

RAF DAWS HILL, WYCOMBE

*SUMMARY STATEMENT OF
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT*

*BDOR Limited
For Wycombe District Council
and Taylor Wimpey*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of the work undertaken in preparing the planning application for RAF Daws Hill there was a planned programme of community involvement. In order to explain the proposals in respect of the involvement work, it has been necessary to keep a thorough record – an audit trail – from the start of the commissioned involvement process. This report and the accompanying File/CD describe that audit trail by covering what took place, the background to it and the main results of each event or stage. The final part of the report includes a commentary on the relationship between consultation results and the developing and final proposals. (Note that the terms ‘involvement’ and ‘consultation’ are used almost interchangeably in this report. This reflects national and local usage.)

1.2 The overall Statement of Community Involvement is in two parts. This **Summary Statement** sets the scene and describes the process in broad terms, focusing on the overall pattern of work, the main activities, key results and the flow from initial issues to the final proposals. It is backed up by the second part, an **Appendix** that contains specific and full reports from workshops, actual results from exhibitions, details of publicity, ad hoc responses and so forth. This is all the verbatim, raw material to which this report is the summary.

1.3 The report was put together by BDOR Limited, the company appointed to plan and partly deliver the involvement programme. This was, unusually, a joint commission between Wycombe District Council and Taylor Wimpey. It must be noted however that BDOR Limited were not appointed until some of the general project work was well underway and a first main event had taken place. BDOR’s role covered (a) assistance with designing and managing the overall programme, (b) designing, running and reporting on two events initiated by Wycombe District Council (WDC) and (c) drafting this report. BDOR had no involvement in the detailed design or delivery of other events.

1.4 This report covers the stages up to the adoption by the WDC Cabinet of the Development Brief for the site. From this point on the consultation work will be the sole responsibility of TW. A subsequent Statement, incorporating all that follows, will be produced for TW and will be submitted with their planning application.

1.5 Where links are made to items in the Appendix they are shown as follows: **ITEM X**.

2. KEY POINTS FROM THE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 The RAF Daws Hill site was mentioned in the WDC Core Strategy (2008), with an assumption of a capacity of 500 dwellings, but it was not formally allocated. It was included in the Delivery and Site Allocations DPD Update (2009) with a guideline of approximately 483 (net) which is based on a 550 dwellings (gross) figure but with an assumption about demolition of existing dwellings on the site.

2.2 In July 2011 WDC agreed a Position Statement about RAF Daws Hill. The Statement also mentioned the adjacent site – Abbey Barn South - and concluded that this other site should not be released any earlier (it is included in the Core Strategy as a ‘reserve site’ for later release when needed but that attention should be paid in the planning for RAF Daws Hill to its potential future integration. The Position Statement is in the Appendix as **ITEM 1**.

2.3 Later in 2011 the site was bought from the MoD by Taylor Wimpey (TW). They and their team then started a series of what proved to be regular meetings with WDC officers as part of their pre-application work. This was formalised into a signed Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). However, this was not signed until February 2012 so, in terms of the overall consultation process and some of the actual activities described therein, this is partly retrospective. The PPA is in the Appendix as **ITEM 2**.

2.4 At around this time, once TW had started work (and had run an initial involvement event), the WDC planning officers decided that they needed to produce a formal Development Brief for the site. At that time it was not certain whether this would be a stand-alone Development Brief or be a Supplementary Planning Document and hence become part of, or linked to, the whole suite of Local Development Framework documents. (It was only at around this point that BDOR's work commenced.)

2.5 It was only once work was underway on RAF Daws Hill that work started on 'broad brush' transport proposals for the whole Southern Quadrant of Wycombe, and various papers were also published by both District and County about this, all with relevance to the scale and form of development of RAF Daws Hill. One example is in the Appendix as **ITEM 3**.

2.6 During this pre-application period the Government published its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There may be issues emerging from this that could affect how the policy aspects of the project are judged but that is not for this report. There are implications from both the NPPF and the Localism Act for the involvement work; these are covered in the next section.

2.7 The Localism Act also introduced new, lower level forms of plans called Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). As soon as the Act came into force, the Daws Hill Residents Group (see later) decided to apply to prepare a NDP for their area. Even if the group have been able to start work on their NDP before the planning application for RAF Daws Hill is submitted, the NDP is extremely unlikely to be completed and formally made before the application is determined. It is therefore unlikely that any of the aspirations or policies emerging from that plan-making process would be advanced enough to significantly affect the application or be used in assessing its merits. This issue is picked up again in section 4.

3. REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 When the work started there were no actual requirements on the applicant/developer - Taylor Wimpey - to undertake involvement; in line with legislation at that time the Wycombe Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) could only encourage this. Nevertheless TW chose to do so. Involvement in the parallel Development Brief work, a WDC responsibility, is also not mandatory but the SCI states that it should be done. The planning team therefore also chose to do this.

3.2 When the Localism Act was passed in April 2012, this introduced a formal requirement for managed involvement by applicants on projects of the size of RAF Daws Hill (i.e. any site of over 200 houses). This part of the Act is not yet in force because the Regulations have not been published, though they are expected in the early autumn (2012). It is uncertain whether or how this requirement might apply to the RAF Daws Hill project because the majority of work was started before the Act came into force (some requirements of the Localism Act are being applied retrospectively but not all.) The Act outlines some extremely basic standards for such involvement summarised as:

- publicising the opportunity for consultation widely,
- providing timely opportunities for consultation or collaboration and
- taking account of responses.

3.3 It is not clear what elaboration of this will be in the Regulations or whether they will clarify whether the requirement means that pre-application consultation is a material consideration. This approach is however reinforced by strong encouragement in the NPPF on pre-application involvement, especially on design. Where this is done, the NPPF suggests that the application should be "*treated more favourably*".

