

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
Land at Lower Road, Bedhampton, Havant



Luken Beck

1st March 2019

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on behalf of:

Bargate Homes

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Managing Director: Ian Johnson B.Sc (Hons), M.A., PG Dip UD, M.R.T.P.I.
Exec Consultants: Graham Beck JP, M.B.A., LL.B.(Hons), B.A.(Hons), Dip.T.P., M.R.T.P.I., M.C.M.I.
Mark Luken M.B.A., B.Sc.(Econ) (Hons), Dip.T.P., M.R.T.P.I., M.C.M.I



Executive Summary

The process and form of consultation together with the findings have proved most valuable to informing the nature of this planning application:

- Discussions regarding the submission of a planning application for the development of Lower Road, Bedhampton first commenced with officers at Havant Borough Council in 2017 but the history and background of potential development started in 2010 when the Borough Council identified the site for possible future development in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.
- In July 2014 an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State considered the site for development but given the evidence provided, decided not to identify the site for development against a background of more favourable alternative sites available for development. Helpfully however, the debate at the Examination clarified the key issues for further consideration.
- In December 2016 Havant BC published its Local Plan Housing Statement in which the site at Lower Road, Bedhampton was identified as a suitable site for early release prior to the adoption of the Havant Borough Local Plan 2036.¹
- Following the submission of a formal pre-application inquiry to Havant BC, correspondence from the Planning Officer² confirmed that in policy terms, *“the Council will support the principle of residential development on the site.”*
- Prior to engaging the local community in Havant a good deal of technical work was undertaken to inform the emerging layout which would be presented ultimately to the planning authority for approval. Consultation took place with other organisations including statutory undertakers ensuring the work presented was robust and accurate.
- In March 2018 a full Public Exhibition was held attracting a variety of comments with questions especially relating to the traffic implications and any impact on Heritage Assets given the proximity of the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area. The details of returns can be seen in Table 1.³
- On the 23rd May 2018 a further exhibition was mounted in the Council Chamber at Havant BC’s Offices followed by a two-hour Development Consultation Forum [DCF] attended by local elected Councillors, Officers and Members of the Public, mainly from the immediate local community, representatives of Bargate Homes and their

¹ Paragraph 2.6 Havant BC Local Plan Housing Statement (December 2016)

² Letter dated 16th January 2018 from Havant Borough Council – Appendix 1

³ See page 15 of this report

consultant team. The opportunity was afforded to all parties to make representations and ask questions.⁴ Further comments were made directly to Havant BC.⁵

- Throughout the last fifteen months contact has continued with the Officers with the objective of submitting an informed planning application for due consideration.
- Cognizance has been taken from the current Government Advice '*Before submitting an application*'⁶ insofar as the Applicant consulted all the key local government organisations to ensure the most appropriate organisations and individuals were consulted prior to the submission of an application.

⁴ Notes of the DCF taken by Havant BC (May 2018) – Appendix 2

⁵ Feedback Forms submitted to Havant BC following the DCF – Appendix 3

⁶ Before Submitting an Application, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (March 2014)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Luken Beck mdp Ltd is instructed by Bargate Homes to prepare a Detailed Planning Application in respect of Land at Lower Road, Bedhampton, Havant and as part of that process, it is appropriate to explain the process of how the application has been constructed with involvement of other organisations including the local community of Bedhampton. This adopted process is wholly in accordance with S122 Localism Act 2011 and follows the particular advice provided by Havant Borough Council.
- 1.2 The land at Lower Road has been the subject of discussion for several years now with the Council advancing the site as suitable for development as evidenced in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Notwithstanding the Inspector's Report of July 2014 when the site was not allocated for development at that time, the site remained classified by the Council as 'Developable' in 2016, and in January and December 2017. Since that time, Havant BC has published the Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 – Pre-Submission Draft and draft Policy H20⁷ further reinforces the allocation.
- 1.3 In December 2016 Havant BC published its Local Plan Housing Statement following a public consultation exercise between the 25th July and the 9th September 2016. In that same document paragraph 3.14 stated, *"The sites listed in Table 2 have all been considered through the 2016 SHLAA process to be deliverable or developable. As such they are free of constraints that cannot be mitigated, are available for development, and sustainable development could be achieved on the site."* In addition, the sites were subject to Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 1.4 As part of the preparation for a planning application, Bargate Homes has adopted the Council's Pre-Application and Development Consultation Forum processes to include two public exhibitions and a public meeting held on the 23rd May 2018 enabling elected Councillors, Officers and the local community to comment and ask questions.
- 1.5 On the basis of the above it is considered that various stakeholders have had adequate opportunities to engage in the development management process and impact upon the design proposals. Clearly further comments can be made again once a formal application is submitted.
- 1.6 Based upon the above, there has been substantial public consultation over at least an eight year period in the context of planning policy and more latterly in response to the preparation of this planning application.

