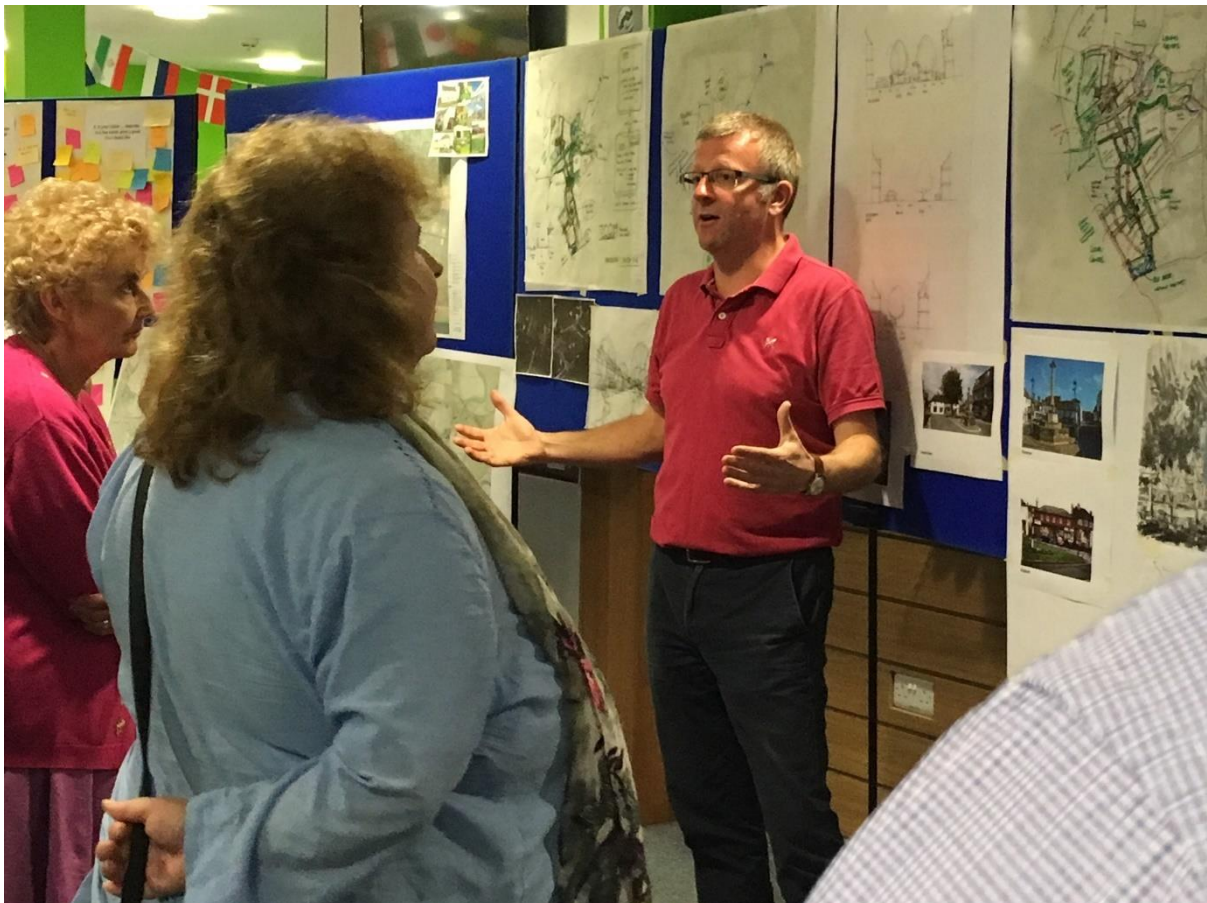


## MAKING PLACES

### FORD DESIGN WORKSHOPS JUNE 2018



## INTRODUCTION

The emerging Arun Local Plan envisages 20,000 new homes across the Arun District in the period up to 2031. It includes the proposed allocation of the Ford airfield site for a mixed-use development.