3.4 As of now, it is believed that the government does not intend to elaborate principles or standards any further. In the absence of these, reference can be made to some quasi-statutory

versions. One of relevance here is the list used by the Homes and Communities Agency. Good engagement should be ...

- Able to make a difference. The activity should have a clear purpose and be able to have an impact or achieve change. It may also make a difference to all those involved in terms of confidence or skills development.
- Voluntary. People must choose to be involved. They can be encouraged or incentivised to do so, but it cannot be compulsory.
- Transparent, honest and clear. This applies to the purpose of the engagement, the limits of what can (and can't) be changed, who is involved and how they can do so, and what happens as a result.
- Adequately resourced to manage the process and deliver on the results
- Involving the right people. Activities need to be representative and inclusive, depending on the purpose of the engagement, and support groups perceived to be excluded from such activity.
- Accessible. Ensure that no one is excluded through problems of physical access to venues, through inappropriate timing and provides support – such as childcare and transport - for people who need it to participate.
- Accountable. Activities and processes need to be accountable to all those involved through good record-keeping and feedback.
- Powerful. Engagement initiatives should have sufficient power to achieve the agreed objectives.
- Learns and develops. The approach should seek to facilitate mutual learning and development among all those involved.

3.5 In legal terms as proven through the courts, the only standard is known as the 'Sedley criteria'. These are that ...

- consultation is undertaken while proposals are still at a formative stage,
- adequate information is provided for consultees to properly respond and
- conscientious consideration is given to the responses to the consultation.

3.6 The Wycombe SCI provides some minimal standards for good involvement. An abstract of key points from the SCI is in the Appendix as **ITEM 4**.

3.7 The above commitments are reinforced in the Planning Performance Agreement (ITEM 3), which states (inter alia) the following:

"The Lead Partners agree that the aim of the consultation programme is to debate and agree as much of the content of the proposal as is possible with as many interested parties as possible. The consultation programme is also a means by which public opinion on the proposals can be gathered and responded to wherever possible.

Lead Partners will work together to agree a detailed consultation programme to assist in the delivery of the project. The consultation programme will set out the responsibilities of the Lead Partners in funding, coordinating and facilitating this part of the project. It is envisaged that the developer will, in consultation with the local planning authority, coordinate and implement the majority of the consultation programme with the assistance of the District and County Council where appropriate.

The consultation will involve pre-application consultation by the developer with the following:

- *The local community, including but not limited to relevant action groups and Parish Councils;*
- *The local Planning Authority;*
- *Relevant departments with the District and County Councils (eg. housing and education);*
- *Environment Agency;*

- *Highways Agency;*
- *Natural England and relevant wildlife and ecology groups;*
- *Statutory undertakers."*

4. THE AGREED PROCESS

4.1 BDOR limited were brought in during January 2012 to help to design and partly deliver the involvement activities. (It was only much later that the commission was expanded to include the preparation of this semi-independent report.) BDOR's involvement started after TW had run their first main consultation event and TW had in mind at that stage an outline programme of further events. At the time there was no overall plan for the consultation and the WDC officers were still considering the need for, role of, specific status for and appropriate consultation on their Development Brief. The first stage of BDOR's work was therefore to try to help both main parties agree the overall programme (as committed to in the PPA).

4.2 It is important to point out that, as well as helping to plan the overall programme, our role was to prepare, lead and report on the two workshops set up by WDC – see sections 5.2 and 5.3. We were not asked to help in any way with the planning and delivery of any of the TW events – see sections 5.1, 5.4 and 5.6 (and also see 1.4 about subsequent stages)

4.3 However, in line with good principles of involvement, the two main parties were not alone. There was both a need and an opportunity, through the already existing Daws Hill Reference Group (see later for details), for the approach to be shared at least minimally with some of the key stakeholders. Though that opportunity was limited, the fact that it was done at all (it remains the exception) is important and valuable.

4.4 Agreeing the programme was complicated by the following factors:

- The usual procedure on any large site is sequential. It starts when a Development Brief is produced and (if appropriate) adopted or endorsed and only then does any potential applicant start their pre-application masterplanning, design and involvement work in line with that Brief. On this occasion TW stated their intention to submit an application in autumn 2012, leaving no time for a sequential process, although WDC officers felt it was necessary to also have a Brief in place.
- Questions around the capacity of the site were unclear at the outset (see 2.1). This led to a continuing debate throughout the involvement process about the relevant policy criteria, especially the site's capacity both in its own right and in relation to traffic and transport implications.
- It was recognised early on that any development of the site would have significant effects on traffic and transport issues across the whole of the Southern Quadrant. This resulted in work to try to engage both the technical work and the consultation work on the site itself with that for the wider Southern Quadrant area.
- Less significant but also needing to be mentioned is the role of Abbey Barn South (ABS) and its possible development. Issues were in the air at the start of the involvement work not just about planning for links in the future should ABS be developed but even about whether that other site could valuably be brought forward and both sites developed at the same time to a shared overall masterplan. This was exacerbated by pressure from the consultants to the owners and consultants of the ABS site to bring that project forward.

4.5 Discussion about the process proceeded over several meetings as there was also some urgency in setting up a first event. The key challenges were to:

- meet the demanding timetable,
- get an agreed Development Brief before the project plans were finalised and
- make progress with the site on its own while also making progress on the site its wider Southern Quadrant setting (not just in terms of traffic but also possible land uses).