⁷ Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 Pre-Submission Draft page 259

2. Methodology

- 2.1 Pre-application consultation has been at the forefront of the process since the inception of the project following the inclusion of the land at Lower Road, Bedhampton as a potential housing allocation in the Havant Borough Council's Housing Statement of December 2016.
- 2.2 Havant Borough Council is the determining authority for any planning application at Lower Road but we are mindful that Hampshire County Council is the Highways Authority for which reason both Councils have been engaged during the preliminary discussions.
- 2.3 The consultation process has engaged all the appropriate technical and professional areas to be considered in line with the current Development Plan as well as adopting Havant BC's well tried and tested Pre-Application process in combination with the Development Consultation Forum.
- 2.4 It was critical to undertake a number of technical assessments to inform a draft scheme before engaging the wider community because without a detailed level of knowledge and understanding, the public in particular, would have likely considered the preparation to be inadequate and poor.
- 2.5 To ensure members of the local community were afforded the opportunity to engage in the process, contact was made with Havant Borough Council to establish which organisations might be active in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site. The West Bedhampton Residents Association and the Save Old Bedhampton groups were identified and contact was made.
- 2.6 Invitations were made to engage in the process to the extent that offers were made to promote the date of the public meeting on local websites or to have separate discussions.
- 2.7 A public exhibition was organised which took place on the 8th March 2018 prior to which 200 leaflets were posted through the letter boxes of the properties closest to the site with the objective of reaching those who would be most interested in the proposals. Information pertaining to the public exhibition was made available to anyone with an interest in the scheme to post on their websites.
- 2.8 The local MP, Ward Members, County Councillor and Council Officers were notified of the Exhibition.
- 2.9 At the Exhibition, Comment Forms were made available to those who wanted to make representations and for those who were unable to attend or required more time to consider the proposals, an email address was provided to submit comments.
- 2.10 The public Exhibition took place on 8th March 2018 attended by at least 63 members of the local community all of whom signed the attendance sheet that was available.

It is known that some other attendees visited but chose not to sign the attendance register. The Save Old Bedhampton group provided its own facility to court public opinion outside the community hall but not in collaboration with the applicant.

- 2.11 Since the Exhibition, email correspondence has been received from various quarters and further discussions and responses to questions have occurred. In particular several local residents requested copies of the Exhibition, duly supplied, whilst a further request was made to obtain copies of draft supporting reports which request was denied. The reasons given for not sharing draft reports was because the reports were incomplete, lacked certain information and would be therefore otherwise misleading. This response was reiterated in the DCF discussion.
- 2.12 No organisations have requested a meeting.
- 2.13 Discussions have continued with the Havant Borough Council in accordance with their pre-application advice note posted on their website with key events and meetings taking place periodically as follows;
- 5th December 2017, pre-application letter from Luken Beck submitted to Havant BC
 - 16th January 2018 – formal pre-application response letter from Havant Borough Council⁸
 - 25th January 2018 – meeting with Havant Borough Council Officers
 - 7th February 2018 – contact made with West Bedhampton Residents Association and Save Old Bedhampton
 - 12th February 2018 – Invitations sent to local MP and Ward Councillors inviting them to the Public Exhibition
 - 21st February 2018 – 200 Leaflets circulated to local households in the vicinity of the site⁹
 - 8th March 2018 – Public Exhibition
 - 9th March 2018 – Article published in the Portsmouth News
 - 3rd May 2018 – Meeting with Havant BC Officers
 - 18th May 2018 – Article published in the Portsmouth News
 - 23rd May 2018 – Development Consultation Forum

⁸ 16th January 2018 – letter from Havant BC – Appendix 1

⁹ Copy of Public Exhibition Leaflet – Appendix 4

- 24th May 2018 – Article published in the Portsmouth News
- 13th June 2018 – Meeting with Havant BC Officers
- 20th June 2018 – Meeting with Officers to discuss matters of Heritage