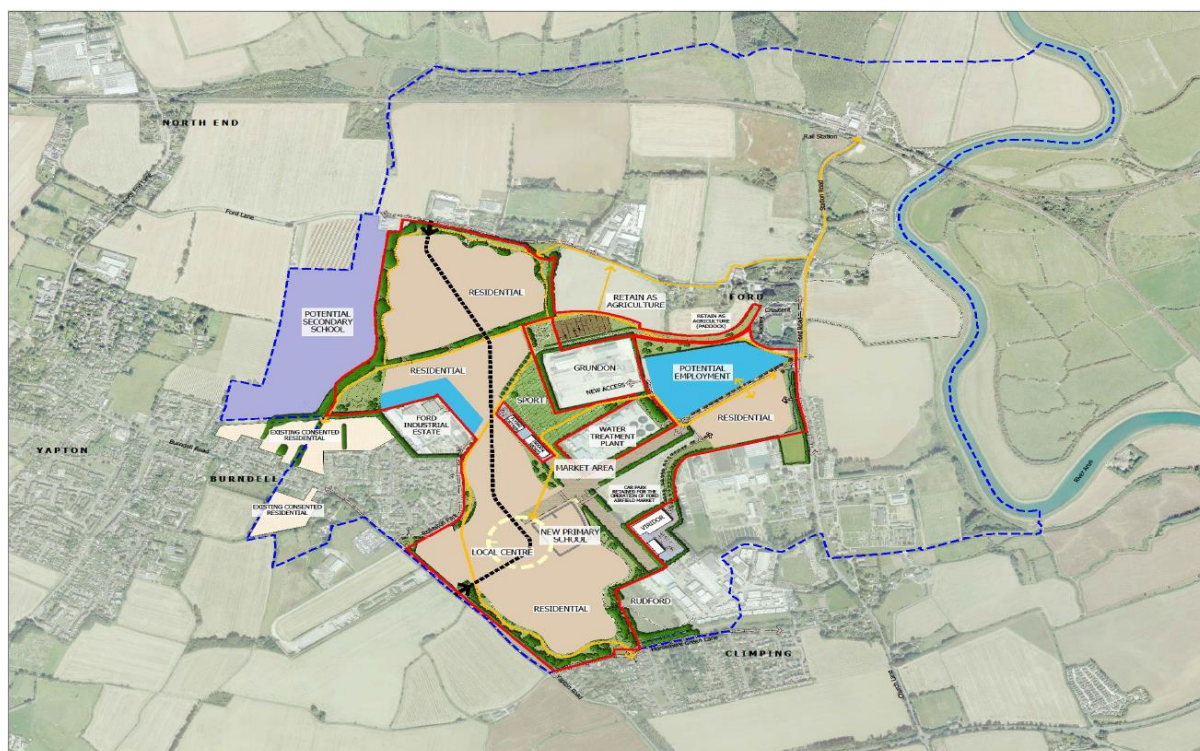
The Ford Neighbourhood Plan proposes the allocation of the Ford airfield site for a development of a minimum of 1500 new homes with supporting facilities. The Ford Neighbourhood Plan Group have always sought to create a village with a heart, not a housing estate and this is enshrined within the principles of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan states that the vision for Ford includes creating a new heart for the village; creating local amenities, jobs and education opportunities; retaining the Ford airfield car boot market; creating affordable housing for local people; creating housing for the elderly; preserving areas of agricultural land for food production; and, protecting the natural habitat within the area.

The Ford Neighbourhood Plan Group have therefore worked to ensure that the design for the airfield site prepared by the site promoters and development team enables a vibrant village community to be established. Alongside the new homes to be created, it is anticipated that the development will include a local centre (with a mix of community, retail and commercial purposes), a primary school, healthcare facilities, public open space and sports and play facilities, employment land and associated infrastructure and a network of natural and semi-natural green space with existing mature vegetation retained. The new homes will include some affordable housing.

It is anticipated that both the Arun Local Plan and the Ford Neighbourhood Plan will be formally adopted later this year.

As part of the process of developing a design for the Ford airfield site a two-day community workshop was held in June 2018. The workshops were attended by 40 or so residents from Ford and the surrounding area and representatives from Barton Willmore (the site promoters), Wates Developments (one of the developers, along with Redrow Homes), the Sussex Community Housing Hub, CPRE Sussex and a number of experts with specialist subject knowledge. The full list of attendees is at Appendix 1 to this Report.