4.6 The initially agreed process is illustrated on the diagram overleaf. By way of explanation:

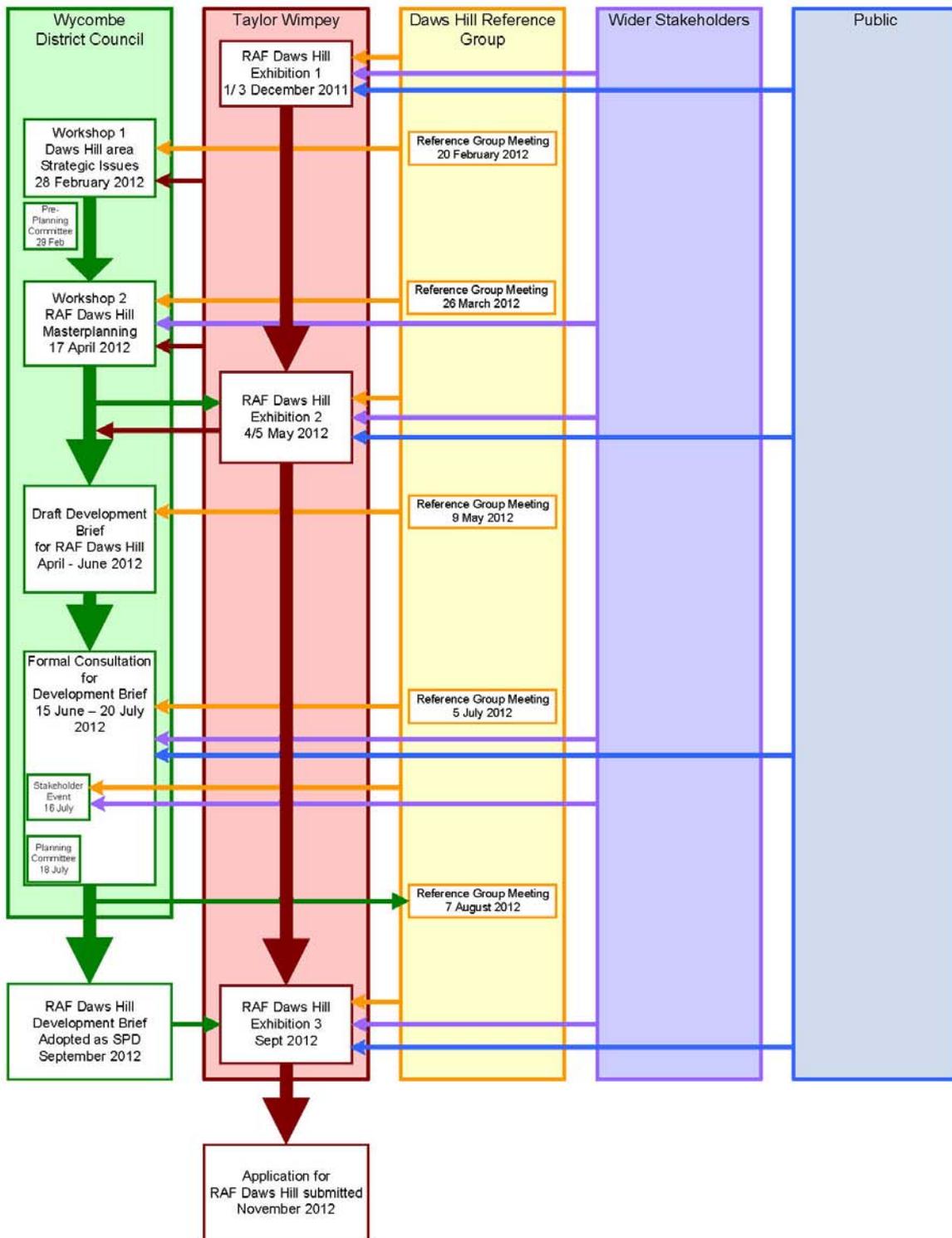
- The first two vertical columns refer to the work of WDC officers and the TW team – this was a joint exercise.
- The next three columns refer to the three main targets for involvement:
 - One is the Daws Hill Reference Group (DHRG). This group met throughout the process and is now continuing to meet. By definition that is a relatively small group but they have been involved throughout. (Not all DHRG meetings are shown on the diagram.)
 - The next column - 'Wider Stakeholders' - includes the DHRG members and, according to the activity at any particular stage, also involves representatives of other relevant groups and organisations as key stakeholders. They were to meet at specific times for topic-specific and stage-specific events.
 - The final column is the general public, invited to contribute in various ways at drop-in sessions, electronically, via representations etc., either on an invited basis or as and when they wished.
- The boxes show the main activities, stages or events and, via the arrows, who is involved.
- Ad hoc meetings took place at various times between, for example, the Daws Hill Residents' Group and the TW team or between the WDC team and key elected members.
- There were also two project-specific websites open to the public. One was a few pages within the overall WDC website, the other was set up and run solely for the purposes of this project by DPP, TW's main consultants.

Details of all these activities follow in section 5.

The later stages were adapted slightly after the diagram was discussed between the teams and shared with the DHRG. (These changes are also elaborated later.)

4.7 The decision by local people to start to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan might have diverted attention inappropriately from the main process as described above (as has happened elsewhere); people could, for example, have ceased to engage in the main programme. There are no signs that this occurred and local people and key local groups appeared to retain their focus on, and give their time to, this process.

Daws Hill Area Engagement Process



30/07/12

5. **ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

5.1 **Exhibition 1 (TW)**

5.1.1 This event was run by Taylor Wimpey completely on their own (it was prior to the joint agreement). It was held on the 1st and 3rd December 2011 at the Daws Hill Site Office. 1600 invitations were sent out. The event took the form of an exhibition of ideas and issues, along with some general background information, supported by a short questionnaire. A separate comments book was also provided.

5.1.2 250 people attended over the two days. 57 questionnaires were returned. 10 attendees made notes in the comments books (none of which added anything significantly to the questionnaire results as below).

