

Community Engagement In Residential Development by Leading Volume House Builders.

A Briefing note by Communityplanning.net for Shelter - Revised 04 September 2012

Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 introduced community-led, statutory Neighbourhood Development Plans and made pre-application consultation mandatory. These changes to the planning system mean that it is now time for best practice in community engagement in residential development to become standard practice. As local communities become more and more influential in the development of their neighbourhoods they need to be aware of best practice. This will help them to negotiate with homebuilders to establish a community engagement strategy for housing development in their neighbourhood.

This briefing note provides some information on best practice in community engagement by volume house builders. It has been drawn from the websites of the top 25 homebuilders as identified by the NextGeneration project which assesses companies performance against social, economic and environmental criteria which include community engagement. The briefing note summarises company policies on community engagement and summarises some of their case studies, providing links to further information on the company's own website.

Please note that communityplanning.net has not verified the information provided on third party websites.

More on the NextGeneration project – see website www.nextgeneration-initiative.co.uk

More on the criteria for selection of the top 25 housebuilders – download pdf www.joneslanglasalle.com/MediaResources/EU/Marketing/UnitedKingdom/2011_NextGeneration_Criteria.pdf

BARRATT HOMES

www.barratthomes.co.uk

Community Involvement Barratt Homes Southampton

- Community Liaison Managers are employed to keep the community informed of what is going on.
- A website with a page for each development site provides up to date information and information and advance warning of meetings and events. For instance, the Community Involvement website for Southampton is here: www.barrattsotoncommunity.com/site/2011/our-aim?LanguageId=0

BELLWAY HOMES

www.bellway.co.uk/

The company' approach to community engagement is set out on its website at

www.bellway.co.uk/corporate-responsibility/creating-sustainable-communities/community-involvement:

The main elements are:

- Funding community facilities as a result of planning agreements;
- Supporting charitable initiatives throughout the country.

Hall Road, Rochford, Essex

Approximately 600 new homes ranging from 2 to 5 bedrooms with emphasis on larger, family-sized homes. Specialist community consultation consultant hired. Consultation includes:

- Public exhibition;
- Community outreach;
- Public meetings;
- Councillor meetings;
- Website.

Statement of Community Involvement – download pdf

fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/hr_sci.pdf

Villa Road, Impington, Cambridgeshire

A development of 72 predominantly family homes. Methods used included:

- Ongoing dialogue with elected council members;
- Mail outs to 540 residential and commercial premises;
- Public exhibition at the local pub – 104 attended – a 19% response rate;
- Councillors' event to facilitate one to one conversations with project team;
- One-to-one meetings offered to residents and traders nearest to the site;
- Feedback Forms with postage free return;
- Analysis of Feedback circulated throughout project team;
- Telephone and email response from project team.

Statement of Community Involvement:

plan.scambs.gov.uk/swift/q/MediaTemp/1124698-412568

BERKELEY GROUP

www.berkeleygroup.co.uk

The Berkeley Group has a Community Engagement Strategy which provides guidance on pre-application engagement.

www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/investor-information/sustainability/delivering-sustainable-communities/enquaging-local-communities

West Kent Cold Store

Community engagement over a 12 month period involved:

- Attendance at monthly Community Forum Meetings;
- One to one meetings with neighbours, residents' associations, ward and parish councillors.

As a result, trust was established and long term objectors became supporters. The overwhelming community support for the improved scheme was key in obtaining planning consent

Fulham Reach, London

Community engagement included:

- A community planning week, widely publicised through local media, letters and banners on site;
- In-depth workshops with groups exploring different aspects of the development;
- Local primary school involvement, with children contributing their ideas for the site;

Community engagement led to a number of changes to the project design to ensure that the community gained the maximum possible benefits from the development.

Queen Mary's Place

Proposal to renovate Grade I listed Roehampton House and redevelop the former Queen Mary's Hospital site. Pre-application consultation included:

- Stakeholder consultations with local residents, the Putney Society, The Roehampton Quadrant Residents Society, the Roehampton Forum, local ward Councillors, English Heritage and the local MP;
- Publicity including leaflets, presentations, exhibitions and a website;

As a result, the total number of units was reduced, specific overlooking issues were addressed and a comprehensive Green Travel plan was included to encourage sustainable modes of travel.

