

Bellway Homes

Land north of Arborfield Road, Shinfield

Statement of Community Involvement

August 2024

The purpose of this report

- 1.1. This report details the scope and methods used for the pre-application consultation and engagement with local communities and stakeholders regarding Bellway Homes' development proposals for 191 new homes on land north of Arborfield Road, Shinfield, consisting of both houses and flats.
- 1.2. The report also provides details of the outcomes of the consultations and how the proposed development has been influenced through community and stakeholder feedback.

The structure of this report

This report is set out in the following sections:

Page 3 - Section 2 introduces the background of the application;

Page 3 - Section 3 sets out the policy context;

Page 4 - Section 4 describes the approach to community and stakeholder engagement;

Page 5 - Section 5 outlines the community and stakeholder feedback;

Page 6 - Section 6 outlines Bellway Homes responses to key feedback received;

Page 7 - Section 7 sets out the next steps.

Page 8 - Appendices

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1. This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is submitted to Wokingham Borough Council on behalf of Bellway Homes.
- 2.2. The planning application will be for 191 new homes, a mix of 163 houses and 28 flats, including 35% affordable housing on land north of Arborfield Road Shinfield. There will also be open space, pedestrian and cycle links and environmental improvements that will lead to a biodiversity net gain.

3.0 Policy context

- 3.1. Community and stakeholder engagement is a key aspect of the planning process as set out in current Local Planning Authority policies and guidelines.
- 3.2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (as amended) required Wokingham Borough Council to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) detailing how it will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing the Local Plan and determining planning applications.
- 3.3. Wokingham Borough Council adopted an SCI in March 2024.
- 3.4. In the Wokingham Borough Council SCI, applicants are encouraged to undertake community consultation at the pre-application stage and to submit a statement with their planning application that outlines the community involvement carried out and the outcome. Wokingham Borough Council's SCI states "engagement should involve the wider area and should start at an early stage with engagement forming an integral part of the initial design process."
- 3.5. When undertaking community engagement, applicants are expected to follow good practice guidelines as outlined in Wokingham Borough Council's SCI. Applicants are encouraged to "consult the community, including the town and parish council where relevant".
- 3.6. Our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how we have involved Wokingham Borough Council, including the ward councillors, the local parish council and local residents, in the preparation of planning documents and the consideration of planning applications.

4.0 The approach to community and stakeholder engagement

Introduction and background to the consultations

- 4.1. The preparation of this planning application follows a process of statutory and stakeholder consultation as well as public consultation and community engagement.

Stakeholder engagement

Elected Members

- 4.2. Elected representatives from Wokingham Borough Council representing the Shinfield ward were contacted individually and briefed on the proposals.
- 4.3. The members for the Shinfield ward were also offered a face-to-face briefing on the proposals. The project team met with two of the ward councillors, Cllr Andrew Gray and Cllr Sarah Bell to discuss the proposals and answer their questions on Thursday 18 July 2024. The key themes raised were:
- Impact of the development on local infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries and dentists.
 - What the affordable housing percentage is, what the tenure mix is and who will manage the affordable housing.
 - What the s106 money will be spent on.
 - Will there be active travel links on the site.
 - How the biodiversity net gain is calculated.
- 4.4. The project team also met with the third ward councillor, Cllr Vishal Srinivasan on Tuesday 30 July 2024. The key themes discussed were:
- Impact of the development on local infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries and dentists.
 - The breakdown of the unit mix between flats and houses.
 - Community feedback raised.
- 4.5. In addition, the project team have also reached out to the Council leader, Cllr Stephen Conway, the Deputy Leader Cllr Prue Bray, the leader of the Conservative Group Cllr Pauline Jorgensen, planning committee members and the constituency MP, Yuan Yuang. Offers have been made to meet with all the members to brief them on the plans and offer the chance to respond to questions, however no meetings have taken place as of yet. At the time of writing, a meeting is currently being arranged with Cllr Pauline Jorgensen on site.
- 4.6. In addition, the project team contacted Shinfield Parish Council offering them a presentation on the proposals. The project team met with the Clerk of Shinfield Parish Council, Bruce Winton, and

the Chair of the Shinfield Parish Council Planning Committee, Cllr Dawn Peer on the 10 July 2024.

The key themes raised were:

- Impact on local schools and other local services.
- Biodiversity on site.
- Road infrastructure, improvements and access.

Bellway Homes remain in contact with the Parish Council and will be presenting to the Shinfield Parish Council at their meeting on September 11, 2024.

Public consultation

- 4.7. A variety of best practice consultation methods have been used to inform local stakeholders and local residents about the consultation and to encourage them to participate in the process.
- 4.8. An invitation letter was sent to residents informing them of the proposals and giving them the opportunity to ask the consultation team questions and send feedback them. The invitation letter was sent in the post to 1,154 addresses. The letter was delivered on the 19 July 2024. The project team felt the best form of engagement with residents was to deliver a letter and keep consultation channels, the project email address and phone number open. The team were conscious that not everyone is able to attend a physical exhibition given how busy people are and felt this method allowed for questions and comments to be answered.
- 4.9. A copy of the invitation letter can be found in Appendix 1 and a map of the full mailing area can be found in Appendix 2.
- 4.10. At the time of writing, the project team had received emails from 10 different residents.

5.0 Community and stakeholder engagement feedback

Key feedback themes raised following the letter delivery:

- 5.1. In the feedback received via email comments that came up most were the following:
- Questions about the impact on local infrastructure such as schools and GP surgeries.
 - Access route into the site.
 - Traffic and construction traffic.
 - Cycle/pedestrian links through the site.