3. Pre-Submission Consultation & Findings

- 3.1 As mentioned already a good deal of Pre-submission consultation has taken various forms during the last few years but this Section summarises the key stages in that process.
- 3.2 Reference has been made to the Inspector's Report¹⁰ regarding the position in July 2014 when the site was not allocated for development the key issues being the sites proximity to the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area through which access would be required together with uncertainty of any impact on biodiversity and agricultural land.
- 3.3 For these reasons it has been important to better understand the current position through the process of a formal pre-application submission to the Council.
- 3.4 The first draft layout submitted to the planning authority for discussion remained preliminary assisting to identify the main issues;



Fig 1. Initial sketch layout – December 2017

¹⁰ Inspector's Report on the Examination into Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) 7th July 2014

- 3.5 An overarching comment from the Council's Planning Policy team was, *"the Council will support the principle of residential development on the site ahead of the adoption of the Havant Borough Local Plan 2036, subject to development proposals meeting the requirements of the Adopted Local Plan [ALP] and if accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Statement [IDS]."* Bearing this in mind it has been essential to address the several policies in the ALP because any planning application will be considered in the round balancing each and every policy.
- 3.6 The initial response from the Council in respect of the close proximity of the **Conservation Area** stated, *"The impact on the nearby heritage assets and their setting must be addressed as part of a Heritage Statement."* Further work was undertaken by Terrence O'Rourke resulting in a full analysis of the site within its wider context.
- 3.7 The Council also gave advice by encouraging a dialogue with the **County Council's Ecologist** and **Natural England** having regard to any survey work and associated avoidance and mitigation measures.
- 3.8 **Natural England** has provided advice also which has been incorporated into a full report prepared by Aluco Ecology; that same report covers matters raised by both the Hampshire County Council Ecologist and the **Wildlife Trust**.
- 3.9 The **County Archaeologist** has also been a stakeholder in the sense that he has been consulted as part of the pre-application discussions thus ensuring that any application addresses matters germane to the development of the site. No objections have been raised in principle. L-P Archaeology has prepared a report which accompanies the application.
- 3.10 Integral to the design layout and the context of the site adjoining the Conservation Area it has been important to engage the **Council's Landscape Architect** who, having been consulted, raised no in-principle objections but has helpfully made some comments which have been taken into account as part of the submission. A full Landscape Impact Assessment has been prepared by Terra Firma Landscape Architects to support the application.
- 3.11 An Arboricultural Report was recommended and now supports the application. The **Council's Arboriculturalist** raised no objections in principle.
- 3.12 The Council's landscape architect also offered advice concerning SuDS as well as pedestrian / cycle use in and around the site. A helpful list of details was requested to support the application.
- 3.13 In respect of highway matters the **Council's Development Engineer** pointed to a number of detailed pieces of work that required attention but raised no in-principle objections. Much of this detailed work has since been undertaken by i-Transport consultants in collaboration with the **Hampshire County Highways Authority and**

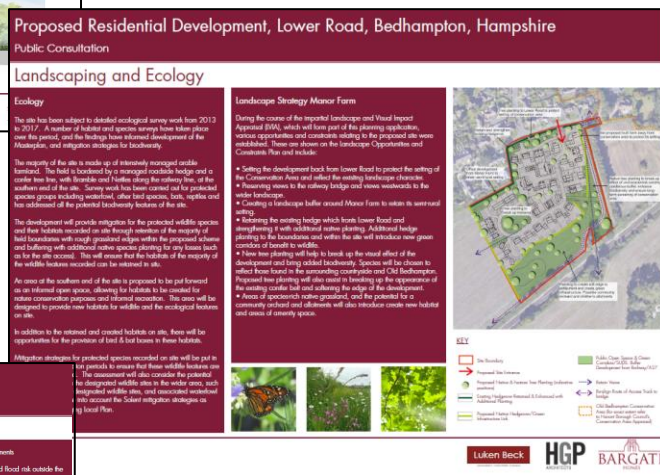
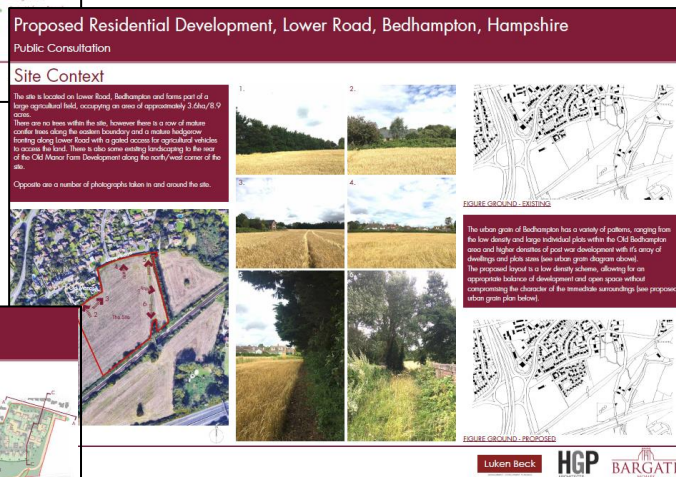
Havant Borough Council Officers. The Transport Assessment submitted with the application incorporates additional survey work undertaken following the public exhibition together with tracking drawings ensuring the comments of the **Council's Waste Services** Department are satisfied.

