

LANGLEY BUSINESS PARK REDEVELOPMENT

(PAPER 7)

Analysis of Planning for Real Day and implications for scheme development

1. Introduction

1.1 A Planning for Real day was successfully held on 5th December 2009. 177 questionnaires were ultimately completed. Some arrived late and as such 163 questionnaires were used for the statistical analysis included in the appendices to this report.

1.2 Residents were asked to evaluate four options:

- Do nothing
- Redevelop for one large industrial user
- Redevelop as an industrial estate
- Redevelop for mixed use

83.4% of residents support a mixed use development. The challenge in both physical and planning terms is to define the nature of the mixed use and the density of development such that it can be demonstrated that the scheme will deliver Local Solutions to Local Needs. The development will need to be compatible with prevailing planning policies. At this stage no assumptions can be made that all of the residents preferences can be accommodated.

1.3 The notes in this report pick out the key issues raised by residents. The commentary is informed by cross references to papers produced by Emery Partnership (Housing Demand, Shopping and Employment), Ironside Farrar (Ecology & Landscape) and AXIS (Transportation).

1.4 The Reiter Scragg site is subject to a Development Brief which was published by Macclesfield Borough Council and incorporated in the Local Plan. It is categorised as a major developed site in the Green Belt. This means that any redevelopment should:

- Have no greater impact than the existing development on openness of the Green Belt and where possible have less
- Contribute to the objectives of use of land in Green Belts
- Not exceed the height of existing buildings
- Not occupy a larger area of the site than existing buildings unless this would achieve a reduction in height which would benefit visual amenity.

The original Development Brief which was published in 2000 envisaged redevelopment at Langley Works for employment uses (B1, B2, B8), tourism and leisure related uses and affordable housing. Since its publication there have been changes in national policy and in market conditions to the extent that we have been encouraged by Cheshire East Council to revisit the Brief in consultation with the community.

2. Analysis of Respondents

- 2.1 57.7% of respondents were over 55 years old, 35% were aged 35-54 and 7.4% aged 16-34 years old.

3. Community and Leisure

- 3.1 170 respondents supported community and leisure facilities the most favoured of which were:
- Extension of footpaths/bridleways
 - Allotments
 - Community hall
 - Outdoor pursuits
 - Community theatre
 - Sports facilities
- 3.2 The footpath/bridleway extensions are an integral part of the Development Brief and must be included in the scheme.
- 3.3 Whilst allotments are strongly supported there are concerns about long term management and viability and the visual impact of ad hoc garden sheds etc in the landscape. Cheshire East Council officers have expressed concerns over viability and have suggested consideration be given to a community orchard and possibly a community growing space. The advantage of a community orchard is that it requires little maintenance and community growing space can be more self contained and organised than conventional allotments.
- 3.4 A stand alone community hall which could also incorporate a theatre, is likely to depend significantly on grants. If an older person's village is developed as part of the scheme, then the Brief would include a multi-purpose hall. This needs to be examined further with a view to developing such a hall which can service the wider communities of Langley and Sutton. If the hall could be integrated into the older person's village it would reduce the extent of dependency on grant.
- 3.5 An outdoor pursuits centre is compatible with the extension of footpaths and the accessibility of the site to open countryside, walks and rock climbing. The location is favoured by Macclesfield Youth Federation and there are prospects of obtaining support from Cheshire Peaks & Plains Housing Association and from commercial sponsorship. Such a centre also has a synergy with the development of sports pitches. There are issues concerning its location within the Green Belt but it could be integrated into the brown field area of the site.
- 3.6 Cheshire East Council officers report a shortage of junior football pitches. There is no sports pavilion in Langley. Langley Cricket Club has aspirations to expand their junior cricket and encourage links with other sports such as football to develop a local sports alliance. This would give the club Cardinal status from the point of view of accessing grants. This development idea can be pursued on the fields to the east end of the site beyond the reservoir closer to the cricket club.
- 3.7 The Borough has a shortage of deciduous woodland. Council officers have suggested that a community woodland could form part of the scheme together with a

green gym and trim trail. Woodland can be used to screen development and reduce visual impact as well as contributing to bio diversity and ecological sustainability.

- 3.8 The issue of a children's play area needs to be further discussed. It may be beneficial for the scheme to contribute to the existing play area in the village. It has been suggested however that consideration be given to a MUGA (multi use games area) for older children as part of any sports development.
- 3.9 There needs to be ongoing discussions with Langley Methodist Church if a Garden of Remembrance is to be incorporated in the scheme.

