



February 2009

A Pre-Application Public  
Consultation Strategy and  
Programme for CALA Homes  
Barton Farm Development,  
Winchester

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Objectives</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Policy Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
i Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.....	4
ii Winchester City Council’s Statement of Community Involvement.....	4
iii CALA Homes’ Commitment .....	5
<b>4. Proposed Methodology</b> .....	<b>6</b>
i Overview .....	6
ii 7-Point Plan.....	7
iii Stage 1: Stakeholder Consultation (March 2009).....	7
iv Stage 2: Public Consultation on a Draft Masterplan (April 2009) .....	8
v Stage 3: Report Back and Public Information Exercise on the Final Plans (June 2008) .....	9
<b>Appendix: Key Stakeholders</b> .....	<b>10</b>

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This paper has been prepared by PPS who are specialists in community consultation on major planning proposals.

1.2 PPS worked for CALA Homes in 2003 designing, managing and implementing a programme of pre-application public consultation in relation to the Company's original planning application for development at Barton Farm in Winchester. PPS also designed and managed a major consultation exercise in Winchester on behalf of Thornfield Properties in relation to the plans for the Silver Hill development, which is being taken forward in partnership with Winchester City Council.

1.3 CALA Homes is planning a highly sustainable urban extension on 87 hectares of land that it owns to the north of the city of Winchester. The Company's proposals are for the development of around 2,000 new homes and a range of associated community facilities to help meet Winchester's housing needs.

1.4 The site, known locally as Barton Farm, has a long planning history. Following its allocation in the adopted Winchester City Local Plan as a "Reserve Major Development Area", CALA submitted a planning application for 2,000 homes in 2004. The application went to a public Inquiry in 2005. In reporting on the Inquiry the Inspector and Secretary of State acknowledged the merits of the proposals and accepted there were no technical reasons to prevent development. However, at the time of the appeal it was determined there was no compelling need to release the site because housing supply in the County was sufficient to meet targets set by the County Structure Plan.

1.5 In the intervening period the South East plan (RSS), which will shortly replace the County Structure Plan, has increased proposed housing targets for Winchester. The RSS recognises that the City is a highly accessible location without major environmental constraints and can therefore deliver housing sustainably. The Panel reporting to the Secretary of State on the RSS also indicated that green field land to the north of the City would be the most appropriate location for development.

1.6 Winchester City Council has begun preparation of its Local Development Framework acknowledging the requirements of the South East Plan. The emerging Core Strategy process has been considering the options for development at Winchester since 2007.

1.7 The Council's Cabinet LDF Committee agreed in January 2009 that the development of Barton Farm should be a preferred option for its Core Strategy consultation document. The Council's Preferred Options Core Strategy document is due to be published for consultation in April 2009.

1.8 As the principle of future housing development at Barton Farm is now recognised in current and emerging planning policies, CALA Homes has decided to develop its plans for the site with a view to submission of a planning application in the summer of 2009.

1.9 This paper outlines the developer's proposed pre-application community consultation strategy. It also provides relevant background on current national and local policy requirements on community consultation in planning, outlines a suggested methodology and approach to community consultation on the future of this site, and provides a timetable of consultation activity to support the development proposals.

# 2. Objectives

2.1 Against this background, the objectives of this consultation strategy and programme are as follows:

- To meet the requirements for pre-application consultation on major planning applications as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, its supporting guidance and in Winchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), dated January 2007.
- To ensure that the local community and key local stakeholders are fully informed of, and engaged in, the plans for the development of the Barton Farm site.
- Where possible, to reflect the views of key stakeholders and the local community in the masterplan and planning application for the site.
- To ensure that the public consultation programme informs the City Council's subsequent decision-making process on the planning application.

# 3. Policy Background

## i **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act**

3.1 Increased community involvement in the planning system is one of the key components of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act makes it compulsory for local planning authorities to consult on and adopt a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explaining how the local authority intends to engage and consult with communities and stakeholders on planning and development.

3.2 The SCI should also outline how the local authority expects applicants to consult with local communities on major development proposals prior to the submission of a planning application. This is highlighted in Planning Policy Statements 1 and 12 and has been supported by various Ministerial statements.

