DEVELOPER STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

for

Residential, Employment and Retail Development, with Provision for Education & Leisure Uses (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C3 & D1); Provision of Renewable Energy Facility; Part Demolition & Part Retention of Existing Buildings; access from Broadmead Lane, Green Lane and Stewartby Way

at

New Stewartby, Marston Vale, Bedfordshire

Prepared on behalf of

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Developer Statement of Community Involvement (DSCI) outlines the consultation that was undertaken as part of the preparation of the planning application for the redevelopment of the Stewartby Brickworks.

1.2 The Brickworks closed at the end of February 2008 and the scheme would present a proposal which utilises a large brownfield site within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub Region.

1.3 The DSCI is a factual document and outlines the consultation carried out to date which have led to the development of the scheme presented in the planning application.

1.4 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) outlines the process of how the design has evolved and been adapted following the consultation. This includes changes resulting from stakeholder engagement, particularly the public exhibitions held in Stewartby in June and October 2007.

1.5 Hanson Building Products and its key consultants have worked closely with stakeholders, including Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council. Other key stakeholders have been consulted on the proposal including:

- Highways Agency
- Environment Agency
- The Forest of Marston Vale Trust
- English Heritage
- Residents of Stewartby

1.6 The purpose of the DSCI is to outline the national and local regulations for community involvement, explain the applicant's consultation strategy, summarise the methods of consultation used and feedback from the consultation events, and how the consultation influenced the development proposals.

2.0 CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1 As part of the Department for Communities and Local Government 'The Validation of Planning Applications: Guidance for Local Planning Authorities' (December 2007) states that planning applications may need to be supported by a statement of how the developer has consulted with the community, and how the applicant has complied with the local authority's statement of community involvement. The guidance directs applicants to the PPS12 (Creating Local Development Frameworks) companion guide. Bedfordshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council have also adopted Statements of Community Involvement.

PPS12 Creating Local Development Frameworks: Companion Guide

2.2 Paragraph 7.7 of the companion guide states that where development proposals may give rise to controversy, or those on sensitive sites, may require community consultation. Pre-submission consultation is preferable and encouraged by the local planning authority, although it cannot be prescribed by them.

2.3 Paragraph 7.74 states that for any applications that are not small scale, local authorities should consider adopting thresholds to help determine type and level of community involvement at each stage of the application process. A three tiered approach, with those proposals requiring the highest level of community consultation at tier 1 and lowest in tier 3. The redevelopment of the brickworks is considered to fall into tier 2, as the application is broadly in accordance with the emerging local development framework, but due to its heritage value, would raise controversial issues. Stewartby is identified as a Key Service Centre within the emerging Core Strategy, which is one of the key locations for development. Thus a medium approach to consultation should be adopted.

2.4 Table 7.3 lists the potential methods of consultation including letters to statutory bodies, website, leaflets/brochures, public exhibitions, focus groups, one-on-one sessions with selected stakeholders, and workshops, among others.

2.5 Paragraph 7.72 states that the local planning authority cannot refuse to accept an application should they disagree with the way in which an applicant has consulted the community. However, failure to involve the community may lead to objections which could be material to the determination of the planning application.

Bedfordshire County Council SCI (April 2006)

2.6 The SCI for Bedfordshire County Council aims to provide individuals, communities or organisations the opportunities to understand the issues, express their views, have those views properly understood and taken into account during the decision making process for planning applications in Bedfordshire. The SCI outlines guiding principles for community involvement, including starting as early as possible and continue involvement throughout the decision making process.

2.7 Section 8.2 encourages applicants to consult with the County Council, district and town council, and with local communities, particularly for potentially controversial schemes. Annex E outlines the categories of development requiring different levels of pre-application community involvement. The redevelopment of Stewartby Brickworks is considered to fall within category A needing a high level of community involvement as it is a major application accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Thus, at pre-application stage the applicants should hold pre-application meetings with the County Council and local community, hold public exhibitions and/or produce a leaflet, involve the media and continue consultation with liaison groups (where existing). Feedback from such consultation would then be provided with the submission of the application together with details of any changes resulting from the comments received.

2.8 Annex C of the SCI outlines the advantages of consultation methods. Staffed exhibitions give the advantage of building trust and personal relationships, and are effective in providing information. Documents are useful for collating information. The media is effective in conveying information to many citizens. Stakeholder dialogue is good when conflict arises between groups as discussion can take place, and differences can try to be resolved.

Bedford Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (May 2006)

2.9 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will involve the community in the way it plans for the future of the borough. The document focuses mainly on consultation required when producing local development documents.