Following submission of the application with the above amendments, the same extensive consultation process was repeated. As a result:

- St James made a legal commitment to Wandsworth Borough Council to ensure that proposed pedestrian and cycle access routes were not opened to vehicles in the future; and
- On a very sensitive site a resolution to grant detailed planning and listed building consent was achieved within just 11 weeks.

BLOOR HOMES

bloorhomes.com/

Hurst Lane, East Molesey, Surrey

A development of 76 new homes.

The consultation process included:

- Community engagement consultants hired;
- Public exhibition – invitations to 600 households – 112 attended;
- Ongoing discussions with officer and statutory bodies such as Elmbridge Borough Council;
- Project website.

Statement of Community Engagement – download pdf

www3.elmbridge.gov.uk/WAM/doc/Other Documents-480378.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=480378&location=volume1&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=18

Lime Grove School, Bath

A development of 13 new homes on the site of a former school.

Community engagement methods used included:

- Community newsletter circulated to 698 addresses within a radius of approximately one third of a mile from the site, with an invitation to a public exhibition. Also sent to the ward councillors representing the area;
- Public exhibition - approximately 120 people attended with 50 leaving feedback on the day.
- Second community newsletter explained that following the consultation on the initial planning application for 18 homes, a revised scheme of 13 homes was adopted.

Statement of Community Engagement – download pdf

idox.bathnes.gov.uk/WAM/doc/BackGround Papers-556545.pdf?extension=.pdf&id=556545&location=VOLUME2&contentType=application/pdf&pageCount=1

BOVIS HOMES

www.bovishomes.co.uk/

The approach to community engagement is set out on page 18 of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility Report:

www.bovishomesgroup.co.uk/pdfs/CSR_2012.pdf?filedesc=20120326160326

The company keeps open lines of communication with the local community through a number of channels depending on the nature of the development, the issues involved and the stage it is at in the planning or build process. These include:

- Letter drops and leaflets;
- Public meetings;
- Dedicated websites;
- Providing feedback opportunities or contact.

If, following public consultation, concern is raised over any environmental or design issues, proposals are reviewed and revised to take account of the public's views.

Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire

A development of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes in a village.

Public engagement programme included:

- Public exhibition held at the Village Hall attended by representatives from Bovis Homes. Interviews were given to the local press about the plans and the team spent more than eight hours discussing the proposals with around 100 local people.
- A feedback form was available for local people to fill in at the event and visitors were also made aware of the fact that a dedicated website would be online the next day containing all the information available on the display boards, together with an electronic feedback form.

Priors Lea, Paulton, Somerset

In the most recent phase of 233 homes at a former printworks site, community engagement methods included:

- Public exhibition;
- Public consultation website to acquire community's views about the second phase, including feedback on the type, style and layout of the proposed new homes;
- Statement of Community Engagement which will catalogue the public consultation process by the next phase.

The project public consultation website is/was available here:

www.bovishomes.co.uk/priorslea/

CALA HOMES

www.barratthomes.co.uk

Oatlands Park Cricket Club, Weybridge

A development of a 5 acre former cricket club site for substantial detached properties selling for between £1 million and £1.5 million.

- Anti-development opposition from all quarters including national press and national television – neighbours broke into the site and along with the vice-chairman of the planning committee, strapped themselves to trees

- An extensive programme of community exhibitions and private presentations changed the opinion of local ward councillors - the one-time chairman of the "Save Oatlands Park" anti-development committee actually gave evidence on the company's behalf at the successful planning appeal.

www.cala.co.uk/homes/land/casestudies/oatlands.aspx

Weir Valves Engineering Works, Huddersfield

Redevelopment of the 17.7 acre Weir Valves Engineering Works for 319 residential dwellings in a prominent and strategic location within the Birkby Conservation Area, and only a short distance from both the town centre and motorway system.