5.1.3 The questionnaire included 9 questions (sometimes more than one per topic), all based on aspects of the latest (at the time) Position Statement. The key results per topic were as follows:

- **Green Infrastructure:** There was strong support for outdoor sports pitches, play space, parkland/semi-natural spaces and informal public amenity space. There was also some support for allotments. Play space and parkland/semi-natural spaces were ranked the highest.
- **Community Facilities:** There was strong support for some facilities on site, less support for some being provided off-site. The most strongly supported on-site facilities were a doctor's surgery, school and community hall. There was less support for a sports hall and most of those responding about the inclusion of a church rejected the idea.
- **Employment Uses:** When asked "is there a need for employment uses at the site?" two thirds said 'no'. If there were to be employment uses, almost all those who responded favoured (roughly equally) small and medium-sized business units and home/work units.
- **Neighbourhood Centre:** People were not asked whether they wanted one or not (this flowed from the earlier community uses question), only where it might best be located. Just over half favoured a central location, others were split between a front of site location and a back of site location. In terms of what to include in the centre there was very strong support for a convenience shop. None of the others – takeaway, hairdresser/beauty, clothes or food and drink uses gained much support at all.
- **Transport:** The highest ranking initiative on traffic and transport was clearly improvements to congestion. Improving school congestion ranked well, as did improving public transport services. There was some support for better integration with the local network.

5.1.4 In a presentation to the DHRG after this event TW stated their conclusions and intentions as follows:

- **Green Infrastructure:** Provision to be made for a neighbourhood green (including a LEAP), public amenity space, sports pitches, allotments and improvements to related public access.
- **Community Facilities:** Provision to be made for a community facility, a one-form entry primary school and a convenience store.
- **Employment:** This would not be provided but there would be a 'high proportion' of home/work units.
- **Neighbourhood Centre:** The preference at that time was for a centrally located centre and TW would include (which overlaps with community facilities above) 4 units with several options for use.
- **Transport:** No conclusions or suggestions were offered on transport.

5.1.5 The powerpoint presentation containing these results is in the Appendix as **ITEM 5**. The summary report from which the results outlined above were drawn was not sent back to all those signing in. It was however made available on the project website (see 5.8).

5.2 Workshop 1: Semi Strategic Issues (WDC)

5.2.1 This was the first event to be run with some level of collaboration between WDC – and BCC Highways – and TW. It was held in The Hub in Wycombe on the evening of 28th February 2012. The event was planned jointly between WDC and BCC with some input from TW. It was run by BDOR Limited with some group facilitators being provided via WDC. It was held at this time and in this way because, as in the event report (**ITEM 6** in the Appendix):

“It was felt that it would be very difficult to proceed to the initially proposed masterplanning workshop while people felt so unsure as to whether the site could be developed at all because of traffic challenges. Taking this further, any narrowing down of the range of what might be appropriate for the site in terms of traffic and transport would of course then affect the masterplanning work.”

5.2.2 Attendance was by invitation only, kept to elected members and DHRG members because of the (justifiably) complex nature of what needed to be discussed. 18 members and local representatives attended, as did the core TW, BCC and WDC teams; in fact members of both main teams were participants in the group work. Other District and County officers and TW team members also attended as observers/helpers.

5.2.3 Although the focus was very much on traffic and transport across the whole of the Southern Quadrant (explaining the term ‘semi-strategic’) there was an opportunity, through an informal and active start, for participants to add any comments they wished about other infrastructure elements such as schools and health provision. The core session involved groups working through choice-making about possible actions, initiatives, changes for (a) the RAF Daws Hill site alone then (b) RAF Daws Hill plus Abbey Barn South then (c) the Southern Quadrant as a whole. This was done using maps and prepared post-its, termed ‘starters’ and relating to specific initiatives (known and new; blank post-its being available for new suggestions).

5.2.4 It was known in advance that this would be a challenging set of tasks for all involved, especially during one evening session. This proved to be the case; some groups focusing almost entirely on the site itself, most not addressing the potential link to Abbey Barn South and only a few completing a look at the whole Southern Quadrant.

5.2.5 The full report (ITEM 6 as above) contains all the many choices suggested (though none could be termed ‘agreed’) but BDOR later produced a shorter summary report (**ITEM 7** in the Appendix). The key points from this were as follows:

- There was good support for several of the Daws Hill Starters, some support for several others.
- There was less support for the additional Daws Hill only list.
- No group really had enough time to consider the Southern Quadrant list properly but what results emerged were quite negative about many of the initiatives.
- There were also some questions about whether any such list would have a significant enough impact.
- There was discussion about all schools-related initiatives and, although not all were widely agreed, there was agreement about the significance of this general issue.
- Parking restrictions to address school pick-up/drop-off were however agreed by almost all, even if there was no clarity on exactly where such restrictions should apply.
- There was good support for a bus hub and school drop-off on the RAF Daws Hill site.
- There was some caution about the effectiveness of Travel Plans generally but good support for such plans for all nearby schools together.
- Different views were expressed about creating, as part of the RAF Daws Hill project, any road links or potential links to Abbey Barn South.

- On the Daws Hill Only list there was good support for a bus link to the station, a bus Hub at Handy Cross, enabling home working and some support for including more non-car generating uses (retirement homes were mentioned).
- Only Group 1 gave serious concern to adding in Abbey Barn South and they added bus services and one set of junction improvements.
- The few Southern Quadrant initiatives that may have secured support include the widening of the bus lay-by and providing on-site drop-off at John Hampden and Wycombe High Schools, upgrading of the M40 J3, linking traffic signals together and perhaps upgrading the Marlow Road/Desborough Avenue junction.
- There was caution about improved/new cyclepaths because of practical issues (road widths/slopes) and their likely cost benefit (are they worth it).
- There was some agreement about the need to provide two access points to RAF Daws Hill but concern about how and where that might be done.
- There was also caution about any road, and especially Lane, widening.
- People felt they needed to know more about the Hub before they could make further comments.

5.2.6 The full report of the workshop (ITEM 6) was sent to all participants and those sending apologies. It was also placed on the WDC website. The summary report (ITEM 7) was produced for joint team use.