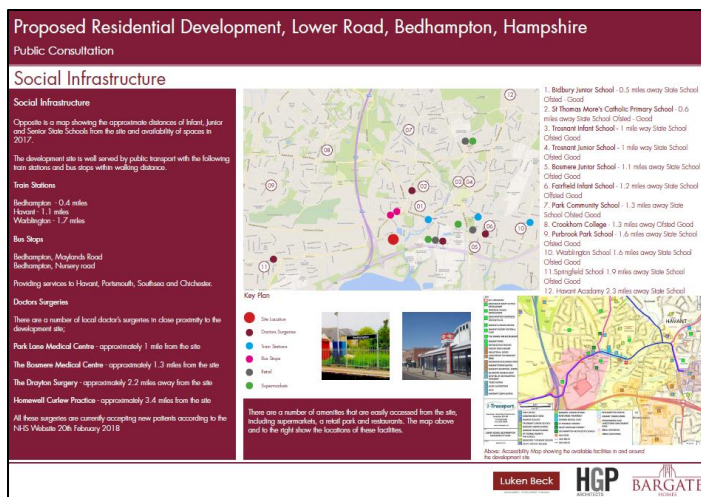
- 3.14 The **Environment Agency** commented that there were no constraints to development based on the preliminary information offered whilst **Southern Water** and **Portsmouth Water** identified standard requirements to be submitted with any planning application.
- 3.15 Potential noise from the railway line, possible contamination from previous agricultural uses of the land and air quality matters have been raised by the **Council's Environmental Health Officer** (EHO) but once more there have been no objections raised in principle. The advice given by the EHO has been followed up in the submission of technical reports supporting the application.
- 3.16 The **Council's Housing Officer** has commented on the provision of affordable housing which will be provided on site as part of the proposals.
- 3.17 All the above information was actioned with varying degrees of work before presenting the next phase of work to the general public at the Exhibition which took place in March 2018.
- 3.18 The layout plan presented at the Exhibition reflected changes discussed with officers including the following;
- Moving the development frontage further south away from Lower Road to reduce any impact on existing dwellings to the north; to create a wider green wedge along the road frontage thus retaining an improved rural ambience on the edge of the urban area;
 - The design and scale of the proposed dwellings in the north west corner were altered to be more in-keeping with the more traditional existing development immediately to the north;
 - The suburban layout was changed creating a more dispersed low-density scheme incorporating an intimate 'village green' surrounded by a mixture of houses resulting in a more appropriate road layout for the area;



