



Lodge Hill

Outline Planning Application on behalf of Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared by PPS Group

October 2011

This document forms part of a suite of documents
which comprise the Lodge Hill Outline Planning
Application



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*These reports were prepared by Trimedia. Personnel from Trimedia moved to PPS Group at the end of 2009. From this point forward, the programme of public consultation for Lodge Hill continued to be undertaken by the same personnel, but under a different company name.



Introduction

This document outlines and collates all public consultation and engagement activities undertaken for Lodge Hill.

PPS Group has developed an approach to consultation that meets the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12, which enshrines the Local Development Framework system (including SCIs) and subsequent Government planning guidance. Medway Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement was used as a guide to inform the programme of activities and PPS Group has been in constant dialogue with Medway Council officers throughout the consultation process.

The consultation and engagement strategy for Lodge Hill is responsive to a number of different factors; not least the consultation already undertaken by Medway Council on the strategic development potential of the site, and the Localism Bill, which was introduced by the Coalition Government in November 2010. The activities undertaken by PPS Group on behalf of Land Securities pay heed to this emerging policy, to help ensure that opportunities have been provided for people to determine the shape of their communities in line with the principles outlined in Open Source planning.

At the start of this programme of public consultation and engagement for Lodge Hill, the following aims were identified:

- Consultation should be open and inclusive to all interested parties, with particular emphasis on widening participation amongst members of the community who do not traditionally partake in the planning process
- Engagement should be ongoing and iterative, providing adequate opportunities to contribute to emerging Lodge Hill policies and shape a masterplan for the site
- All activities should be robust and representative, ensuring that those involved in the process can evidence the value of their participation

Three rounds of public exhibitions and a set of themed workshops were held in 2009 and 2010. These events were scheduled at pertinent times within the planning timetable to enable a tangible community input into the Lodge Hill proposals. After each event, a comprehensive report of all the feedback received was made available for public scrutiny (the reports were uploaded to www.lodgehill.info and posted to parties who had requested a hard copy). These reports collated and analysed the feedback and made recommendations for amendments to the Lodge Hill proposals as a result. They are important documents as they track the evolution of the Lodge Hill



proposals. Prior to the submission of the Outline Planning Application for Lodge Hill, a final pre-application information event was held in October 2011 to explain the content of the planning application and a summary report from this event was also published. Together, these documents form the basis of this Statement of Community Involvement.

In addition to these key public consultation events, emphasis was also placed on ongoing engagement with the local community and stakeholders. Communication activities were implemented to encourage awareness and understanding, as well as to enable accessibility and communication between the developer and those who have an interest in the development. This aim is in line with Medway Council's Statement of Community Involvement, which states that "a framework of different methods should be used to contact different sections of the community in Medway" (Page 17).

Land Securities understands that its activities may impact many people and it strives for that impact to be positive. To achieve this, PPS Group has interacted, listened and responded to local communities, enabling interested parties to see the benefit of their involvement in public consultation for Lodge Hill.

PPS Group is an independent communications company that specialises in community consultations in the planning sphere. PPS Group was one of the first companies to understand the need for consultation on planning applications and has become an expert at developing tailored programmes to ensure that its community consultations contribute positively to the planning process. PPS Group is an active member of both the Association of Professional Political Consultants (which promotes transparency and openness in public affairs consultancy, through the promotion of a strong ethical code) and the Consultation Institute, which helps all those engaged in public and stakeholder consultation to absorb and promote best practice.

Consultation summary

Statistics at a glance since public consultation and engagement commenced



- 12,803 letters have been issued to the local community to inform them of the opportunity to take part in the Lodge Hill public consultation. This includes a mailing to all households in the Strood Rural and Peninsula wards. Letters have also been issued in response to those received from the community
- 89 hours of public events consisted of 71 hours of public exhibitions and 18 hours of themed workshops
- Over the course of the consultation, 36 adverts have been placed in the Medway newspapers. There have been 11 separate press articles and appearances on local radio, as well as coverage in on-line blogs and the Hoo Peninsula village newsletters. This has the potential to reach approximately 1,488,397 people across Medway
- In total, 1,357 people have attended the Lodge Hill public events. 597 people attended the first public exhibitions in April 2009. In July 2009, 113 people attended the themed workshop sessions (although some people attended more than one session). 260 people attended the November 2009 public exhibitions and 204 people attended the exhibitions in November 2010. 183 people attended the final pre-application information event in October 2011. In 'Community Engagement – some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme' published in September 2008 by Communities and Local



Government (CLG), the author states that “it is evident that even when people have been involved, their interest can wane once their immediate problem has been resolved.”

