



# Bioregional Homes



Mincing Lane Nursery, Chobham, Surrey

Statement of community involvement and  
design responses to issues raised

December 2018

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Bioregional Homes has combined the principles of ‘community-led design’ and ‘custom build’ in the development of this scheme in order to involve a broad and representative cross-section of relevant stakeholders in the overall design and planning process. This process has been set up to continue on during detailed design, construction and occupation via a Community Land Trust (CLT) which has a subscription of 41 members to date. The CLT has submitted an application to become legally constituted as a Community Interest Company (CIC) named “Sustaining Chobham CIC”.

The aim has been to empower a range of local people to have an active role in shaping their locality and to develop designs that directly respond to the specific needs and preferences of local stakeholders, including future occupants and local neighbours.

We adopted a 4-tiered approach to identify and engage with stakeholders as detailed in Table 1 below. In total we have run over 20 hours of public engagement sessions and, in doing so, have ensured that we have gained a deep understanding of local needs, concerns, hopes and preferences. As the table shows, we spent more time with those that would be most affected by the scheme.

*Table 1 Community Engagement Activity*

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Engagement activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Location / Dates</b>	<b>No. attendees</b>
<b>1</b>	‘Sustaining Chobham’ Community Land Trust (CLT) members	Design and planning workshops	Interactive facilitated sessions providing deep involvement in the iterations of designs and plans for the scheme, followed up with emailed presentations of the sessions. Membership is open to anyone with a living/working connection to Chobham Parish, and sign ups were initially derived from responses to the housing need survey, followed by an on-line form on the website. The 40+ sign ups to date include neighbours, prospective residents and other interested parties in the community.	<u>Chobham Village Hall:</u> 1) 18:30 – 20:30 30 <sup>th</sup> July 18 2) 18:30 – 20:30 29 <sup>th</sup> Aug 18 3) 18:30 – 20:30 27 <sup>th</sup> Sept 18 4) 18:30 – 20:30 16 <sup>th</sup> Oct 18 5) 18:30 – 20:30 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec 18	Circulation to 40+ CLT members
<b>2</b>	Neighbours from surrounding streets (Medhurst Close, Mincing Lane, The Avenue)	Discussion forums	Informative updates on proposals with extensive time for discussion and feedback. We engaged this group first on 22 May, before then developing designs with the CLT (which neighbours could join), then presented the results of these sessions and the professional surveys to the group on 11 October 2018.	<u>Chobham Parish Pavilion:</u> 1) 18:30 – 20:30 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 18  <u>Church Hall, Chobham High St:</u> 2) 18:30 – 20:30 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct 18	40 - 42 neighbours per session

3	Chobham Parish residents and businesses	Parish Council Public Presentation	To publically announce our proposal for developing a housing scheme, and seek input and involvement from interested parties	<u>Chobham Parish Pavilion:</u> 1) 19:30 – 20:00 30 <sup>th</sup> Apr 18	c.20
		Housing Needs Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To give all residents and businesses an opportunity to provide an opinion on the issue of this development within the village;</li> <li>- To assess the scale of need for this particular type of development.</li> </ul>	<u>Postal and online questionnaire:</u> During June 18	177 responses
		Open Consultation events	To publically present the proposed housing scheme, and seek feedback and further involvement from interested parties	<u>Church Hall, Chobham High St:</u> 1) 11:00 – 15:00 Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> Oct 18 2) 18:30 – 20:30 Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov 18	c.20 -25 per session
		Meetings with local stakeholders	Various face to face meetings with individuals and community group representatives to raise awareness of our intentions, seek early input and involvement from interested parties.	Various	Various
4	Wider stakeholders	Dedicated website with comment form	To publically present the proposed housing scheme, and seek feedback and further involvement from interested parties	Ongoing	928 website page views to date

**What topics were discussed, and how was the information received integrated into the proposed scheme?**

Table 2 provides a summary of the key topics raised during the various levels of engagement and the way in which the proposal has responded.

*Table 2 Topics raised during community engagement*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Need /Concern / Preference</b>	<b>Response reflected in planning and design process</b>
<b>Locally affordable homes</b>	How affordable homes will be defined, who they will be for, and how will they remain a community benefit into the future?	<p>In response to the housing need survey, we have chosen to offer Discount Market Sale (DMS) homes, which allow people to own their home outright, without the ongoing burden of additional rent (such as with Shared Ownership).</p> <p>We have undertaken an affordability analysis which focussed on two key indicative salaries (Surrey Heath Median earnings and Primary School teacher median earnings). Proposed discounted prices were based on ensuring that mortgage repayments would be less a third of gross household income and that deposits were within reasonable reach.</p> <p>The DMS homes will be prioritised first and foremost for local people with a living, working, current or previous family connection to the Parish.</p> <p>The designated discount on OMV and the published Eligibility Criteria will apply in perpetuity by being secured on each resale through a covenant on the lease of the property.</p>
<b>Site selection</b>	How was this site selected and why is suitable for housing?	<p>The site has been identified by the council in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Site Allocations as land that is suitable and available for housing development as a rural exceptions site.</p> <p>Professional assessments of the, Soil, Ecology, Trees, Daylight, Drainage, Utilities and Road access have all demonstrated this to be well suited to housing development.</p>
<b>Number of homes</b>	Is this an appropriate number of homes for the site capacity and local area?	<p>The site is listed in the current SLAA 2017 Site Allocation as having an indicative capacity for 35 units.</p> <p>The Local Housing Need Survey (June 2018) received responses of 44 households in need of alternative accommodation, 33 of whom wanted to move with the next 5 years. Further responses were received beyond the closing date of the survey and from those registered on the Custom and Self-Build Register.</p>