5.3 Workshop 2: Masterplanning (WDC)

5.3.1 This event, planned to follow soon after the semi-strategic event above, was held on the evening of 17th April 2012 at John Hampden School. It was developed and delivered by BDOR with input from TW, WDC and BCC. The main aim of the event was to provide a wide range of stakeholders with the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the early masterplanning stage.

5.3.2 Attendance was by invitation only, therefore including all those invited to the semi-strategic workshop but also others from local and area-wide groups and organisations. Other District and County officers also attended, mainly as helpers (eg. someone from Education) but some also participated if they had not been otherwise involved to date. 47 people attended as participants, supported by the WDC and TW core team members who also acted in a semi-facilitation role to support groups.

5.3.3 The main part of the evening people worked in small groups tasked with commenting on and perhaps (in their terms) improving the very first draft plan produced for the session by the TW team. That plan was not the only group resource; they were also given a copy of the full tree survey (from WDC), an overall constraints plan (from TW) and a summary (by BDOR and WDC) of key points from the latest Position Statement. Groups were encouraged to make notes as well as annotate the draft plan. During the mid-evening break participants were encouraged to talk to key people about specific issues such as the local centre and transport, using and taking forward material from the earlier workshop.

5.3.4 In order to give people some sense of what others had done there was a short but unrecorded summarising session before the break. Following the break the second group work task dug deeper into issues of housing layout and design, using a prompt sheet prepared by WDC and BDOR. There was another short summarising session at the end of this second main stage.

5.3.5 The full report of Workshop 2 is in the Appendix as **ITEM 8**. As before, BDOR produced a reflective summary report. This is in the Appendix as **ITEM 9**, but almost all of it is included here as it sets the scene particularly well for progress by that stage and for later. The summary stated the following:

Masterplanning Key Issues

Two sets of issues of major significance emerged, shielding a third. The two main ones were:

- **Tree retention:** There was a very strong feeling from all, in all groups, that the number of trees proposed to be retained by Taylor Wimpey was unacceptable. It is fair to say that everybody expects many more trees to be kept than were shown.
- **Traffic:** Although the drawings and text focused on the site and very immediate traffic/transport proposals, concerns were raised by many about traffic volumes generally as a result of the proposed scale of development and about the supposed inadequacy of the current road system, or the future proposed wider area system, to cope with the likely numbers. In some cases it was suggested (as has happened earlier) that no development at all is possible for the site because of traffic issues.

The two issues above lead to or shield another major issue: the clear belief from many that the generally stated figure of 550 houses is unachievable because (mainly) of traffic issues and the actual developable area if many more (all) trees are to be retained. There is a clear feeling that there is as yet no adequate explanation of how the given number can be accommodated at all, let alone appropriately.

Three more specific aspects generated regular comments, but with varying views expressed:

- **Location of the Centre:** Five groups commented on this as follows, with no clear preference emerging. Notes suggest that those in the other 5 groups were happy with the inclusion of some form of centre and generally happy with its location as shown.
- **Location of Employment Uses:** Nine groups commented in some way. 4 groups agreed generally with a south east location. The other 5 groups considered that no employment uses are needed or appropriate.
- **Accesses:** Once again, there were differing views from the four groups making an explicit comment, 3 suggesting that 2 entry points are needed, one suggesting one entry point only.

Other Points

- Noise issues were mentioned quite often, presumably related to those parts of the site nearest Daws Hill Lane and the M40.
- Air quality near the M40 was suggested as a reason not to have allotments there.
- Locating employment uses to the South East was seen as a way to deal with issues of noise and air quality.
- Those groups which commented suggested that play provision should be spread around the development, not centralised.
- Several groups suggested more provision for the elderly (reflecting the surrounding area) and more diversity of type of provision.
- The Care Home was generally welcomed (even though several picked up that this is in part a ploy to deliver some 'employment').
- There need to be good buffers to the surrounding areas.
- Two groups suggested the need to bring buses actually into the site.

Housing Layout and Design

The key points here were often more common between groups than in the previous sessions:

- Reduce densities
- Create the feel of a 'Garden Suburb'
- High standards of parking are crucial
- Spread the affordable housing around – pepper-potting not ghettos

- Ensure a mix of designs and styles
- Ensure a series of different character areas that reflect the character of the surrounding area
- Keep to a maximum of two storeys and include few/no flats
- Use the topography but with care (to avoid damaging views in)
- Most people wanted traditional, locally distinctive materials and styles, a few wanted exemplar contemporary design
- High quality, intense landscaping
- Retain some of the 'bungalows'

Once again, much of this relates back to questions or anxieties about achieving an appropriate development of up to 550 houses.

5.3.6 The full report of the workshop (ITEM 9) was sent to all participants and those sending apologies. It was also placed on the WDC website. The summary report (ITEM 10) was produced for joint team use.

5.4 Exhibition 2 (TW)

5.4.1 This took place again at the Daws Hill Site office during the 3rd, 4th and 5th May 2012. There were different opening times on different days to maximise opportunities for attendance. Advertisements were placed in two local papers and invitations were sent to the same list of people/businesses etc. as was used for the first exhibition. The exhibition boards were placed on the project website (TW's) with an interactive survey.

5.4.2 The aim of this second exhibition was to update residents and stakeholders on progress since Exhibition 1. To that end a handout was produced outlining the key stages and results to illustrate how previous stages had informed the material on display.

5.4.3 The main display included boards covering:

- An overall vision for the project
- Background material, eg. tree constraints and landscape influences
- An initial overall masterplan
- Ideas for traffic/transport solutions
- Ideas for location of the neighbourhood centre
- Some character studies, eg. of possible 'serpentine lanes'

5.4.4 As before the main format for responses was via a questionnaire. This was limited to questions on just the neighbourhood centre and transport. The questionnaire is in the Appendix as **ITEM 10**.