- 212 feedback forms were received from the public exhibitions in April 2009; 44 in November 2009 and 28 in November 2010. 20 letters have been received from members of the community and 44 comments were left in the comments box at the October 2011 events
- There have been an estimated 17,000 visitors to the dedicated project website www.lodgehill.info
- 52 local organisations have been engaged with during the workshop sessions or on a one-to-one basis

Public consultation - events and feedback

In April 2009, 20 hours of staffed public exhibitions held over five days formed the first stage of Land Securities' public consultation regarding proposed development at Lodge Hill, Chattenden. The purpose of these events was to generate an understanding of issues affecting the local community and to gauge concerns and aspirations regarding potential development at Lodge Hill. 597 people attended these exhibitions and the feedback received helped to start shaping plans for the development by identifying the type of facilities the community believed were required at Lodge Hill. Key considerations for the Lodge Hill proposals were identified from the community feedback. These are listed below, but please see the document Lodge Hill, Stage One Exhibitions – Feedback Analysis for a detailed summary of all activities and results.

- **Road infrastructure** - concern that the road infrastructure cannot cope with any new development, along with a desire for better public transport
- **Road safety** – concerns about the existing speed and volume of traffic on Four Elms Hill
- **Site access** – this is a key opportunity for infrastructure improvements
- **Health facilities** – perceived to already be at capacity and new facilities needed
- **Educational facilities** - perceived to already be at capacity and new facilities needed
- **Concern regarding development** – the impact on neighbouring villages
- **Open space amenity** – a desire for open space such as countryside parks, village greens etc
- **Views** – protection of countryside views
- **Woodland and environment** – strive to protect the woodland and wildlife on site
- **Leisure amenity** – create facilities for people to enjoy their leisure time
- **Retail provision** – provide appropriate retail facilities



Images from the Lodge Hill exhibitions in April 2009

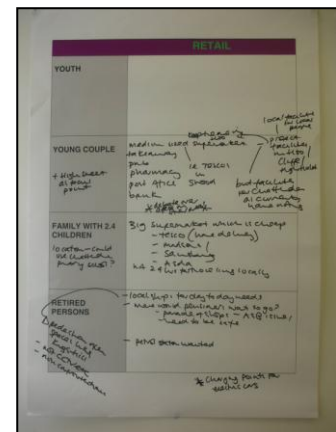
The public feedback received from these exhibitions informed the topics and discussion points for public workshops, which took place in **July 2009**. Six, three hour workshops covered the themes of Movement, Environment and Community and provided a forum for attendees to progress the issues identified in the exhibitions in more depth with specialist consultants. They also enabled the Lodge Hill team to gain insights and views from people who live and/or work in the local area and guide the proposals in response to these. 21 local groups were represented at these workshops, in addition to general members of the public. The feedback from these extensive sessions was synthesized and a community wishlist was prepared for Lodge Hill:

- Multi-use and intergenerational facilities across the development
- Health provision in the centre of the new scheme, with flexible facilities to meet current local needs and to be capable of responding positively to future local needs
- Schools as the centre and hub of the community, including the integration of the existing Chattenden Primary School, to provide facilities for all ages. The team should also consider placing schools close to woodland areas
- Leisure opportunities – especially cycle park and/or mountain biking, football pitches, safe play areas for the younger age group, a green gym, facilities for both the youth and older generation, youth club(s), a country park, character bars and pubs, allotments and a heritage centre or trail
- The masterplan needs to recognise the history of the site
- The protection and enhancement, through new planting, of the existing woodland areas, and maximising this landscape amenity by creating 'free' activities, while managing the impact of people in the woodland. Informal public open space appears to be preferential to formal parkland areas
- Improved accessibility to Deangate Ridge Sports Complex and Golf Club
- The 're-stitching' of PROWs and footpaths to maximise the ridgeline views from the site. But Lodge Hill should not allow housing to break the ridgeline (apart from the possible creation of a landmark to create a 'sense of place')
- A new high street for the development and supermarket, while being mindful of the impact on existing retail facilities in the surrounding area
- Employment opportunities, so that Lodge Hill doesn't become a 'dormitory town'
- Sustainable, future-proofed housing, but not windfarms
- The Lodge Hill team needs to be confident of utilities provision, to ensure the development doesn't have a detrimental impact on the already poor current provision
- A mixed community for all age groups and incomes, from flats through to sheltered accommodation
- More than one access point into the new development – one from the west and one from Dux Court

Road

- A viable alternative to the car from the outset. Buses and other more sustainable travel methods would be used if the barriers such as infrequency and lack of information could be overcome
- A managed and phased approach to the delivery of new homes, so people are not living in a building site for the next 20 years
- A better traffic management system for the Peninsula generally, and especially for Four Elms roundabout and Four Elms hill.
- The introduction of safety measures to cross the A228

Please see the document Lodge Hill, Stage Two Workshops – Feedback Analysis for a full description of all activities and feedback.