Example comments from residents who emailed the project email address:

Traffic and access:

- "Will construction traffic access the new proposed development from the Arborfield road?"
- "The logical assumption would be that the access point was on the bypass running up the side given its purpose was to redirect traffic flow away from already overused roads through the village."
- "As it stands, Arborfield Road is already used as a 'racetrack' day and night and this proposed access point will only add to the risk of accidental injury or worse."
- "Arborfield Road is 40 miles an hour and is already ridiculously busy. It is, at times, hard to exit my driveway due to this. So another road onto it would cause issues."
- "I worry that the Phase 2 with almost 200 new homes will add substantial traffic to Shepherd Road causing traffic burden and noise/air pollution to existing homes along the Shepherd Road."

Impact on local infrastructure

- "I would like to ask where the families who might live in these homes would send their children to school."
- "Also it is already difficult to access doctor appointments, how would Bellway mitigate these issues? No NHS dental places available locally either."
- "I would also like to understand how where the plans for the facilities to support such investment are, specifically secondary schools. There are currently no way near enough places in the area for secondary school pupils and so adding further people into this mix is very irresponsible."

Other feedback

- "Could the cycle pedestrian route currently built east of phase 1 if that could be continued into phase 2 to make a continuous path running along the eastern relief road side which will be great for both sites and a good cycle exercise route for all."
- "Noise and Light Impact: Concerned that connecting the road will attract non-residents and lead to an increase in car spotlight effects and noise disturbances, especially during peak hour period."
- "I am assuming the sector of land is not on the flood plain at the Shinfield end of Arborfield Road."

6.0 Bellway Homes responses to feedback

6.1 Table of Bellway Homes responses to comments received:

The below table outlines Bellway Homes response to the most common themes raised during the public consultation and in the subsequent online feedback responses.

Theme	Penso Power
Traffic and access	The reason for the access road into the site being from the south (Arborfield Road) rather than from the Eastern Relief Road is because it is considered to be the safest option given the speed limit on the Eastern Relief Road is 50mph. The access has been designed to ensure safe access and egress from the site, through the provision of suitable visibility

	splays and filter lanes. The details for which will be included in the full planning application within the transport statement. We are also engaging with the Highways department and our Transport Statement will show the development will not lead to an unacceptable impact on local traffic flows.
Impact on local infrastructure	We appreciate resident concerns regarding access to school places, GP surgeries and dentists. As part of the application, Bellway will be making a CIL/s106 payment for local infrastructure which Wokingham Borough Council can use to put towards local infrastructure such as GP surgeries, local schools and dentists. The details of which will be discussed and agreed with the Council during the course of the application.
Flooding	The site falls within Flood Zone 1, so it has a low risk of flooding. As part of the planning application, a flood risk assessment will be carried out to show the site is acceptable from a flood perspective.
Active travel	Under the proposals, the cycle route currently built east of phase 1 will be continued to phase 2, to form a continuous path along the Eastern Relief Road. Ensuring future residents and residents living in the local area can use active travel wherever possible is important for Bellway Homes and will help residents use environmentally friendly transport routes.

7.0 Next steps

- 7.1. Following submission of the planning application, Wokingham Borough Council will continue to consult interested parties, including local residents, by keeping the various consultation channels open and responding to resident emails and phone calls. Bellway Homes will continue consulting with local stakeholders throughout the application process. The consultation email address and telephone number will remain open for residents to ask questions post submission too.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – A4 invitation letter sent to 1,154 residential and business addresses

Appendix 2 – Mailing area for invitation letter

Appendix 1 – Invitation sent to 1,154 local residential and business addresses



Introduction

Bellway Homes has prepared this newsletter to notify local residents of the proposals for 191 new homes at land north of Arborfield Road, Shinfield. This follows phase one for 249 new homes on the northern parcel of the site which has now been built.

The application will be for new homes, including affordable properties, open space, pedestrian and cycle links, and environmental improvements which will lead to a biodiversity net gain.

The newsletter also provides information on how you can get in touch with Bellway Homes to provide feedback or ask questions.

The proposal

Our proposal is for circa 191 new homes of which 67 (35%) will be affordable – helping to meet the significant housing need in the area. The proposals include 163 houses and 28 apartments. The homes will range from one and two-bedroom apartments to four-bedroom houses.

A new road access to the development will be provided from Arborfield Road, in addition to connection through to the existing development to the north. Open space will be provided along the eastern edge of the site with an additional area located within the proposed developed part of the site. Pedestrian and cycle links would be provided across the site, together with landscaped areas and additional tree planting.

The proposals have been designed to a high standard, in keeping with the architectural styles in the local area currently.

Bellway



Benefits

- Much needed new homes – including family sized houses and 35% affordable homes.
- New landscaping and tree planting to ensure a net gain in biodiversity across the site.
- Community Infrastructure Levy and S.106 payments for local infrastructure improvements.
- Highly sustainable construction with homes including renewable energy initiatives such as photovoltaic cells and air source heat pumps.

Next steps

A planning application is likely to be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council in the summer and then full details will be available on the Council's planning portal website, where comments can also be made directly to the Council's Planning Department.

Bellway

Your feedback

Bellway Homes will carefully consider feedback from the Council alongside that from the local community. You can share any feedback or questions you have by contacting shinfieldphase2@instinctif.com or 0749 386 7448.

About Bellway Homes

In just over 70 years, Bellway Homes has grown from a small, family-owned firm to one of the most successful house builders in the UK built on the pillars of quality, service, and trust. Today Bellway Homes directly employs more than 2,000 people. This application has been prepared by Bellway Homes (Thames Valley), whose office is based in Reading and who are experienced in building new homes in and around the town.

Appendix 2 – Consultation area for the invitation letter to the exhibition