## WORKSHOP STRUCTURE



The first day of the workshop consisted of an overview of some of the site issues and considerations followed by a series of roundtable discussions on the following topics:

- Homes, Character and Creating Places
- Heart of Ford
- Movement and Connectivity
- Green and Blue Infrastructure

Each participant spent some time at each table so input was gained from all the participants on all of the topics listed above. Discussions were focussed on a series of maps showing the initial proposals for the layout of the site and a list of questions designed to elicit information on key issues relevant to each of the topics. More detailed maps were used to highlight specific issues, such as existing transport routes, vegetation and drainage.

At the end of the first day the design team took away the output from the roundtable sessions to review the feedback received and then produce revised proposals and drawings which were presented to the community on the second day of the workshops. There was a further discussion to ensure that the revised proposals had captured all the feedback from the previous day.

Presentations on both days of the workshops also looked at the existence of the Ford Community Land Trust and the potential opportunities for the ownership and management of some of the community assets, such as affordable housing and a community hub.

## THE WORKSHOPS

### 1. HOMES, CHARACTER AND CREATING PLACES

- *What sized houses would you like?  
Eg number of bedrooms*
- *Should there be provision for the elderly?*
- *What parts of the site could fall within different character areas?*
- *How should car parking be provided?*
- *Should the style of housing be traditional or contemporary?*
- *Where should affordable housing be located?*
- *How tall should the buildings be?*

The current, approximate, population of the village is 1,300. The proposed expansion will add 1,500 homes – resulting in over 4,500 people. This group discussed differing housing ‘styles’, concluding that there should be perhaps 5 or 6 types of home and that there should be no standard ‘look’.

#### Residential style

There was consideration of the 30% affordable homes principle and how these should be incorporated within the site. There were strong views expressed for the affordable homes to be fully integrated within the development and for affordable homes not to look any different from any other houses.

*“Keep them mixed within the community, that’s what we’ve been arguing all the time”*

The group looked at the needs of the older population. Bungalows were raised as a topic by participants with views expressed that when sold on they should not have a second story built on. The facilitator noted that bungalows would not be economically viable for the developers so if bungalows were to be provided they would need to be done so via the Community Land Trust. It was felt important that older people and the disabled can walk to the hub.

Residents also wanted to see the primary school in the village centre to keep the shops alive.

A mix of housing types was thought important to accommodate the needs of all age groups. One individual commented that they would like to be able to move from their big house releasing it for someone else and move to somewhere smaller in the area. Parking was raised by many and the group looked at the options for parking, including the possibility of communal parking areas. Privacy was also seen as important – it was felt that you needed a back garden for your own privacy.

## What kind of housing?

The community wants to see a mix of housing on the plots with a variety of scales. The provision of housing for the elderly was raised, such as sheltered accommodation or a retirement village, and sited to allow access to bus stops etc to allow ease of travel. A hierarchy of street widths and planting was explained, with primary streets taking the form of wide tree line boulevards, with narrower streets leading off.

*“Headline – we’re going to build a community not a housing estate”*

Overall, the majority view was in favour of a more traditional style of housing although some suggested that in England we are far too traditional, with Europe using better quality materials and new styles. Local character and materials were thought to be important to create somewhere that fits within the wider area.

The impact of some of the existing usages of the airfield was discussed. *“I think that if this is going to be a community, not just three housing estates, then the Market has to go” ... “The influx of people on a Saturday, and it’s a brownfield site, and brownfield should be developed first.”*

Others noted the effect of the Grundon water treatment works with the concern of smells and noise that come from the works. It was said that this would need to be resolved as people would not want to live in close proximity to this otherwise. Similarly housing near the industrial estates would also need to be reviewed.

Open space was considered important to create a pleasant environment in which to live.

*“Make it a green place, and make sure you clearly define public and private green spaces”*

## Scale/style of building type

Those living nearby to the airfield site wanted to ensure that their privacy for existing houses and gardens is maintained. The concept of lower building heights at the periphery increasing to greater density and height at the centre to avoid overlook and provide a greater ‘sense of place’ was raised.

Again, residents were keen to ensure a mix of building types. The possibility of linked bungalows in an alms houses type concept was suggested. In terms of the maximum building height it was felt that three storey would be the maximum and could be used in some areas of the development.

