

Introduction to the Statement of Community Involvement

This **Statement of Community Involvement** documents the comprehensive programme of public engagement and consultation that has taken place over many years from the early stages in the development of the proposals to feedback of the detailed plans.

This process is testimony to Bunting & Sons total commitment to inform the local and wider community about the Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre proposals and to listen to the public's views and responses in a positive and proactive manner. Bunting & Sons are grateful for the support as well as the many suggestions that have been received over this period, and from so many people. This invaluable feedback has been taken into account and enabled the proposals for Horkesley Park to evolve and be progressively enhanced.

The Statement of Community Involvement is set out in the following four sections:

- Presentation and Record of the 2007 Exhibition and Public Consultations
- Presentation and Record of the Horkesley Park Petition
- Presentation and Record of Letters of Support
- Presentation and Record of Supporting Information

Public Consultation in 2007

A four week programme of formal public engagement and consultation was undertaken to inform as many people as possible about the proposals for Horkesley Park, and to obtain their opinions and feedback, prior to finalising the plans for submission as a new planning application.

The following public engagement and consultation took place:

- Touring Information Roadshows (29 April - 9 May 2007)
- Exhibition and Public Consultations (10 – 12 May 2007)
- Site Exhibition and Show Rounds (14 – 26 May 2007)

The centrepiece of the programme was the Exhibition and Public Consultations which LDA Design and the supporting Team of Consultants conducted over three days in Colchester Town Hall and Great Horkesley Village Hall. The general public had the opportunity to meet and have consultations with many of the technical consultants and specialists responsible for the Environmental Impact Assessments and other professional studies relating to the proposals. Visitors were also able to meet and have consultations with the partners of Bunting & Sons. Close to 500 people took the opportunity to attend the Exhibition and Public Consultations during the 10 – 12 May 2007 and to complete questionnaires and return comments forms.

The purpose of the Touring Information Road shows was to inform people and seek their opinion on the proposals. This was further supported by Bunting & Sons hosting a Site Exhibition and Show Rounds. The Site Show Rounds gave visitors the opportunity to see as much as possible of the site in relation to the proposed masterplan.

Editors of local newspapers were also informed and requested to publish the information as well as advertisements placed. A Public Notice was also distributed door-to-door in Great Horkeley, Little Horkeley and Nayland to encourage the participation in the consultation process.

An Ongoing Process of Consultation

Since the public engagement and consultation programme in May 2007, Bunting and Sons has continued the process of community involvement and consultation by attending a large number of events to inform as many people as possible about the Horkeley Park proposals. These have ranged from farmers' markets to supermarkets, central town locations and local village events and shows. The public attending these events have been given the opportunity to sign a petition to register their support for Horkeley Park.

Positive Response and Enhancement of the Proposals

This comprehensive consultation process is evidence of Bunting & Sons' firm commitment to obtain as much feedback from the public as possible. The sharing of information and seeking opinion has been carefully considered and analysed and, where appropriate, embodied in the design proposals.

The comments and questionnaire forms received during the exhibitions and the public consultation process were thoroughly analysed and summarised, and all matters raised referred to the specialist consultants in order to consider the appropriate course of action, and to take these on board in the evolution and enhancement of the proposals.

Numerous refinements have been made to the proposals as a result of feedback from the consultation process. The most significant amendment is that the Main Building has been modified, and in addition to a more sympathetic architectural form and roofline, now includes a wildflower roof as well as the incorporation of a range of sustainability measures. A stronger 'sense of arrival' for pedestrians had also been incorporated into the design with a separate pedestrian approach to the main entrance enhanced by tree planting and formal gardens that complement the courtyard containment and framework of pleached trees and hedgerows within the main car park. A wide range of facilities has also been incorporated within the new buildings as well as opportunities and activities within the Country Park that complement the educational and rural conservation principles that lie at the heart of the Horkeley Park proposals.

Conclusion

It is heartening to note that of the returned questionnaire/comment forms for the 2007 public consultations, over 95% showed either 'support' or 'no objection' to the Horkeley Park proposals. Furthermore a supporting Petition contains 22,839 signatories and the feedback demonstrates overwhelming support for the proposals.

LDA Design concurs with Bunting & Sons' firm belief that the proposals for Horkeley Park truly reflect what the majority of the public would like to see created. The long period that has been allowed for ongoing open public engagement and consultation has therefore been time well spent.

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