5.4.5 236 people were registered in as attendees to the event over the 3 sessions. 68 questionnaires were returned, none of which answered all questions. A further 83 comments were received from the comments books, email and post and also on the final section of the questionnaire.

5.4.6 The key results from the questionnaire and other responses were as follows:

- **Walking and Cycling:** No clear preference emerged although upgrading the existing right of way and introducing a signalised crossing on Daws Hill Lane were ranked highest.
- **Public Transport:** A school bus hub on site was regarded as noticeably the most important improvement for respondents. There was also good support for increasing the frequency of the no.36 bus service and including Wycombe rail station on its route.
- **Highway Improvements:** The strongest support was for extra capacity for left turning from Daws Hill Lane onto Marlow Hill. Creating a school drop-off/park-and-walk and including a new site access roundabout also secured good support.

- **Neighbourhood Centre:** In general this confirmed the earlier result in favour of a central location, but not as strongly as before. A location at the back of the site received very little support.

5.4.7 A report of overall results (**ITEM 11** in the Appendix) was produced by TW but not sent to all who registered. However, the report states that *“the outcome of this exhibition will be available for attendees at the next exhibition and will also be shared via the Daws Hill pages on WDC’s website”* (but not the TW website).

5.5 *Development Brief (WDC)*

5.5.1 WDC undertook a semi-formal consultation on their Draft Development Brief in June and July 2012. The draft brief was based on the earlier Position Statement but updated in response to issues and ideas raised during consultation before June/July. It is important to note that the draft brief went out for consultation in a shared process with the Draft Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy.

5.5.2 Conventional methods were used in part for this consultation – website promotion and on-line response form and mailings to a large number of statutory and non-statutory consultees. However, WDC also put on an exhibition and arranged a workshop. The exhibition involved a series of panels covering the same material as in the draft brief.

5.5.2 Representations were received from residents (mostly living near the site), from area-wide bodies, agents for developers, agents for other WDC departments and agents for the Daws Hill Residents Group (those appointed to assist with the proposed Neighbourhood Plan). Around 120 resident representations were received, many covering several issues. The full list of local resident representations is included in the Appendix as **ITEM12**. It also highlights WDC’s initial responses. (WDC retains the full details of all representations made.)

5.5.3 The issues addressed most commonly in the representations were as follows:

- Trees
- Housing density and numbers
- Business use
- Location of local centre
- Transport
- Car parking
- Existing buildings
- Infrastructure capacity

The report includes amendments suggested by the team on all topics except business use, which would be subject to further review.

5.5.4 The workshop was held on 16th July 2012 at Wycombe High School for Girls. It was designed and delivered by WDC staff. It was held largely as a result of concerns about transport issues from the DHRG and they had an opportunity at one of their meetings to discuss how the event might best be run. All DHRG members were invited to attend and invitations were also sent to other elected members in affected wards, the 3 schools in the area and additional representatives from the main local Residents Associations. 22 people attended the workshop, as did 7 of the WDC and BCC staff teams.

5.5.5 The event started with a presentation and a question and answer session. The first workshop stage was about the proposals for the whole Southern Quadrant, although most discussion (given the group membership) focused on the RAF Daws Hill site and adjacent/nearby roads. Responses varied, some small groups being content in general with the proposals, others querying them in basic ways. The second workshop stage focused on the Development Brief. This was curtailed because of overrun with earlier stages so groups only had

a short time to draw overall conclusions about 6 key objectives in the Brief. 4 of the objectives secured full support with some minor qualifications. 2 objectives were either supported or generated more substantive queries. None were rejected. The report is in the Appendix as **ITEM 13**.

5.5.6 On the basis of the results from all consultations, the WDC team drew up a paper for Cabinet to suggest ways in which the draft Brief could be amended. This was approved by Cabinet. The paper about the changes is in the Appendix as **ITEM 14** but the points in the main list are worth including here:

- *The plan responds to the concerns raised during the consultation regarding character, density and tree retention.*
- *It pulls back development from Daws Hill Lane to allow a greater sense of wooded frontage.*
- *It defines an area of low density more spacious residential character of around 20 -25 dwellings per hectare (ha) that would be interwoven between existing trees. This would cover the frontage along Daws Hill Lane and extend into the site along the boundary with Wallingford Gardens. This boundary would have some new tree planting in the longer rear gardens of the new houses to bolster the existing tree belt and ensure a sensitive relationship between the existing dwellings.*
- *The guidance in the Brief would be for the rest of the residential area, as an overall average, to accommodate at least 30 dwellings per ha recognising that areas constrained by existing trees would create incidental open space linked together by a recreational footpath. This footpath, connecting with existing footpaths, can create a circular route through the development. Beyond the incidental open space would be the more substantial areas of open space which will provide a setting to the more built up parts of the site.*
- *The 'Village' Centre has been reduced in size and repositioned so that it will be less prominent in views from Daws Hill Lane forming part of the new street that runs into the site and potentially linking with the business village. It will be integrated with the adjacent spacious residential area and be "low key" in nature.*
- *The Business Village has been reduced in size and located further away from Daws Hill Lane and the north/ south footpath. The units will be small in scale and have a more rural character being set in a high quality wooded landscape made up of existing woodland and newly planted trees.*
- *The route of the new street through the development has been modified to retain more of the important existing trees and reflects a less formal and more 'organic' approach to the layout.*
- *It is expected that the total number of dwellings will not exceed 500 taking into account the tree constraints on the site.*

5.6 Daws Hill Reference Group (WDC)

5.6.1 The Daws Hill Reference Group was set up by WDC in time for an opening meeting in September 2011. It then met almost bi-monthly through into 2012 and it continues to meet. The initial membership was intended to include 6 elected members from WDC (2 from Planning, 4 local), and 10 representatives of key groups, some local to the site, some likely to be affected by any development and some with a broader geographic remit. One list is included in the Appendix as **ITEM15** but some details changed as the project proceeded. Officers of WDC were also named as members of the group and, as relevant, other WDC and BCC officers were invited to attend and contribute. There was some initial uncertainty about whether or not TW ought to be at all meetings, although it was accepted that they would probably need to contribute to all or most. People representing the Abbey Barn South site were also invited to attend on at least one occasion.