Participants wanted to see a well thought out approach to design with a strategy for roads, green-space, pedestrians and cycles.

## Creating Places

*“Density is very important”* commented one of the participants. *“We have a nice mix already between one and two storey homes in the village”*. Others thought it would depend who was being encouraged to live here – whether it was the young or old. A number of those at

the workshop were concerned that they might need the opportunity to downsize in time. Some were keen to see warden assisted accommodation and accommodation suitable for the disabled as well.

Use of materials was raised as a factor in creating places.

*“Flint, brick, tile – beautifully done”*

There was a consensus on a mix of finishes and materials, although with a bias towards traditional rather than contemporary building styles. It was felt that avoiding uniformity was a factor in ensuring an interesting place to live.

Street design was raised. Lining streets with trees would create a homelier atmosphere. It was felt that no frontage to new housing would look mean and that parking should be located to the side of houses. It was also noted that many now have vans for their jobs so it wasn't just a case of considering parking for cars but for trade vehicles too. Parking and traffic considerations around the school were also important with participants noting the challenges faced on the North Bersted estate with the nearby school. It was suggested that a one-way system for school drop off and pick up might be a resolution.

In creating somewhere with a sense of place, areas to relax in were important too. Tranquillity was a recurring theme and participants wanted views to Arundel maximised.

## **2. HEART OF FORD**

- *Where should the heart of Ford be located?*
- *Should they be clustered or dispersed?*
- *How should the schools relate to the local centre?*
- *Who will be responsible for the management of community facilities?*
- *What uses should be provided and where should they be located?*
- *How will the development integrate with the local and surrounding area?*
- *Where would a care home best be located?*

### **Location of the village heart**

There was a discussion about existing facilities such as the Village Hall in Yapton, the Climping Village Hall and Climping Church Hall – could these meet the needs of the new village? Participants decided a new village hall was needed but wanted it to have shared facilities and flexible uses and include a village green and a duck pond.

There was agreement that the heart should be where shops and facilities are located and that one village centre was better than two. Some mentioned the importance of people feeling safe when in the area that is the heart.

*“The whole point of the new village is to pull everyone together not further divide.”*

In relation to the schools, residents reviewed the benefits and disadvantages of combining the primary and secondary schools in terms of shared facilities vs traffic and otherwise and agreed that they would prefer for them to be kept separate.

There was a discussion about whether the heart could be in the ‘narrow gap’ near the existing Ford Sports Arena and the consensus was that the gap was not the right place and the area to the south between Rolleston Road and Climping was preferred. Many wanted the heart to be away from commercial and industrial uses and near the primary school.

People talked about links to the primary school, shared facilities including car parks/ football field and whether this was possible. It was thought that the heart needed a high footfall, should be central to housing and to be accessible by different transport modes. A bus service into the heart was suggested.

Some felt that the Sports Arena and Flying Fortress should be relocated into the ‘Heart’.

### **What buildings/landscape would provide the village with a heart?**

A Village Hall was suggested by a number of participants. There was also enthusiasm for a gym and leisure facilities. Other popular suggestions were a duck pond or water feature and a community orchard.

Many residents suggested areas of green space, such as a village green or playing fields, outdoor gym or BBQ or picnic areas. A number expressed the view that places that bring people together were important to the concept of the village heart. There was a discussion about whether the old canal could be resurrected and used as a feature, as some bridges remain.

In terms of community buildings, suggestions included shops and a café (with wifi!) or pub. Some wanted to see a traditional village centre.

### **What does a good village heart look like?**

There were many and varied ideas as to what a good village heart should look like, including the following:

- Village green
- Pub
- Trees
- Farmers market
- Benches and flowers
- Sense of space
- Village fair
- Tranquil
- Place for people to gather for events
- Tree lined streets
- Welcoming
- Light
- Bunting, street party, traditional space for events
- Focal point
- Green
- Village pond
- Petanque/outdoor social opportunities
- Flowers, sculpture, art

- Mosaic, referencing airplanes or the airfield

There was a discussion about having a central green space and housing radiating outwards from this centre. The word “safe” was used many times. Consideration was given to balancing accessibility and parking with pedestrian safety.

It was considered important to reflect the area’s history within the development – “to create somewhere with a story and a sense of character”.