Fig 2. Draft proposed layout displayed at Public Exhibition – March 2018

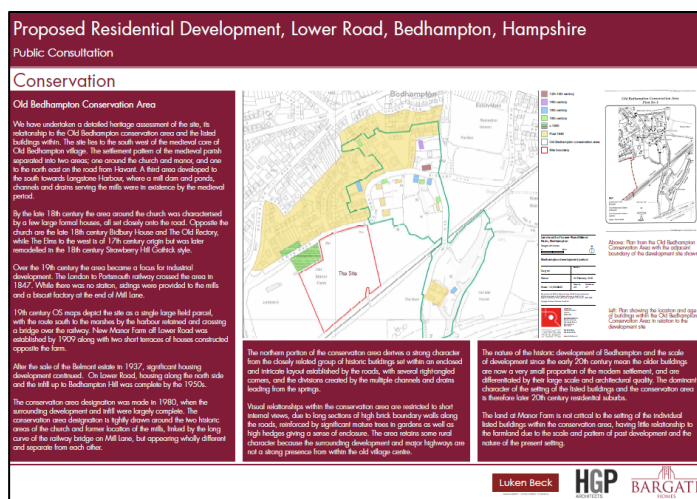
- 3.19 The Exhibition itself consisted of nine large display boards, each one designed to summarise how the scheme was emerging at the time of the exhibition.
- 3.20 Following a general introductory board explaining the planning policy background and the context for the proposed development including the process of consultation, the next three boards explained the 'Opportunities and Constraints' and the 'site context' leading to the draft layout (Fig 2 above). The next board displayed a series of possible street scenes for comment.
- 3.21 A detailed Landscape and Ecology board explained the work and the key considerations for the development determined by the landscape and ecological considerations. A further board was devoted to Transport and Drainage which included a plan of the drainage details. The last two boards displayed the 'social infrastructure' within the vicinity with the last board examining the Heritage issues.





Left: Social Infrastructure

Right: Heritage



3.22 The public exhibition attracted some 63 local residents according to the Attendance Book. Comments sheets regarding the material displayed at the exhibition were made available to anyone who wished to contribute, attracting 26 sets of returns¹¹. Attendees were given the choice to email any comments if this was more convenient or to submit additional comments following further consideration. A total of 3 emails were received expressing opinions about the proposals. A grand total of 29 commentaries (46% return) have been examined, the results of which are recorded in the table below. As people wished to make comments on a number of different topics, the total number of comments exceeds the number of contributions but all the material has been included.

3.23 Table 1 below summarises all the comments received following the public exhibition.

¹¹ Appendix 3 Redacted copies of Returns

Table 1 – Summary of Public comments arising from the Exhibition

Comment	Number Times Mentioned
Object to the Principle of Development here	7
Specific Objections	
Impact of construction traffic	3
Increased traffic congestion at main road/ need improvements	6
Traffic impact on local highway safety due to bends and lack of pavements	21
Impact on Conservation Area	11
Impact on Biodiversity	1
Noise/ Rail proximity	1
Daylight to adjacent houses	1
Lack of infrastructure such as schools, doctors, etc	5
Pollution	1
Too many houses proposed	1
Tip of the Iceberg for developing adjacent land	3
Flood Risk	2
Inadequate highway impact statistics	2
Who will pay for upkeep of community elements?	2
Houses will not be affordable	1
Housing not needed	1
Suggested Improvements to Design if development goes ahead	
Good looking scheme if principle accepted	1
Push buildings further back from Lower Road	2
Add trees, hedge and stream to Lower Road frontage	1
Lower building heights (bungalows) on Lower Road frontage	1
Introduce road calming measures	1
Provide public access to adjacent open land	1
Provide a pond for increased biodiversity	1
Use native trees and wildflowers in scheme	1

- 3.24 Mention has been made already that transport and heritage matters were the two consistent issues raised at the Exhibition which were further addressed prior to the next stage of the DCF.
- 3.25 A number of alterations were made to the layout following the initial exhibition but most important of all, further survey work was undertaken on the current traffic levels to ascertain an up-to-date picture of pedestrian and cycle movements as requested by several people attending the exhibition. Further analysis work was also undertaken of the Heritage assets around the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area including listed buildings and the wider landscape setting.

- 3.26 Resulting from the comments arising from the public exhibition and further consideration of the landscape, the setting of the site on the edge of settlement and the nearby conservation area Figure 3 below was presented at the DCF meeting.



Fig 3. Draft proposed layout displayed at second Public Exhibition & DCF – March 2018

- 3.27 The major changes to the layout included the creation of a wider green buffer along the eastern edge making sure the existing tree group was included within any planning application to actively manage the trees. The long views from the corner of Lower Road (north-east corner of the site) was particularly pertinent as development was moved both further south and further west enabling the two views across the site towards the old farm buildings to the west and the southerly views to the railway and countryside beyond to remain open.
- 3.28 The Development Consultation Forum process and details are well documented on the Council's website¹² for which reason there is little to be added here.