2.10 With regards to planning applications, the Council encourages applicants to engage with planning officers prior to the submission of an application. This would identify

any problems which could be rectified, save time and result in a better quality development. The 'project management protocol' (PMP) has recently been introduced to enable pre-application discussions and negotiations to take place. The PMP sets out agreed principles, standards and mechanisms and include responsibilities and delivery targets for the Council and the applicant. The approach would assist the Council's commitment to delivering the growth area agenda.

2.11 The SCI encourages pre application consultation with the community and stakeholders to be undertaken for larger schemes and schemes which may be sensitive. The scope and results of the consultation should be submitted to the council. Applicants who choose to undertake pre-application consultation should follow the requirements of the SCI as far as possible. The applicants may seek the advice of council officers with the consultation process by commenting on the draft consultation strategy. It is noted that the Council cannot refuse to accept a valid planning application if they disagree with the method in which the community has been consulted.

2.12 The nature and extent of pre-application consultation with the community should depend on the scale and sensitivity of the development. Generally, the more controversial the proposal the broader range of consultation methods should be used.

2.13 Appendix 1 lists the consultation methods which should be utilised. For tier 2 projects (projects which accord with the Bedford Development Framework, or are large scale or controversial), consultation methods include website, telephone, letters, leaflets and newsletters, meetings and workshops, media coverage, and consulting with Members and local councils. Other methods of consultation include public exhibitions, posters and displays, and focus groups.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 Stewartby is located within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area, and is a Key Service Centre as identified in the emerging Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan. In November 2007 Hanson Building Products announced the closure of the brickworks at the end of February 2008. Hanson and their consultants have been considering options for redevelopment to establish the company's commitment to Stewartby. The scheme presented in the planning application has been devised with the input from the public and key stakeholders.

Types of Consultation Undertaken

Public Exhibitions

3.2 Two manned public exhibitions were held within the Memorial Hall in Stewartby in June and October 2007. The first explored the design concepts and examined issues important to Stewartby residents, and fed into the masterplan. The second examined the public's opinions on the location of facilities and retention of buildings following the formulation of a draft masterplan. A copy of the exhibition boards for both exhibitions is located in Appendix 2.

15th/16th June 2007

3.3 Members of the Hanson project team (including the land agents, urban designers, planning consultants and highway engineers) were available throughout the exhibition, to answer questions and provide any information. The Friday exhibition was held between the hours of 3pm and 7pm. The Saturday exhibition was held between the hours of 10am and 4pm. The exhibition hours were designed to encourage the maximum participation of local residents.

3.4 The aim of the exhibition was to explore the future of the Stewartby brickworks and also to gain an understanding of how Stewartby residents perceive issues within the village. This included asking questions regarding the sense of community, amount and quality of open space, and the impact of the potential closure of the brickworks. The exhibition also presented 14 options for the 'next steps' which could be included within the masterplan. Such options explored the retention of certain buildings on the brickworks site, the provision of services, landscaping provision, connection to Stewartby Lake, among others.

3.5 The event was advertised in advance inviting local residents and businesses to attend the exhibition. In order to encourage the residents of Stewartby to attend the public exhibition, and in recognition of the large elderly population, a bus was commissioned by Hanson for transporting attendees. In total, 121 people attended the exhibitions, split into 64 on Friday and 47 on Monday (plus 10 children who did not sign in). Of those 88 completed questionnaires.

27th/29th October 2007

3.6 Members of the Hanson project team (including Hanson representatives, planning consultants, urban designers, and highways consultants) were available throughout the exhibition, to answer questions and provide any information. The Saturday exhibition was held between the hours of 10am and 4pm. The Monday exhibition was held between the hours of 3pm and 7pm.

3.7 The public were able to comment on the proposals presented which had evolved following the previous exhibition. The exhibition presented the opportunity to gather information from the local community on what facilities should be located in the development, and the siting of such facilities. The exhibition also explored the heritage aspect of the development, and what factors of the brickworks should be retained, and whether a museum should be created.

3.8 All residents and businesses of Stewartby were invited via hand delivered notices, posters and an advertisement in the local paper Bedfordshire on Sunday. An advertisement was also displayed in the local shop. For the October exhibition 108 people attended, split into 55 on the Saturday and 53 on Monday.

Stakeholder Involvement

3.9 As part of the planning application process and environmental impact assessment stakeholders have been consulted. Table 1 in Appendix 1 lists all those engaged, how engaged and when involved. As can be seen, there has been a vast amount of stakeholder engagement, and this has aided in ensuring that the development proposals are the most appropriate and satisfactory.