4. Employment

- 4.1 Only two thirds of the existing premises are let. These tend to be on short term low cost leases. Out of 60 employees on the site only one is resident in Langley and Sutton.

Existing uses include car restoration, throwsting, warehousing and manufacture of fibrous quilts.

The existing buildings with the exception of the original dye house and a small buildings previously used by Abbey Electrical are large span steel frame sheds with ease levels of 5-6m. The visual impact of these large sheds in the countryside is recognised in the Development Brief which supports development of smaller scale and darker coloured roofs.

- 4.2 Demographics indicate that 18% of the population work from home. This was reinforced at the Planning for Real day when 6 individuals expressed an interest in live-work units. 19 individuals have requested more information with a view to locating or generating employment on the site.

- 4.3 The main employment uses suggested by residents and being pursued are:

- Craft workshops
- Studios/gallery
- Small industrial units
- Small scale office/managed workspace

There was a general view that any industrial development should reduce HGV traffic and 35% are against any development which creates any further heavy traffic onto the roads. 53.4% are against any large scale new office buildings.

- 4.4 Financial appraisals have indicated that it is not viable to redevelop industrial premises on the site for rent. Any development therefore is likely to be offered for sale.
- 4.5 It is a requirement of the Development Brief that employment uses are incorporated. Cheshire East Council's recent decision to reactivate interest in developing land at South Macclesfield means that major industrial development is most likely to be attracted to that site. This means that the employment development of the Reiter Scragg site is only likely to be successful if it remains local and small scale. The advantages are that such a scheme would have less impact on open countryside and generate less industrial traffic than otherwise would be the case for other industrial development options.

- 4.6 Consideration needs to be given to how craft workshops can be made viable. There is potential for a community workshop with shared facilities but this is likely to require grant support unless it is owned by a community organisation. Ongoing discussions with those individuals who have expressed an interest in craft workshops is required.

It also needs to be noted that the concept of craft workshops and a gallery is compatible with the aspirations of organisations such as the Rossendale Trust to expand their facilities locally.

- 4.7 Whilst there is a clear mandate for some element of live-work the economic viability needs to be considered in more detail as they could be offered for both sale or rent. Live-work can also involve financial and management support from a housing association.
- 4.8 If an older person's village forms part of the scheme then it also introduces employment onto the site.
- 4.9 Existing industrial tenants have leases which must be respected but equally consultation is required with them to find out to what extent their needs could be integrated into any new development and in particular an assessment of the compatibility of their function with a residential development.

5. Housing

- 5.1 75.5% of respondents want to see more housing on the site. This can be categorised as:
- Family housing for sale – this is most desired because there is a deficiency of conventional family homes in Langley and residents report that whilst the cottages service first time buyers, young families have to leave the village as their families grow.
 - Older person's housing – there is a shortage of older person's housing in South Macclesfield. 25% of the population in Langley and Sutton are over 65 and this is going to double in the next 5 years.
 - Starter homes including housing for rent and for sale
 - Live-work
- 5.2 For arguments in support of housing to succeed there will have to be recognition of the constraints imposed by current planning policies. There also needs to be an understanding as to how much family housing could be developed and is necessary to generate funds to cross subsidise other elements of the development including open space.
- 5.3 Cheshire East Adult Services have expressed an interest in examining an older person's scheme based on the Avantage model similar to those produced at Handforth, Crewe and Middlewich. Local residents who support housing for older persons have expressed interest in a range of accommodation with a choice of tenure and a full support of ancillary spaces such as shop, bodycare suite, activity rooms etc.

There is a local presumption in favour of a high quality scheme.

Expansion of Rossendale Trust activities would be compatible with development adjacent an older person's village as well as introducing employment into the site.

- 5.4 Development studies indicate that a mixed use scheme involving all of these different types of housing, plus modest employment development and leisure facilities is physically feasible subject to negotiations with Cheshire East Council.
- 5.5 The North West Regional spatial Strategy sets out sustainability criteria against which any new housing development should be assessed. It is perhaps ironic that Langley in its current state, being a village of some 200+ dwellings would not meet the sustainability criteria even though it is one of the most popular residential destinations for home buyers. This is because the community lacks a shop, post office and school and has limited public transport.

One of the arguments in support of additional housing will be that it strengthens the long term stability of the village and in particular provides a better infrastructure for local schools, shopping and the retention of public transport.

- 5.6 The case for new family housing has been strongly made by the community. A number of people commented that the introduction of new family housing will reinvigorate an otherwise ageing community. A number of those looking for occupation of older person's housing recognise that by vacating existing family homes in Sutton and Langley this too would help to rebalance the demographic profile of the villages.