5.6.2 The meetings were held in evenings at the WDC offices and were relatively formally run. Most meetings include a general update on progress and some particular presentation about a

topical issue, eg, transport surveys and results. There was usually a reasonable opportunity for people to make points and ask questions.

5.6.3 No simple summarising of the meetings is possible but minutes of the first 6 are included in the Appendix as **ITEM 16 (A to F)**.

5.7 Websites (Both)

5.7.1 WDC had included a whole section about RAF Daws Hill on their website from the informal start of the process in autumn 2011, although earlier papers would have been available before that, certainly about overall Southern Quadrant issues. The website was (and is) regularly updated. As of summer 2012 its main explanatory text commented on the current planning position, the pre-application process, the Daws Hill Residents Group application to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and consultation on the Development Brief. Anybody accessing the site could also download key documents such as the main Position Statement, the DHRG membership and meeting minutes, TW responses (eg. to the Position Statement), information on traffic/transport issues across the whole Southern Quadrant, meeting minutes, presentations, reports and technical documents. This content was extremely thorough. There was no direct opportunity via the website for people to comment or contribute to the planning process (those opportunities came other ways, see 5.5 above for example). The site does not appear to have a link to the TW site, see below.

5.7.2 The other website was set up and is managed by TW's main consultants, DPP. It contains basic information only and usually only information from the latest stage of work (eg. exhibition 2) rather than offering, as does the WDC one, a thorough long term record. Although there is a page entitled 'Have Your Say' this does not offer that opportunity on this page; that is available on the Home page. There is also a link on the Home page to the WDC website. The boards displayed at Exhibition 2 were placed on the website with an opportunity for people to complete an interactive questionnaire.

5.8 TW Meetings with Daws Hill Residents

5.8.1 Members of the TW team had two meetings with the Daws Hill Residents Group, one in January 2012 and one in May 2012. Both parties produced minutes of these meetings. They are in the Appendix as **ITEM 17 (A to D)**.

6. EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS

By definition, this section and the following section are more personal commentary by the report's authors, not just straight reporting. They are therefore different to the rest of the report and should be viewed in that light.

6.1 Overall Process

6.1.1 There were various factors that made for a challenging start to the consultation on this project:

- The quantum of development was unclear; it varied between 483 and 600 houses (ending with a ceiling of 500). This was a major concern throughout to local people both in its own right and because of its implications for traffic and tree loss in particular.
- Work on the Southern Quadrant only started once work was already underway on Daws Hill. This had a significant impact on traffic and transport discussions.
- The Southern Quadrant work almost certainly needed a more extended timescale; the lack of resolution again created a lack of clarity for all, but especially local residents
- TW were working initially towards an autumn planning application.
- These areas of uncertainty and differing ideas of timescale created a 'quart into a pint pot' problem, in several senses.

6.1.2 Despite the above there are several positive points to make about the overall process:

- Though in some ways quite awkward and unusual, it was nevertheless as well as innovative and positive to develop a joint approach to engagement between WDC and TW.
- The main strands of the work were good in principle, notably the WDC lead on stakeholder workshops and Reference Group and the TW lead on engaging the wider public.
- Several different methods were used and the process was appropriately iterative, not just one round or a single opportunity.
- This was a good overall process plan in principle.

6.1.3 There is a small retrospective query that needs to be made about the engagement of young people. This ought to have been done, but was not pressed hard mainly because of the dictates of time and resources. It is something that TW are intending to pick up in the next stages of consultation.

6.2 Delivery

Wycombe District Council Responsibilities

6.2.1 It was good to set up the DHRG, good that it evolved over time and good that it addressed many relevant issues. Such bodies are often limited as formats for consultation if run, as here, in conventional committee format but having the group was a positive feature.

6.2.2 In terms of its role in the consultation on Daws Hill, the 'Semi-strategic workshop' was extremely challenging, mainly as a result of the late start to the work on the Southern Quadrant and the complexity of the traffic issues in particular. Designing a format to enable a reasonable quantity and quality of debate, let alone conclusions, on such a large range of issues was extremely difficult. The methods used helped considerably with general awareness raising (illustrating to all the complexity of the situation) but did not get as far as had been hoped in terms of specific conclusions either for Daws Hill or for the wider area. This event was probably more of a 'gallon into a pint pot'!

6.2.3 The 'Masterplan workshop' went well. It was well attended, helped to introduce the professionals to residents and others and generated some clear overall results and recommendations.

6.2.4 Formal consultation on the Development Brief followed the usual pattern although WDC officers chose to add in an exhibition and workshop. This work was still affected by issues related to the challenging start (as above) – the quantum of development and traffic, but also tree retention and any inclusion of employment. The officer team made, and Cabinet approved, a significant number of minor changes in response (not that common in Development Brief consultation).

Taylor Wimpey Responsibilities

6.2.5 The first exhibition took place at what is usually the initial issue raising, information seeking, ideas seeking, widening out stage – often termed 'front-loading'. This is therefore more about listening than presenting. However what was put on was more of an exhibition with a limited opportunity for people to comment.

6.2.6 At the same time it was noticeable how few people filled in the questionnaire and, in the light of the comment above, how few then chose to comment on all the many other issues that one would have expected to be raised (as at the DHRG meetings for example). It appears that this may have resulted from a pre-planned decision by some residents not to fill in the form.

6.2.6 The employment question in particular was rather loaded and could be thought of as designed to produce the answer TW were seeking. A more open question that elaborated the many possible and very different meanings and implications of 'employment' would probably have generated a more balanced response.