Images and feedback sheets from the Lodge Hill workshops in July 2009

In **November 2009**, 22 hours of public exhibitions were held across the Hoo Peninsula to gauge whether the emerging proposals for Lodge Hill had adequately responded to the concerns highlighted by the public in previous consultation events. By assessing the feedback received since the public consultation commenced, this provides an indication of issues which have been minimised, requests which have been delivered upon and any remaining issues still to be addressed.

Analysis of the feedback received showed that overall, the number of anti-development comments (either general or in relation to Lodge Hill specifically) had **decreased by 98%**. Furthermore, a number of issues had been minimised as concerns had been addressed through the Lodge Hill masterplan. However, it should be borne in mind that the Lodge Hill proposals were still in development at this stage and it was only possible to give a flavour of the types of solutions which were being considered as studies were still being undertaken.

- **Road infrastructure** – this remained a prime area of concern for respondents, who were keen to see new roads rather than upgrades to the network. The public transport solutions proposed were well received
- **Road safety** – overall mentions of this issue decreased substantially
- **Site access** – a new concern about the safety of cars using the Upchat sliproad onto the A228 was identified
- **Health facilities** – the feedback shows that reference to this issue had decreased substantially as the initial fear that Lodge Hill residents will be a burden on existing facilities was unfounded
- **Educational facilities** – new schools were included in the Lodge Hill proposals and any references to this as an issue disappeared
- **Concern regarding development** – this decreased from 139 comments in the feedback from the first exhibitions, to three comments in November 2009
- **Open space amenity** – positive comments were provided about the landscape character of Lodge Hill and the inclusion of public open space and play areas in the proposals
- **Views** – concerns over the detrimental impact on views had diminished, although there were still individual cases of concern
- **Woodland and environment** – respondents welcomed the retention of the woodland. Individual cases of concern remained regarding the proposed wildlife protection measures
- **Leisure amenity** – younger Chattenden residents still wanted a skatepark!
- **Retail provision** – retail facilities have been provided and respondents appeared satisfied

This is a summary of all detailed information provided. Please see the document Lodge Hill, Stage Three Exhibitions – Feedback Analysis for the full report of all activities and feedback received.





Images from the Lodge Hill exhibitions in November 2009

In 2010, the Lodge Hill masterplan continued to evolve as the consultant team started to formulate the extensive proposals required for a development of this scale. Further public exhibitions were held in **November 2010** to provide interested parties with an update on the team's current thinking and request the public's feedback on this. 21 hours of public exhibitions were held across the peninsula and 204 people attended these events, with 28 taking the time to complete a feedback form.

Attendance figures and the number of feedback forms received have decreased over the course of the public consultation. It is believed that a core audience of representatives have self selected their participation in the Lodge Hill consultation. The team staffing the November 2010 exhibitions also felt that the majority of people attending these events came out of interest to view the progress of development and ask questions of the team, rather than to express strong views.

Nevertheless, the main and ongoing issues of interest for respondents identified in the November 2010 exhibitions were the proposed Lodge Hill transport strategy, along with secondary issues of employment creation and wildlife protection. Unsurprisingly, given the current economic climate, there appeared to be an increased public focus on employment opportunities generated by Lodge Hill and respondents were keen to ensure that Lodge Hill would create new jobs. Please see the document Lodge Hill, Stage Four Exhibitions – Feedback Analysis for a full summary of all activities for this stage of public consultation.

In October 2011, Land Securities held the final pre-application information event for Lodge Hill, prior to an Outline Planning Application being submitted to Medway Council. The purpose of this event was to explain the the planning application- the content of which had been influenced through the four previous stages of public consultation.

Eight hours public exhibitions were held at The Lodge, Land Securities' base within Chattenden. Guided tours of the former Chattenden Barracks and part of the Lodge Hill Training Area were provided to interested parties during the exhibition, hence why The Lodge was chosen as the base for this final event.

All draft planning application documents were made available for public viewing at this event. As many of the previous consultation comments had focused on the proposed transport strategy, Land Securities prepared a Non-technical Summary of the Draft Lodge Hill Transport Assessment. Representatives from the transport consultant, Hyder Consulting, were on hand to answer questions on the transport strategy and copies of the Non-technical Summary were available for people to take away and read at their leisure.