¹² Follow the link at:
<https://www.havant.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Local%20Planning%20Authority%20presentation.pdf>

3.29 The Forum provided an opportunity for the local community to review the exhibition followed by a two-hour presentation, discussion with questions and answers.

3.30 In their presentation Officers identified three key areas including the impact on the Conservation Area, highway considerations and design & layout.



3.31 There were several questions raised by Members as well as the public that have been considered further as part of the submitted application namely;

- Providing safe walkable routes and cycling;
- Facilitating access across the site towards and over the railway bridge to the south of the site;
- Reinforcement of the tree belt along the eastern boundary;
- Ensuring there is sufficient school places for children on the development;
- Retention of hedge along the northern boundary with new footpath located to the south. Mitigation for the provision of the breach for access includes new length of hedging along the western boundary;
- Parking provision is in accordance with Havant Borough Council Highway standards;
- All private housing will be sold freehold whilst the affordable housing will be owned and managed by a Registered Social Landlord;
- Traffic counts were conducted on Lower Road, Brookside Road and the junction between Bedhampton, Maylands and Portsdown Hill Roads;
- A construction environmental management plan (CEMP) will be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to any work commencing;
- An alternative access into the site has been considered but found to be unacceptable to Highways England;

3.32 In addition the Council forwarded a number of Feedback Forms (10 no.) gathered after the DCF which have been considered further. Having examined the feedback sheets the following new issues or questions were raised:-

- It is proposed to incorporate a private management company to oversee the maintenance of the open space. The current proposal is to transfer the land into the ownership of local residents whilst the affordable houses would be leasehold managed by a registered social landlord.
- There are various options available to any residents group to look after the open space areas but the most common practice is to create a Residents Management Company [RMC] / Community Trust; The RMC would be responsible for the maintenance and associated public liability and indemnity insurance;
- The internal roads will be private and not adopted by HCC;
- What is the default position if the Residents Management Company fails? In response, there is a S106 agreement ensuring the POS is retained in perpetuity but if the RMC fails for any reason, then there is normally provision in the S106 for the land to revert to the residents to decide how to continue maintenance and repair in accordance with the permission and legal agreement.
- A management agent is normally appointed on behalf of the RMC to provide annual budgets and to ensure the RMC is complying with the planning permission. If the agent fails to perform, the RMC can de-instruct and replace with another agent.

3.33 The remaining comments did not raise new matters and some questions were aimed at HCC or HBC to consider.

3.34 As a result of the DCF commentary, further changes were made to the final layout before submission as part of the planning application. See Fig 4 below.



Fig 4 - Proposed layout displayed at second Public Exhibition & DCF – September 2018

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 During the period from December 2017 until the submission of a detailed planning application a great deal of consultation has occurred with the local planning authority, external consultees and the local community, to include local residents, the Save Old Bedhampton Group and West Bedhampton Residents Association albeit contact with the latter two organisations has been through and with the Council.
- 4.2 Public consultation has occurred regarding the preparation of the Council's Planning Policy documents including the Local Plan Housing Statement, published in December 2016, which document identified Lower Road, Bedhampton as a suitable and appropriate site to be brought forward for development ahead of the new Local Plan 2036. A further Council public consultation is taking place not only into the Havant Borough Local Plan 2036 Pre-Submission Draft [4th February 2019 to 18th March 2019] but also into the Old Bedhampton Conservation Area Review 2019 subject to consultation from the 4th February 2019 until the 18th March 2019.
- 4.3 As part of the pre-planning application consultation process the Applicant, Bargate Homes, has adopted the Havant Borough Council's formal pre-application process to establish initial views, conducted two Public Exhibitions and been party to a full Development Consultation Forum where the elected members, Officers and the public were given the opportunity to raise questions and listen to answers.
- 4.4 The final submitted planning application has considered all of the various comments and where appropriate, made changes to amend and improve the scheme. As part of the formal planning application process, there will be further consultation as part of the consideration of the application before the local planning authority makes a decision.

Appendix 1

Letter dated the 16th January 2018 from Havant Borough Council

Appendix 2

Notes of the Havant BC Development Consultation Form prepared by Havant BC dated May 2008

Appendix 3

Copies of the Public Comments arising from the Public Exhibition in 2018 (redacted)

Appendix 4

Copy of the Leaflet prepared prior to the Public Exhibition on the 8th March 2018.