### **What services/activities should the village hub building provide?**

The idea of the Hub being flexible and multifunctional was popular with provision for all ages, young and old. Suggested activities included:

- Café
- Library
- Childcare facilities
- Space to hire out
- Doctors surgery
- Pharmacy
- Care home
- Gym/keep fit facilities
- Scout hall
- Safe places for young people
- Youth club or skate park
- Village hall
- Community pub
- Picnic areas
- Crazy golf or other outdoors activities for young people / families
- A park
- Multi use church or church hall
- Opportunities for adult learning

### **Should the Community Land Trust own and manage the hub?**

Participants all agreed that the CLT should have a role in managing the Hub. There was support for social housing and green spaces.

Some asked a lot of questions about how the CLT could manage the Hub – would this be directly or indirectly? Who would pay staff? How would the CLT make any money? Graham from the Sussex Housing Hub gave the example of Thornhill where the Co-op Metro store rents the shop from the CLT and this provides an income of around £30k per year. The group was unsure as to whether there would be enough footfall to sustain another co-op in



addition to the one at Yapton. Graham confirmed that the village hall could also be rented out by groups or businesses.

### 3. MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

- *Should there be a main north-south route through the site?*
- *Would an access point off Rolleston Park by Peregrines to the west work?*
- *How can a safe route to Ford railway station be achieved?*
- *What off-site highway improvements are likely to be required?*
- *How should the market be accessed?*
- *Is there scope to deliver a bus route through the site?*

#### North-South route through site

There were very strong views voiced that there should not be a vehicular north-south route through the development site. Participants were keen to avoid creating a rat run through the site. Similarly, residents did also not want to see any other through route for cars (eg East-West) to

*“Don’t put a main road through the middle of the site. It will divide the community.”*

#### Buses

Residents felt that there was not a huge amount of public transport in the area and that it would be good to improve the connectivity of Ford to nearby towns and villages, with Arundel frequently mentioned as somewhere people would like to be able to access via bus.

All agreed that the existing Coastliner no 700 route could usefully be diverted from its current route to pass through the development.

Participants commented that there were no buses to Barnham or Ford and that *“Barnham is really key”*. Barnham is a major hub with superior train services to those from Ford. Barnham was therefore seen as a key destination for bus journeys with links to Arundel also seen as desirable.

#### Cycling/walking

Residents felt that there was significant scope to improve cycling and walking in the area. This would potentially reduce the number of car journeys. It was agreed that the development should be linked – via cycle routes – to Ford and Barnham railway stations, the A259 cycle path (and onwards to Littlehampton) and to the proposed cycle route along the river (linking to Arundel). There was some discussion around the type of cycle routes – it was felt that dedicated routes away from traffic were the best solution. Shared cycle and pedestrian routes were not popular.

Participants talked about the different types of cyclists and that if you wanted to encourage more people to cycle the facilities need to be of a better standard – direct, continuous and easy to use and wide enough to allow for safe cycling.

There was some discussion about the existing footpath route to Ford railway station along Ford Road. Many felt it was inadequate. Participants were all in agreement that they would like a safer cycle and pedestrian route to the station and that the existing footpath along Ford Road to the station should be made wider. There were differing views on the issue of street lighting. Some wanted to see the route lit to make it safer – some wanted it unlit to avoid urbanisation, disruption to wildlife and detracting from dark skies.

Parking at the station is limited so some thought secure cycle parking at the station would help to increase cycling to the station.

Some of those who attended were particularly keen to ensure East-West connectivity. They commented that they would like to be able to walk or cycle to local shops and facilities in the neighbouring village of Yapton.

Some residents said they would like to see a circular route footpath (and cycle route) around the edge of the development. A number also commented on the need for a footpath/cycle route from the Peregrines side of the development to the Oystercatcher pub.

### **Traffic generally**

There was some concern over the siting of the secondary school – it was felt that the planners should take into consideration the number of large lorries that use Ford Lane and that there needed to be adequate separation between school children and lorries.

The primary school was also raised. People wanted to see the primary school sited in the centre of the development so it was integrated into the local community and to make it accessible on foot. It was felt that the secondary school should be in a separate area of the site to avoid congestion in one area, to keep traffic away from the primary school and to ensure social separation between those attending the different schools.