In total, 183 people attended the exhibitions in October 2011 and 96 people took part in the guided tours.



Images from the Lodge Hill exhibitions in October 2011

All consultation participants will be notified once Land Securities has submitted the Outline Planning Application for Lodge Hill, on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, and a period of statutory public consultation will then be undertaken by Medway Council.



Public consultation reports

This Statement of Community Involvement is a précis of the extensive consultation and engagement activities which have been undertaken to inform the emerging proposals for Lodge Hill up to October 2011. For a detailed description of all activities carried out for each of the stages of consultation, along with the analysis of all feedback received, please view each of the post-consultation event reports which accompany this document. Each of these documents were made available for all consultation participants to view and they explain:

- The invitation list for each of the events
- Publicity undertaken, such as adverts, posters and editorial media coverage
- Venues and timings for each of the exhibitions – a travelling roadshow of exhibitions visited many locations across the Hoo Peninsula
- Number of attendees at each of the exhibition venues
- The number of feedback forms received
- Timings and agendas for the themed workshops
- Analysis of all feedback received, both quantitative and qualitative, and recommendations for changes to the Lodge Hill proposals as a result



Ongoing community engagement

As explained, an emphasis was also placed on ongoing engagement with the local community and stakeholders to encourage awareness and understanding of the emerging proposals. This section explains the activities which were undertaken and the benefit of each of these.

Website and online mechanism

www.lodgehill.info went live on the first day of the April 2009 public exhibitions. It is regularly updated by PPSGroup to provide the latest information on the consultation and the evolution of the plans. In the spirit of openness and transparency, all post event consultation reports were uploaded as PDFs to this website, for people to download or view at their leisure. To date, there have been an estimated 17,000 unique visitors to this website.

Visitors to the website can email the PPS Group team directly with any enquiries or comments and 60 emails have been received to date. The majority of enquiries have been responded to within 24 hours (within the working week).

Proposed development at Lodge Hill, Chattenden

In May 2008, Land Securities was selected as Land Sale Delivery Partner by Defence Estates and tasked with realising the site's redevelopment potential: to bring forward a new mixed-use development north of the A228. The Lodge Hill site has the potential to create in the region of 4,500 - 5,000 new homes, together with community facilities and new employment opportunities over the next 15 years.

Land Securities is keen to work with the local community. Please contact us via this website or come along to a future consultation event to find out more about the project and provide us with your feedback.

→ **LODGE HILL UPDATE NEWSLETTER**
For an electronic copy of our recent newsletter, please click the link.

The site | What's next? | Timeline | About us | Contact us | News

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Register your details

If you would like to receive updates about Lodge Hill please complete the form below.

First Name:

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Address:

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Email Address:

Confirm Email:

How did you hear about Lodge Hill

How

Please use this section to detail any comments you wish to make:

Comments

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Home page of www.lodgehill.info and

contact us page

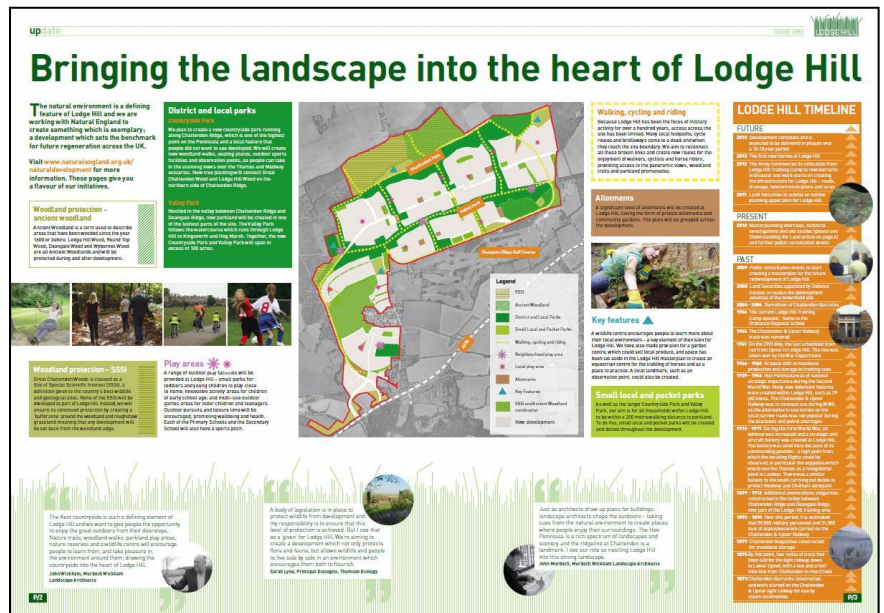


Telephone hotline

A 0845 telephone number was set up and is staffed between office hours. This provides people with a mechanism to pose questions, call for updates and/or register their details for further information.