6.2.7 There was no direct feedback to all who attended as is standard good practice.

6.2.8 For the second exhibition a large amount of information was prepared and presented, on a wide range of issues and including a very draft overall masterplan. However, the format then used for people to respond was a questionnaire limited to two relatively minor issues – traffic and neighbourhood centre. To balance this it was, once again, surprising how few people used the final section of the questionnaire to comment on any other issue.

6.2.9 As before, there was no direct feedback to all who attended.

Delivery Summary

6.2.10 The limited scope of the TW events was disappointing but, when balanced with the other events, not fundamentally damaging. Discussions are underway to strengthen the TW approach in the final stages towards the application. Overall, the delivery was acceptable.

7. EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION RESULTS AGAINST PROPOSALS

7.1 The audit that follows uses a simple format. The left hand column lists the key points(not every detail) emerging from all the events and stages but primarily the results of the Masterplanning workshop. The right hand column includes notes on how the proposals in the final Development Brief (referred to as 'October 2012 Final Draft') have responded to each point. If they have not been responded to, some explanation is added to say why not (if known).

7.2 Please note that **this report only covers work up to the approval of the final Development Brief**. Some issues are therefore 'downstream' of this stage, so cannot be commented on here and none of this relates to what will eventually be shown in the planning application. Please also note that this is not a representation-by-representation report; it is based on the main points emerging from the views and inputs of all at all stages in the consultation.

7.3 Summary Audit

<i>Consultation Issues/Aspirations</i>	<i>Responses (as in the Development Brief)</i>
Quantum of development	The number of dwellings most commonly discussed at the outset of the consultation was 550. This has now been reduced to a figure not exceeding 500.
Traffic generally	Full reference is now made to the Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy (SQTS). Amendments have been made (a) to incorporate more clearly the impact of congestion on the site and the M40 J4, (b) to omit the Daws Lea link. The brief has not been changed in terms of (a) parental drop-offs at local schools, (b) security and privacy for residents, as this is covered in the overall SQTS. The brief now clarifies that the school drop-off point is for the two existing schools. The brief is unchanged re. public transport as this is covered in the SQTS. The brief has been amended to include mention of construction period impacts and management.
Site accesses	The brief has not been changed, in part because the decision will rest mainly with the applicants. However, design guidelines have been added.
Footpath and cycleway links	Text in the brief has been amended to highlight more clearly the topography issues involved in footpath provision and the benefits of walking and cycling provision. The brief has been amended to add that footpaths have recreational as well as access value.
Tree retention	Amendments have been made to reinforce issues of tree retention and any rationale for their possible removal, especially those on the site boundary. The brief has been amended to include encouragement of specific tree retention where this provides a link to previous use of the site (eg. with American species).
High quality landscape/open space	The term 'ancient woodland' has been removed. The requirement for allotments has been reinforced. Otherwise it is felt that the brief gives appropriate status to existing trees. The brief has been amended to include points about the biodiversity value of landscaping and the potential

	value of open space for historic interest.
Sport/play provision	This remains as shown originally but information on walking distances has been included to show that the location is fully accessible.
Inclusion and location of the 'centre'	The brief still includes a local centre as this is felt necessary for the development now and possibly in the future for Abbey Barn South. The brief has not been amended re. the location of the local centre as this location is considered to be best and that can be achieved without compromising the character of Daws Hill Lane. The brief has been amended to make clear that the design of the centre should prevent parking/waiting on Daws Hill Lane. No changes have been made to the provisional list of uses to be included. The brief has been amended to clarify which facilities are essential (and to say these will be secured by legal agreement or conditions) and which additional facilities would be acceptable.
Inclusion and location of the school	The brief has been amended to clarify that the school is to be provided after the completion of 4 years or 350 dwellings.
Inclusion of employment uses	These uses are still included but with design guidelines added to ensure that there is no negative impact on the development or the general area.
Location of employment uses	The location remains unchanged as this is considered to be the most appropriate.
Care Home	This option remains in the brief as it may be a choice for the applicants.
Spreading affordable housing	The brief has been amended to make this a requirement.
Reducing densities	The brief now requires part of the development to be more spacious, based on a density of between 20 and 25 dwellings per hectare.
Parking standards	Changes have been made to the brief in terms of parking numbers to reflect the latest census projections. The brief has been amended to require larger garages.
Garden suburb character	This is not mentioned specifically but it is felt that the brief enables such an approach.
Maximumstorey numbers	The brief now clarifies this with particular attention to views, notably from the Chilterns AONB.
Retain some 'bungalows'	Retention is a decision for the developer. Amendments have been made to include recycling of existing building materials and short term use of buildings if possible.
Noise pollution	Amendments await further survey results.
Air quality	The brief has been amended to include the latest standards. This is also now highlighted as a link to the value of tree retention.
Heritage/landscape context	The Wycombe Abbey Historic Parkland boundary has now been included. Text has been added to highlight the issue of impacts on the Chilterns AONB and generally to clarify the importance of the historic context.
Links to Abbey Barn South	No amendments have been made to this in order to keep open future options, however, the text now clarifies ways to integrate with the Daws Hill site.
Sustainability	Most of what is in the brief is unchanged. However, it now includes a (a) specific mention of the inclusion of solar thermal/photovoltaic renewable energy provision, (b) mention of water efficiency measures and use of grey water and (c) a requirement for electric charging points

7.4 The chart shows that there have been, over the whole period of the consultation, a large number of responses to consultation comments. In addition, the full documentation on the final Development Brief process includes far more detail than has been covered above and many more minor changes both in terms of clarification and actual amendments. The effectiveness of consultation is not to be judged solely by the number of changes made (that would imply a very low level of professional skill by planners and others) but by the balance and quality of the final outcome, in this case and at this point in the process, the Development Brief.