## ii **Winchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement**

3.3 Winchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted formally in January 2007.

3.4 The adopted SCI contains general guidance for applicants on pre-application consultation for major development proposals and generally recognises its benefits. The document states that:

*"The Council expects all applicants to carry out pre-application discussions and early community involvement, appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposed development and to provide evidence of this with an application". (Winchester City Council SCI, paragraph 5.26)*

3.5 The SCI defines 'large scale' applications as those with 10 or more dwellings and states that the Council expects developers to undertake the following pre-application events:

- Public meetings
- Public exhibition
- Meet with Town and Parish Councils
- Notify consult with neighbours
- Review published guidance in LDF.

3.6 For 'large scale' applications the SCI also advises that the following developer events may be appropriate:

- Workshops
- Press notice/adverts.

3.7 The SCI goes on to make it clear that:

*“Most applications, especially those for planning proposals of a significant size or potential for controversy, should be accompanied by a supporting statement of public participation. This should set out what initial consultations were carried out in the area likely to be affected by the scheme or proposal and how the results of this have been reflected in the planning application. For medium and large scale applications, the Council considers it sufficiently important to give every encouragement to a transparent process and clear sequence, in which the applicant undertakes to: make contact with all relevant individuals and groups, sufficiently early in the process for their views to have an influence on the scheme; conduct appropriate consultations; accurately record the results of these consultations and; make an altered application as necessary. Failure by a developer to conduct adequate or appropriate community consultation could lead to matters being raised or objections being made which could be material to the eventual determination of the application.”* (Winchester City Council SCI, paragraph 5.30)

3.8 Finally, the SCI makes it clear that there are examples of upper tier major developments where the Council has worked with applicants and their partners to take a firm lead in consulting and involving the community at an early stage, using the latest techniques for meaningful dialogue and engagement. The Major Development Area at Waterlooville and the Silver Hill development in Winchester are cited as examples of this.

### **iii CALA Homes' Commitment**

3.9 CALA Homes recognises the importance of this site to the future of Winchester and has kept the City Council fully informed of its plans for undertaking pre-application community consultation in relation to the detailed form of development on the Barton Farm site.

3.10 The developers therefore accept the importance and relevance of undertaking community consultation in relation to their detailed plans and believe that this should be managed in accordance with a programme that reflects the Council's adopted SCI.

# 4. Proposed Methodology

## i Overview

4.1 The Chief Executive of Winchester City Council advised in a letter to RPS, CALA's planning advisers, dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009, that the Council would continue to work with CALA to promote development within Winchester and would ensure that officers maintained a constructive working relationship with the company.

4.2 A draft of this pre-application public consultation strategy and programme was sent to Winchester City Council planning officers during 2008 and a revised draft was again handed to officers at a meeting between CALA Homes and the City Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009.

4.3 The City Council suggested a number of additional stakeholders to be added to the list of key stakeholders in the Appendix to this document. CALA Homes has therefore decided to proceed to implement this consultation strategy and programme in accordance with the Council's adopted SCI.

4.4 Prior to the main public consultation events, there will be initial engagement with key stakeholders to ensure they are: briefed on the public consultation process; aware of the latest planning policy developments that affect the site; and have some initial input into the masterplanning process before a draft masterplan goes out to wider public consultation.

4.5 This initial stakeholder engagement process will take place during the period leading up to the Preferred Options Core Strategy being considered for publication by full Council in April 2009.

4.6 Once the main public consultation events have taken place, and around the time of submission of a planning application, an information exercise would be undertaken to explain to the public how the consultation process has influenced the final plans.

4.7 The whole pre-application consultation process will be undertaken on the basis that the principle of development at Barton Farm has been accepted through current and emerging local, regional and national planning policies. The focus will be on the detail of how development might take place on the site, rather than the principle of whether or not it should happen at all.

4.8 PPS believes that this is the only way that meaningful, developer-led pre application public consultation can be conducted on this site. The public and key stakeholders will have a full opportunity to express their support for or against the development at Barton Farm during the period of consideration of the planning application.

4.9 Groups and individuals will undoubtedly express their views on the principle of development at Barton Farm during the consultation process organised by the developer. These views will be respected and recorded. However, the consultation will be conducted on the basis that when development takes place, it needs to meet the needs of the City of Winchester and, therefore, the local community should play its part in shaping the masterplan for the site.

## ii **7-Point Plan**

4.10 The methodology to be used for the consultation programme will be based on PPS's 7-point plan, which has been employed successfully across the UK on a wide variety of proposals and was used in relation to Thornfield Properties consultation on the Silver Hill development in Winchester.