		<p>Professional assessment of the trees on site by a qualified arboriculturalist demonstrates that by adopting the natural clearing and removing the lower value trees in the centre of the site, a 30-home scheme can be accommodated whilst retaining the vast majority of higher value trees, particularly to the periphery of the site, thereby protecting views. This proposal would protect 40% of the land area to be reserved for woodland nature, and actively managed for biodiversity benefit.</p> <p>The masterplan for the scheme has been evolved as a response to maximising the biodiversity of the site, and integrating trees into the landscape and character of the scheme, producing the feeling of living in the woods, close to nature, whilst protecting exiting views.</p>
<b>Road safety, traffic and parking</b>	<p>Safe entry and access on and off site.</p> <p>Traffic during construction.</p> <p>Sufficient car parking spaces to prevent overspill.</p>	<p>The residents of Medhurst Close expressed concern regarding the creation of a vehicular access serving the development from ‘their’ close; residents of Mincing Lane expressed safety concerns if the development were exited from Mincing Lane, given the absence of a local pavement and the poor visibility from the existing access point.</p> <p>A professional transport study, including traffic counters, was undertaken to assess the options for a safe site entry and egress onto the highway. It has been demonstrated that a safe and appropriate approach can be provided thorough a single entry point on Mincing Lane with exit onto Medhurst Close. It is felt this creates the optimum solution for safety, least impact and best integration of the scheme into the existing fabric of the area.</p> <p>Panelised offsite manufacture of the homes and re-use of on-site felled timber will minimise the number of vehicle journeys to and from the site and speed up the construction process. A carefully managed Construction Management Plan will be implemented and the Principal Contractor will be selected with an excellent track record in the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS).</p> <p>We are proposing this scheme as an environmentally conscious development which supports the use of alternative transport modes to use of the private car. For example there will be 2 covered and secure cycle spaces per home, with the option of an electric connection for e-bikes. We propose to include a car <a href="#">club car</a> which will act as a resource for both new and existing residents. The number of car parking spaces has been designed based on the detailed responses from the Needs Survey so should match actual demand. We are exploring inclusion of setting maximum</p>



<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p>	<p>How to protect the biodiversity currently on-site, and find ways to enhance it</p>	<p>As can be expected, people mentioned wildlife and in particular bats, deer, grass snakes in the general area. Unsurprisingly they said that they would not wish to see the wildlife disturbed or destroyed by construction of houses.</p> <p>The scheme has been designed as ecologically sensitive and environmentally responsible, and the ethos will be to support 'living within the woods' to encourage residents and visitors to have a positive connection with nature in their everyday lives. We will be working closely with our experienced Arboriculturalists and Ecologists and the Surrey Wildlife Trust to manage and protect as much of the biodiversity as possible, and to adopt re-provision and enhancement measures, with the aim of creating a net biodiversity gain on site. Members of the Community Land Trust have proposed that some of the higher value areas of trees on the site be cordoned off to prevent regular access in order to create mini-nature reserves, and that the majority of habitat management and enhancement measures should be concentrated on these areas to create the greatest biodiversity benefit.</p> <p>There has been extensive Arboriculture Survey work by experienced specialists in accordance with BS5837:2012. The masterplan layout of the scheme has been chosen to concentrate the location of construction in the natural clearing where the lowest value trees have been identified, and individual siting of homes has been adjusted and optimised in relation to the retention of significant trees wherever possible. This includes consideration for the root protection zones. Where trees will have to be removed, this will be done under the dual supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced arboriculturalist and ecologist, and options to re-provide will be sought.</p> <p>A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was undertaken by Surrey Wildlife Trust. Whilst it is noted that the woodland nature of much of the site has the potential to host various species of interest, it is also acknowledge that much of this habitat will be retained and enhanced. Therefore the majority of the species present are unlikely to be significantly affected. The key finding was the potential disturbance to bats foraging or roosting as a result of the tree removals. In response to this, a bat Preliminary Roost Assessment and Preliminary Ground Level Roost Assessment of Trees was undertaken by Surrey Wildlife Trust. The survey area was found to be of low suitability for roosting and commuting bats due to the low diversity of habitats present, however the wider area was of high suitability. Some specific trees were identified as being of moderate suitability for roosting bats. Surrey Wildlife proposed, and we have accepted that for</p>
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		every removal of a tree that has potential roosting suitability, a Schwegler 2F bat box will be provided on a nearby tree. The lighting of the scheme will be designed to minimise adverse impacts to bats in the surrounding area. Additional enhancements will be devised for the wider scheme, once the results of the further surveys have been completed.
<b>Integration with village</b>	Aspiration for pedestrian access to and through the site	The masterplan now includes access to and two significant routes through the site for non-residents, one from Mincing Lane and one from Medhurst Close.  These new routes will be well sign posted and allow easy and convenient access to the adjoining Pet Cemetery and Little Heath SANG that is currently nearing completion.
<b>Boundaries / Maintaining the open green belt feel of the area</b>	Consideration for site boundaries to ensure privacy and landscape amenity are retained	Clear feedback was provided that the current green and tree lined boundaries should be maintained. This was a guiding principle in siting the homes to the centre of the site, to maintain the current amenity views. Significant trees to the centre of the site that are visible from the periphery are also being maintained. Retention of the boundaries screening in this way will help to retain the wooded feel of the scheme and allow residents to enjoy a strong visual and physical connection with nature, whilst living in a socially interactive and high quality built environment.