Road links to the A27 were viewed as key and a replacement to the existing Ford rail crossing (for example, with the introduction of road bridge over the crossing) was thought to be essential given existing traffic congestion in the area.

*“The level crossing at Ford is a big issue. There are always cars queuing.”*

Residents were also keen to ensure that parking was looked at sufficiently in designing the new development. Some felt that there was “never enough parking in new estates” and that, as noted from other roundtable discussions, the developers should also take into consideration the need to park trade vehicles as well as cars.

There was some discussion about the “look” of streets in the development. The general consensus was that tree lined streets would be more attractive and appealing and would reflect the wider rural environment. There were also views that adequate separation of cycles and pedestrians from cars should be catered for on any main roads.

A hierarchy of streets was discussed, with a wider central spine street for buses and, as you move away from that main street, streets become narrower moving to more of a shared space. Table treatments were mentioned to traffic calm junctions and there were popular (contrasted against speed bumps which were not liked) as they were good for pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled. Planning for the disabled with features such as junction treatments to slow traffic and the provision of level crossing points was considered important.

It was also mentioned that even if streets were cul-de-sacs for cars, there should be good permeability for pedestrians and cyclists through the site, so they can take short-cuts and don't have to go on long routes to get to places.

Participants were keen to avoid overly wide roads so as to keep traffic speeds down. A 20mph speed limit might be appropriate, especially near the village centre.

#### **4. GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE**

- *How can green and blue infrastructure connect the existing and new community?*
- *What uses should be provided at the low points on the site to the north and south?*
- *Are there particular locations where new screen planting is required?*
- *What types of green spaces should be provided and where?*
- *Are there opportunities to secure a positive use for the water/drainage features within the site?*
- *Relationship to Public Rights of Way?*

#### **Wildlife**

Overall, there was a strong feeling about the need to conserve and enhance wildlife in the area.

It was thought important to map out existing wildlife to protect and to enhance their habitat. Wildlife in the area is diverse and amongst the species seen on site the following were noted: skylarks (the only species that benefits from arable farmland habitat), bats, deer, hedgehogs, kestrels, woodpeckers, foxes, grass snakes, barn owls, swifts, swallows, rabbits, red kites, squirrels, buzzards and long-tailed tits.

Participants wanted to encourage bees into the area and highlighted wildflowers and the importance of pollination. They wanted to ensure that green corridors are created within the site to enable wildlife movement to/from the wider landscape. For example, sparrows use hedgerows to move through the site.

There was agreement about the need to maximize the wildlife potential of private gardens and participants wanted the development design to reflect this, and ensure good connectivity with the countryside.

### **Green Infrastructure**

People thought that green infrastructure should go in first before buildings, etc to allow it to mature. It was mentioned that there are very few street trees – and that more trees were therefore needed.

Residents said that footpaths are not connected and are completely missing in some areas. They therefore wanted more connectivity between communities via green corridors and safe cycling/walking and wildlife networks. In addition, it would be important to create buffer zones between industrial and residential zones – wildlife corridors could be useful in this regard.

As well as the lack of connectivity in footpaths and cycle routes, some at the workshops thought there was an opportunity to connect disjointed bits of trees and hedges into a woodland. A few residents mentioned allotments and a community orchard.

There was some discussion around front gardens within the site. Is there a possibility for private front gardens be more “open” and integrated more within the green corridors to create better connectivity? It was agreed that back gardens should also be designed into surrounding countryside again to allow better links and connectivity and to ensure a more natural urban fringe.

It was felt that green space must be part of the community centre for activities such as picnics and similar. Some commented how a village green focus was needed (but a meaningful one, more than just a duck pond) and with wildlife-friendly greenspace. The green spaces should be enjoyable for all across generations. Some noted that they did not want to have closed off fenced off spaces, although some areas will need to be fenced such as playgrounds to ensure separation between dogs and children. It would be important to have more shared spaces for inter-generational interaction and socializing.

A few people mentioned the need to manage noise and air pollution from the industrial units, on some days there are 180-200 lorry trips a day plus other traffic. Trees/shrubs will help with air pollution although would be less effective with noise pollution – although they do not reduce noise they do change the perception: if you don't see the units, it's easier to block out the noise. Some residents emphasized the need for a larger buffer zone between industrial and residential zones.