4.11 The plan is as follows:

- **Notify** stakeholders and local people that they are to be consulted.
- **Inform** them about what they are to be consulted on. In particular they need to know about the constraints – planning, geographical, technical, financial etc.
- **Consult** people using methods designed to go beyond the “usual suspects”.
- **Measure** the views received.
- **Report** the outcomes back to the local community.
- **Respond** by amending the proposals where sensible.
- **Publish** details of amendments that have been made and, where changes are impossible, explain why.

## iii **Stage 1: Stakeholder Consultation (March 2009)**

4.12 A period of stakeholder consultation will take place in the lead up to formal public consultation on the Council's Preferred Options Core Strategy.

4.13 This will allow stakeholders to be fully briefed on the consultation process and updated on the planning policy situation applying to the Barton Farm site, both in the light of the South East Plan and the Council's own emerging Core Strategy.

4.14 Part of this process will be to explain to stakeholders the key opportunities and constraints affecting future development at Barton Farm and to seek their views on how best the masterplan can meet the needs of the local community and the City as a whole.

4.15 Methods of consultation to be used at this stage of the process will include:

- A stakeholder briefing meeting between the developer and key community groups likely to be involved in the planning process.
- Initial briefing for Winchester City councillors, arranged through Council officers.
- A meeting with relevant Parish Councils and County Council members.

4.16 At the end of this stage of the process, the main public consultation programme will involve:

- Circulating a newsletter to those parts of the City closest to the Barton Farm site, and to the key stakeholders, giving details of the public consultation process, outlining the policy background to the site and highlighting some of the key constraints and opportunities affecting future development. The newsletter will also provide a mechanism for the public to feedback their views during the consultation process via a freepost address, e mail address and the project website (see below).
- CALA will also, at the same, time make a public announcement of the consultation programme through the local media.
- The project website dealing with the Barton Farm development, [www.winchestercitynorth.co.uk](http://www.winchestercitynorth.co.uk), will be updated to include details of the consultation programme and provide a means for people to feed back their comments and ideas to the developer.

#### **iv Stage 2: Public Consultation on a Draft Masterplan (April 2009)**

4.17 The main public consultation will utilise a variety of public consultation tools in order to maximise the opportunities for people to engage in discussion about the draft masterplan. These will include:

- Two focus groups will be held to help identify the views of 'hard to reach' groups that may not engage in the main public consultation events. The first will be target younger people and the second those in housing need or people who work in/live outside the City.
- A public exhibition of the draft masterplan will held over two days and evenings at two different venues. One will be held close to the site to ensure those living in the immediate vicinity of Barton Farm are consulted and one will be held in the City Centre to attract the wider audience of Winchester residents and key workers. Visitors to the exhibition will be given an opportunity to comment on the draft masterplan, either by filling a questionnaire/comments form on the spot, or returning it subsequently via the freepost address.

- For those unable to attend the main public exhibitions, a 'virtual' exhibition will subsequently be uploaded onto the project website, allowing people to complete and return the questionnaire/comments form to the developer electronically.
- Towards the end of this stage of the consultation process, consideration will be given to holding a discussion on the draft Barton Farm masterplan at a public meeting of the Winchester Town Forum.
- Media coverage of the main consultation events will be encouraged throughout this period to maintain the profile of the programme.

**v Stage 3: Report Back and Public Information Exercise on the Final Plans (June 2008)**

4.18 In the period leading up to submission of a planning application, and once the developer has finalised the masterplan in response to public consultation, a report back and public information exercise will be held, which will use the following methods:

- A second newsletter to report back on the findings of the public consultation process on the draft masterplan, outline the final proposals for the site and explain how the consultation has influenced the planning application.
- Public Consultation Statement to be submitted with the planning application documenting the consultation process, its outcomes and the developer's response to the key issues raised.
- A media announcement of submission of the planning application.
- The project website to be updated to include all relevant planning documentation, including the Public Consultation Statement.

# Appendix: Key Stakeholders

Set out below is a list of key community and other stakeholders who will be specifically consulted during the programme:

Winchester City councillors

Hampshire County councillors from the City of Winchester

Local MP and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

Littleton & Harestock Parish Council

Headbourne Worthy Parish Council

Winchester City Residents Association

Winchester Town Forum

City of Winchester Trust

Save Barton Farm

Winchester Cycling Association

Council for the Protection of Rural England

Winchester Transport Forum

North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

University of Winchester

A2 Housing Group, Winchester

Winchester Police

Winchester & Eastleigh Healthcare Trust

Henry Beaufort School

Hampshire Primary Care Trust

Winchester Action on Climate Change