Newsletter

1,750 newsletters were printed and distributed to households on the Hoo Peninsula in September 2010. This first issue focused on the environment, woodland and wildlife aspects of the proposals and included information from the landscape architects and ecologists for Lodge Hill. It also summarised the likely timescales for development. This newsletter is the first in a series of publications which will be issued at appropriate times in the development programme, likely to increase in frequency as time progresses.



The first edition of the Lodge Hill newsletter, September 2010

Meetings and Presentations

Land Securities was appointed as Land Sale Delivery Partner by Defence Estates (now the Defence Infrastructure Organisation) in 2008. Before the public consultation events commenced, Land Securities and PPS Group met with a number of local groups to seek their feedback on the proposed consultation strategy and take advice regarding other groups who should be engaged with. From this point forward, regular meetings continued with these representatives to encourage two way communication and help ensure that they, as well as Land Securities, were able to speak with some knowledge about the emerging proposals.

As well as meetings, presentations have also been delivered to groups such as the Rural Liaison Committee (formed of Parish Council representatives from across the Peninsula), Medway Council Members, Parish Councils, the Medway Regeneration Ambassadors, the Hoo Partnership, Medway Youth Parliament and the London & Quadrant Community Partnership.

A register of all meetings and presentations is contained in the appendices.

Youth engagement

Younger people do not traditionally take part in public consultation events. Therefore, PPS Group set up an innovative education project to engage a younger Medway audience in the creation of plans for Lodge Hill. Commencing in June 2010 and running through to December 2010, the Lodge Hill project team spent six months working with nearly 200 pupils across seven different Medway schools, setting planning-related challenges for the pupils to overcome.

This programme of youth engagement was built on the principles of applied learning - a style of learning which equips and prepares students for life, learning and employment by providing relevant active learning opportunities. Pupils are faced with real problems, rather than studying past events. As a result, young people build their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live and develop the essential skills to be successful.



The schools who took part in the Lodge Hill challenge were; Hundred of Hoo School; Thomas Aveling; Bishop of Rochester Academy; Brompton Academy; Wilmington Academy; Northfleet School for Girls and Mid Kent College.

Sample problems set for the pupils:

- A-Level Business Studies students from Thomas Aveling School worked with the Lodge Hill socio-economic consultants, Hunt Dobson Stringer (now known as Quod Planning), to assess the market potential of a country house hotel at Lodge Hill
- Students from Mid Kent College studying for their Advanced Diploma in Construction worked with the Lodge Hill masterplanners, PRP Architects, to create their own masterplan for Lodge Hill

“It is an interesting experience swapping ideas with people who are working on the Lodge Hill development. It was good that they were interested in my ideas and I found their ideas really helped me understand the course that I’m studying.”

Sam Riley, Student, Mid Kent College



“The project had a real impact on teaching and learning in the school. For the Creative and Media students their work was really in advance of what they had been doing previously. In a recent visit to the school, OFSTED was very enthusiastic about the project and felt that businesses and schools working together on real life, real time projects, had the potential to be nationally significant.”

John Keeley Director of Specialism and Community Development

The Hundred of Hoo School



Conclusions

From the outset of this programme of public consultation and engagement for Lodge Hill, it was deemed important to ensure that those involved in the consultation process could evidence the value of their participation. It should be clear to participants how the feedback they provided in the public consultation and engagement activities has been fed into and influenced the evolving Lodge Hill masterplan. Here is a selection of comments received regarding the public consultation programme, demonstrating that this aim has been achieved:

“Land Securities and their associates have always given due consideration to all the subjects raised and I hope they will come to fruition. I certainly cannot think of anything that has not been covered. I wish everyone concerned good luck with the plans and proposals.”

Resident, Waterloo Road

“Having been to the workshops, most local and some national interest groups have been represented; as well as others from the curious, to others with a desire to be involved and with a long standing association with the area.”

Resident, Shepherds Gate

“You're doing a good job! Thanks for keeping us in the loop!”

Resident, Broadwood Road

“The consultation process has had a clear (positive) effect on the proposals. Trust this will continue - keeping the impact on existing settlements and facilities to a minimum. Benefits to the peninsular are not necessarily improved access and further expansion of villages and work places.”

Resident, Marsh Crescent