudes of the residents of Iwade and the surrounding area and has guided the revised Policy AAP9 Development Brief and Masterplan, as well as the content of the submitted planning application.
- 5.2 Suitable consultation methods are outlined within the Statement of Community Involvement produced by Swale Borough Council. Any future planning application would be classed as 'Major' and thus the consultation of the Development Brief and Masterplan has sought to meet these consultation requirements.
- 5.3 The consultative programme put forward for the proposals consisted of a number of meetings with the Parish Council, local figures and Council officers, and a public exhibition. People who attended the event had the opportunity to make their comments and views known through a questionnaire.
- 5.4 The event was well attended and was considered successful. Questionnaire response was generally positive, and provided a good indication of public attitudes to the site and proposals. Specific changes have been made to the Masterplan and Brief in light of comments received at the exhibition, as detailed in Appendix F.