- CALA Homes and Kirklees Council worked together to ensure that the community was included at all stages. Community engagement events were well supported and points raised were addressed in the design solution wherever possible.
- Planning gain included affordable new houses, targeted at various age groups, plus new play facilities as well as managed public open space.

www.cala.co.uk/homes/land/casestudies/weir.aspx

COUNTRYSIDE PROPERTIES

www.countryside-properties.com/

Countryside Properties' ingredients of successful, sustainable communities include:

- Resident liaison that involves people as fully as possible in decisions about their future homes and environment.
- High quality affordable community management with all residents able to control service standards and costs.
- Strong ongoing community development programmes with a range of community facilities and a secure flow of funding to support them.
- High standards of sustainability to minimise the impact of developments on the environment.
- Ensuring that local people are able to access the jobs created by the development programme.

Policy can be found here: www.countryside-properties-corporate.com/ingredients-of-sustainable-communities

Case studies here: www.countryside-properties-corporate.com/case-studies-sustainable-communities

Greenwich Millenium Village

- An active Residents' Association has been formed which is taking a keen interest in local management issues.
- Greenwich Millennium Village Management Limited was set up to be responsible for the long-term management of the Village. This Company will ultimately be owned by the residents/ owners and thus will determine the standards they require.

www.countryside-properties-corporate.com/assets/x/56658

Great Notley Garden Village, Braintree

- Great Notley Garden Village is a free standing new "garden village" designed as a balanced community on a 465 acre greenfield site, adjacent to the A120/A131, south-west of Braintree, Essex.
- A programme of community involvement that includes an active Community Association, Village Liaison Group and a Charitable Trust.

www.countryside-properties-corporate.com/assets/x/56663

CREST NICHOLSON

www.crestnicholson.com/default.aspx

The approach to community engagement is set out on pages 33-37 of the company's report Future Thinking; for sustainable homes and communities - download pdf

www.crestnicholson.com/assets/documents/aboutus/reports/SustainabilityReport_2010.pdf

Kilnwood Vale, Crawley, Surrey

Kilnwood Vale redevelopment of the former Holmbush landfill site for 2,500 homes.

Following favourable reports on draft proposals and having responded positively to stakeholder feedback, further engagement included:

- Two well-advertised public open days. The low attendance indicated limited objection among local residents and groups, reflecting the thorough consultation work already conducted. Following this engagement a secondary access route to the development was incorporated into the proposal.
- Further engagement with residents and local interest groups, such as the Horsham Society, the West Sussex Rail Users' Association, the British Horse Society, Rusper and Newdigate Bridleway Association and Crawley Cyclists Touring Club. As a result of this, several further changes were made including more contemporary designs of homes in later phases; securing an 'in principle' extension for bus and rail frequencies; and improved access from existing rights of way.

Ingress Park, Greenhithe, Kent

A mixed use scheme with 1,307 units

Developing an appropriate structure for the ongoing management of a development is crucial to successfully sustaining a community and in creating a long-term legacy.

- Crest Nicholson established Ingress Park Greenhithe Management Ltd (IPGM) to manage the Open Space. This is a company with a board of Directors comprising residents, Councillors and at present Crest Nicholson Directors. Eventually, when the final phase of the development is completed, the IPGM will be run by Councillors and residents only, to allow more residents to actively take part and engage with the wider community.

DURKAN

durkan.co.uk/home.html

The company's approach to community engagement is set out on its website:

durkan.co.uk/community.html:

The main elements are:

- Local employment – setting targets and monitoring performance;
- Local procurement – engaging local suppliers;
- Apprenticeships – providing fully accredited courses;
- Training partnerships - creating new opportunities for disengaged groups;
- Community partnerships – to deliver environmental improvements and promote social cohesion initiatives.

19 Scarbrook Road and 1 Wandle Road, Croydon

Mixed-use scheme inclusive of parking facilities - a part-9 storey, part-14 storey building which includes the following:

- 93 residential units, with 15% designated 'affordable';
- 302 sq. metres of commercial space;
- Amenity space for residents in the form of communal roof terraces;

- Under cover bicycle parking for each unit.