### **Blue Infrastructure**

Alan Brackley noted that there are two low-lying areas within the site where wetlands will be created. Wetlands will be connected with the flood plains. Participants wanted to see attractively-designed wetlands, which are good for wildlife and observing wildlife. Ponds

will be designed with safety in mind but not fenced off. One idea is to open up the canal and weave it into the surface water scheme but make it not very deep.

Areas of wetlands, ponds and reed beds could be linked to the river. Participants noted the opportunities of linking to the landscape north and east of the development which would enhance the wildlife locally.

Participants felt they would like a pond in the village centre/heart and the possibility of swales to manage water run-off. One resident mentioned the possibility of rainwater harvesting.

### **Usage**

Participants mentioned that there were many dog owners living in the area. They therefore wanted to see plenty of spaces where dogs could be exercised off lead and the possibility of a dog-walking park was mentioned. This would then leave areas where dogs were less likely to be encountered meaning less wildlife disturbance in some places.

Walking and cycling would be important to create a place in which people want to live. Lots of people want to walk and cycle along the river so connectivity to that area from the development was key. People were also keen to ensure suitable walking opportunities for retirees.

The possibility of an angling club was also raised by one participant.

### **Management**

There was a general discussion about the need to have a good management plan for all public spaces and hedgerows.

Many residents were of the view that the management could be shared between the Council and the CLT/local community. There was a recognition of the Council's limited resources, so the design has to aim to deliver high quality but low-level management, sympathetic to the rural nature of the area. For example, a naturalistic playground vs a highly managed playground with standard equipment.

Residents are concerned that if amenities are not managed properly, then they will attract anti-social behaviour.

Some wanted all green spaces to have properties facing them so that residents can keep an eye on what's going on to increase safety and allowing parents and carers to oversee young children playing. This would mean open and visible areas. It was also seen as important to ensure that properties and the site gave easy access to quality countryside and the river for older children (and others) to explore and enjoy.

### **Feelings**

There was a strong view that people love living in the countryside -participants commented that they would not want to live there if it were urbanised. People also felt passionate about the wildlife and the need to conserve and enhance it.



## CONCLUSIONS

There were a number of themes that came through from the day. The key ones were that:

- The community were keen to create open green spaces and water features such as ponds within the site, providing places for relaxation and leisure and environments in which wildlife can thrive
- The development must ensure that those who live there and visit feel safe: both in terms of ensuring adequate and connected footpaths and cycle paths that are separated from traffic and in creating a feeling of personal safety
- The development must result in the creation of a village with a heart which shouldn't be divided with a major road running through the middle of it. Key community infrastructure should sit at the heart of the site with multifunctional facilities catering for all ages and supporting amenities such as the primary school
- There should be a mixture of housing within the site to suit all different age groupings, reflecting local character and materials. Affordable homes (anticipated to be 30% of the total and to be delivered and managed through the Community Land Trust and Registered Providers) should be well integrated within the development and generally housing should be balanced with sufficient open spaces to create places for people to meet and relax.
- The overall design of the development should be done sympathetically reflecting the low density, edge of countryside rural feel of the area.

## **APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP ATTENDEES**

As well as attendees from the local community, the following consultants and experts facilitated and supported the workshops:

1. Robin Shepherd: Barton Willmore
2. Dom Scott: Barton Willmore
3. Steve Tapper: Barton Willmore
4. Luke Vallins: Barton Willmore
5. Steph Maton: Barton Willmore
6. Matt Trapnell: Barton Willmore
7. Silviu Pasargiu: Barton Willmore
8. Camilla Budd: Wates Developments
9. James Bevis: i-Transport
10. Alan Brackley: JNP
11. Nicola Longland: LDA
12. Alison Welterveden: CPRE
13. Kia Trainor: CPRE
14. Penny Hudd: CPRE
15. Marina Watkins: CPRE
16. Will Anderson: Rabble Place Architects, CPRE specialist advisor
17. Phil Belden: Sussex Wildlife Trust, CPRE specialist advisor
18. Chris Todd: Campaign for Better Transport, CPRE specialist advisor
19. Graham Maunders: Sussex Community Housing Hub