Amongst respondents, there were also a number who have moved from Langley and Sutton and wish to return as well as those younger people who prefer to stay locally when they require a new home.

- 5.7 The demand for social housing in South Macclesfield has been verified from Cheshire Peaks and Plains waiting list and can be summarised as follows:

	LANGLEY	SUTTON	BOSLEY	GAWSWORTH
Couple	9	69	11	69
Single	13	122	17	114
Older person (over 60)	8	95	13	82
House sharing	-	5	1	6
TOTAL	30	291	42	271

Of the total for Langley and Sutton alone (321) 32% of the demand is for older persons housing.

6. Health Care

- 6.1 Whilst there was strong support for various types of care facilities the strongest requirement was for a nursing home (46.2%) and a district nurse base (43.3%) which clearly reflects the demography of the area.
- 6.2 Discussions are required with the PCT on the whole issue of care and medical services. It is unlikely that there would be any support for major investment in new facilities because of existing health care policies to develop Primary Care from Sunderland Street. The development of an older person's village however does offer the opportunity for it to act as a hub for health visitor/district nurse and deliver care into the wider community.

- 6.3 Provision of pharmaceutical services is only likely to be financially viable if there was a local doctors surgery nearby but the supply of non-prescribed medicines through a local shop needs to be examined.

7. Commercial Leisure

- 7.1 There was no overwhelming support for any particular aspect of commercial leisure. Art gallery/studios was the strongest supported at 43.2%. This would need to be examined with a view to integrating into either the craft workshops or as a facility within an older person's village. It is not clear, at this stage, whether supporters of the gallery studio concept are able to make a financial investment to secure it.
- 7.2 The least supported community/leisure facility was a new pub (35% against) and a new country hotel (27% against). The nature of the public house/hotel market is such that it is unlikely that a major chain would be interested in a new build within such a small community. The integration of a café/restaurant within the village is however possible if it formed part of another facility.

8. Shopping

- 8.1 There is very strong support for the development of a new convenience store (67.5%) as well as support for a local centre including pharmacy.
- 8.2 Any retail development is unlikely to attract major investment because of location and the size of the local infrastructure. A convenience store which is part of a village centre immediately surrounded by the new housing has a better chance of success.
- 8.3 There needs to be sensitivity in ensuring that existing "shops" such as Sutton Post Office, the new Farm Shop and initiatives such as Food 4 Macc and Go Shop Local Company are not prejudiced by any new shop. There is scope for consultation to examine to what extent existing businesses could be participants in any new development within Langley.

9. Transportation

- 9.1 Transportation studies are being undertaken by Axis. Although it would be difficult for objections to be sustained for any redevelopment which envisages HGV usage because of previous history, the reality is that developments which are biased towards residential rather than employment have less impact on the local highways network.
- 9.2 23.3% of residents hardly ever use the local bus service but 12 – 15% of respondents used it at least once per week.
- 9.3 There was strong support to reduce HGV traffic to and from Langley and also to improve local walking and cycling connections.
- 9.4 88.3% used a car for their weekly food shop and cars are the dominant form of transport for journeys to work, leisure/days out and visits to doctors.

10. Bio-diversity and Environment

- 10.1 82.8% favoured a change from industrial use to mixed use with over 70% aspiring to improve visual appearance, provision of useful extra green space and public amenity and improve walkways to countryside.
- 10.2 66.3% favoured new tree planting which underpins the argument for community woodland suggested by officers of Cheshire East and equally 64.4% would value more public open space.
- 10.3 Studies to date indicate that there is Japanese knotweed on the site and this requires an action plan.
- 10.4 An initial environmental appraisal has identified the following key site assets that need protection or enhancement:
- Avoid adverse impact on the Bollin Brook and catchment
 - Protect and enhance established woodland
 - Protect and enhance bio-diversity including protected species
 - Protect and enhance watercourses, ground water and surface water through appropriate management
 - Protect and enhance cultural/heritage elements
 - Minimise adverse impact on local communities
- 10.5 Further ecological surveys will be undertaken in 2010. The development is able to provide for improvements to habitat for the benefit of reptiles, bats and birds. This can be undertaken by new trees, boundary planting and improvements to hedges.
- 10.6 Development studies have so far indicated that there is little incentive to reopen the culverted part of Bollin Brook. The Brook is virtually a fast flowing ditch at low level and for an extensive length is within private ownership. Deculverting would have an impact lower down the stream and at this stage does not appear to deliver any particular benefits for the development or improved amenity.
- 10.7 Previous tree planting on the site has included species which are not indigenous to the area such as Lombardy Poplar. Consideration needs to be given for their replacement.