Community engagement methods include the following:

- Community consultation specialist hired;
- Letter drop to neighbouring residents informing them of the site clearance works and providing contact details for any enquiries;
- Discussions with local elected representatives;
- Mailed invitation to attend public exhibition to 1,500 local residents and stakeholders;
- One day public exhibition – 10 people attended;
- Analysis of feedback.

Statement of Community Engagement – download pdf

planning.croydon.gov.uk/DocOnline/50823_23.pdf

FAIRVIEW NEW HOMES

www.fairview.co.uk/?xhtml=xhtml/homepage/default.html&xsl=homepage.xsl

Cumberlow Lodge, South Norwood, Croydon

The development includes:

- 155 homes of differing types, 40% 'affordable';
- Car parking for 70% of homes;

The consultation process comprised:

- An initial survey;
- Meetings with two site ward councillors;
- Telephone conversation with the other site ward councillor;
- Contact made with the South Norwood Residents' Association;
- Contact made with the Croydon Society;
- Contact made with the Norwood Society Planning Committee;
- Further survey;
- Public exhibition – 700 invited, 78 attended – 33 feedback forms.

Statement of Community Engagement - download pdf

planning.croydon.gov.uk/DocOnline/26562_50.pdf

Exhibition Report – download pdf

planning.croydon.gov.uk/DocOnline/26562_48.pdf

Former Municipal Offices, The Ridgeway, Chingford, Essex

Housing scheme for 95 homes: 15 one-bedroom, 58 two-bedroom, 14 three-bedroom, 8 four-bedroom, 114 car parking spaces and 95 cycle parking spaces.

Community engagement methods used:

- Letter hand-out;
- Mailing;
- Advertisement;
- Project web pages
- Exhibition;
- Telephone and email response;
- Community outreach at Chingford Area Ward Forum;
- Chingford Foundation School Parents Forum/Endlebury Ward Forum;
- On-going consultation;
- Feedback.

Outcomes of the consultation programme:

- Reduction in the overall number of new homes from 95 to 88 - and an increase in the proportion of larger homes;
- Retention of the old town hall building and its re-use for a community facility such as a doctor's or dentist's surgery.

Project web pages:

www.fairview-theridgeway.co.uk/

Statement of Community Engagement – download pdf

www.walthamforest.gov.uk/Documents/SCI.pdf

GLADEDALE GROUP

www.gladedale.com/

Corporate Responsibility / Community & Environment

www.gladedale.com/corporate-responsibility/community-and-environment

Stanley Mills, King Stanley, Gloucestershire

Conversion of former mill buildings to residential use and community/commercial space, construction of new homes and a new factory.

- Specialised community consultation company hired to assist in the task of identifying, collating and acting on the views of local stakeholders, residents and the wider community;
- Meeting held prior to the public exhibition, to enable immediate neighbours of Stanley Mills to discuss the proposals;
- Stakeholder preview session held at Stanley Mills prior to the public exhibition – to enable parish and town councillors and local interest groups to talk in depth with the project team;
- Public exhibition held all day on a Saturday with 8 exhibition panels showing the history of the site, key planning issues, and current proposals, complemented by a scale model;
- Presentations and site visits provided for the Georgian Group, Victorian Society and the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology.

Statement of Community Engagement - download pdf (4.2MB):

www.gladedale.com/sites/default/files/Statement_of_Community_Enqagement.pdf

LINDEN HOMES

The company's approach to community engagements is set out on its website:

www.lindenhomes.co.uk/community-engagement

Linden Homes has developed a clear set of guidelines for engagement on proposed housing schemes -

Download pdf - Engaging the community: Linden Homes' approach

www.lindenhomes.co.uk/documents/linden-homes/community-engagement.pdf

On each scheme the engagement process includes:

- Sharing the consultation strategy with the local authority at the outset;
- Engaging with local residents and their elected representatives, either by newsletter or at a consultation event;
- Providing an opportunity to receive feedback on proposals which, where possible and appropriate, will be incorporated in design proposals;
- Reporting the feedback received to the local authority and how it has been addressed;

- Publicising ways of contacting the professional team; and,
- Providing progress reports to the community.

Graylingwell, Chichester, UK

The Largest Carbon Neutral Development in the United Kingdom, including 750 homes, featuring:

- Collaborative placemaking processes
- Formation of a Community Development Trust to manage the community facilities and open space - download a publicity flyer pdf - www.jtp.co.uk/public/uploads/pdfs/graylingwell_chichester.pdf

STEWART MILNE

<http://www.stewartmilne.com/>

The company' approach to community engagement is set out on its website:

www.stewartmilne.com/CSR.aspx:

The main elements are:

- Protecting heritage – through funding and knowledge sharing;
- Student mentoring – understanding business;
- Safe driving campaign – funding support;
- Active kids and sports – funding support;
- Protecting native birds – funding support.

Huxterstone, Kingswells, Aberdeen City, Scotland

A high quality village expansion to the south east of Kingswells.

Exhibition boards from two phases of pre-planning consultation can be downloaded:

www.stewartmilnehomes.com/huxterstone-community-enqagement.aspx

TAYLOR WIMPEY PLC

www.taylorwimpey.co.uk

A section called 'Our homes and Communities' (page 9) of the company's Corporate Responsibility Report includes pages on 'Community led planning' – download pdf

asp-gb.secure-zone.net/v2/624/2128/4662/Taylor-Wimpey-plc---Corporate-Responsibility-Report-2011.pdf

or view online:

asp-gb.secure-zone.net/v2/indexFrame.jsp?id=624/2128/4662&lng=en

The company has developed:

- A comprehensive Community Led Planning Strategy in response to the Localism Act 2011;
- Community engagement training for employees, focusing on methods of effectively engaging with local communities;
- A Community Engagement Framework for use on all new developments which:
 - provides guidance and prompts on issues such as research into the local community, understanding community demographics, and identifying a full range of community and other stakeholders;
 - covers how to choose effective consultation methods, evaluate feedback and respond to feedback.

Grand Union Village, West London

- Over 900 new homes built, together with shops, a restaurant, crèche, medical centre, police station and community facilities;

- During the original in-depth public planning consultations, the idea of a Community Development Trust emerged as an effective way for the community to have an ongoing role in the development of the Village;
- Taylor Wimpey is represented on the Trust's elected Board, which has a formal constitution and meets quarterly. The Trust manages 550m² of community space and oversees the implementation of a Green Travel Plan. The community facilities are used by residents and a wide range of groups which run clubs and classes for the community. There are facilities for young children, teenagers and adults. Regular seasonal events, such as the annual Village Fayre, are popular with residents and the wider neighbourhood. The Trust also has its own website and regular newsletter.

Project website:

www.guvcommunity.org.uk/twdevelopments.html

WILMOTT DIXON

The company's approach to community engagement is set out on its website:

www.willmottdixongroup.co.uk/being-unique/community-engagement

- Community Engagement Co-ordinators are employed by the company to provide support and advice on community engagement; to co-ordinate the capture of community engagement measurement and to develop and implement a Community Engagement Plan. They liaise regularly with other Community Co-ordinators to share best practice.

Wolverton Park, Milton Keynes

Canalside development of 300 new homes; 77 in a former train shed and 223 on a brownfield site.

- Presentation to the Wolverton Steering Group in an open and constructive consultation process which created a strong sense of local ownership of the scheme.

Fact sheet – download pdf

www.willmottdixongroup.co.uk/assets/w/o/wolverton-park-case-study.pdf

Denham Garden Village, Buckinghamshire

A retirement village of 327 homes, doctor's surgery and leisure complex

- Monthly residents' forum meetings to involve people in the scheme design.

Fact sheet – download pdf

www.willmottdixongroup.co.uk/assets/d/e/denham-garden-village-case-study.pdf