3.10 Numerous meetings have been held with Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council to discuss the closure of the brickworks and the development opportunities this presented. The historic nature of some of the buildings was

discussed, including the desire to retain a number of those structures. The requirement for open space, the employment mix, renewable energy provision and gypsy and traveller provision were also discussed. Such issues were identified at an early stage in the planning process and were able to be addressed during the course of planning application preparation.

3.11 A meeting was held with County Councillor Richard Stay and Alistair Burt, MP for North East Bedfordshire. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the closure of the brickworks with the need for proactive support by the County Council, national and regional Government.

3.12 Meetings have been held with Bedfordshire County Council, Hyder Consulting, Network Rail, Stagecoach and the Highways Agency to discuss transport related issues. The scope of the Transport Assessment was discussed, and the improvement of rail and bus services was also considered with the transport operators. This guided the proposals of the scheme, and enabled any issues to be identified early in the process.

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion

3.13 As part of the scoping opinion, key stakeholders including Bedfordshire County Council, Bedford Borough Council, Mid Bedfordshire District Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Highways Agency provided advice and guidance on what issues should be addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

4.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

4.1 This section is to provide information on the feedback received from the exhibitions and any questions asked. The public exhibitions were well attended and stakeholder involvement was effective.

15th/16th June 2007

4.2 64 attended on Friday, and 47 attended on Saturday, with an additional 10 not signing the attendance register. This totalled at 121, approximately 10 percent of the population. 53 comment sheets were completed on Friday, and 35 were completed on Saturday, totalling 88. This equates to a 72 percent return. The questionnaire and a summary of the responses are located in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

4.3 The purpose of the first exhibition was to explore design features that could be included in the masterplan, and also to gauge the opinion of the community within Stewartby to the redevelopment of the Brickworks.

4.4 The questions presented to the public began with enquiring whether Stewartby was a good place to live, and what is valued most about living in Stewartby, then leading to what issues are most important for the future of Stewartby, and the role that the Stewartby brickworks redevelopment would play in improving the village.

4.5 83 percent of residents regarded Stewartby as either 'very good' or 'good' as a place to live or work. The village values the open spaces, peaceful environment, model village layout and the sense of community above other assets. Schools and leisure/recreational facilities were also highly regarded.

4.6 The biggest issue to residents of Stewartby were leisure and recreational facilities, followed by the provision of services. Employment and traffic levels were also major concerns.

4.7 76 percent of attendees were either 'very positive' or 'positive' about the general idea of redevelopment, with only a minor number of people 'negative' to redevelopment. Residents saw the brickworks redevelopment as an opportunity to provide additional services and places of employment. Additional leisure/recreational facilities and improved public transport was also cited as potential improvements.

4.8 Most options for the 'next steps' were generally supported, with all options ticked for

at least 30 percent of the completed comments sheets. The most popular option supported was for the retention of the Bedford District Office as a heritage centre, followed by the provision of shops and services in the village centre. Other popular options were to provide a connection to Stewartby Lake and to re-use key historic buildings. Although not listed as an option, attendees specifically stated their desire to see at least one of the brickwork chimneys retained. During the exhibition, however, it seemed that people generally accepted that this might not be possible due to technical issues (it should be noted that at this time the chimneys and kilns were not Listed).

27th/29th October 2007

4.9 55 attended on the Saturday, and 53 attended on the Monday, totalling at 108 attendees. 35 comment sheets were completed on Saturday, and 37 sheets were completed on Monday, totalling 72. Thus, 75 percent of attendees provided feedback, a high percentage return. The questionnaire and a summary of responses can be located in Appendices 3 and 4 respectively.

4.10 The purpose of the second exhibition was to present the current draft of the masterplan, which was partly guided by the first exhibition. Options were presented to the public regarding the location of the school, formal open space, local centre, and which buildings should be retained on site. The exhibition further explored the value of a heritage facility to the community.

4.11 The attendees indicated that they would most like the Bedford District Office retained, above the canteen, brick-built garage and first aid office. A quarter of visitors did not know which buildings should be retained or had no preference. As part of the final scheme the Bedford District Office, canteen and first aid office would be retained. This decision was made prior to the Listing of the chimney and kilns.

4.12 The option to create a heritage facility which showcased the brick making heritage was presented. Nearly a quarter of attendees stated they would visit either ‘frequently’ or ‘often’, while 50 percent stated they would visit ‘now and then’.

4.13 96 percent of visitors expressed an interest in some kind of material being presented in the heritage facility. Photographs and displays/exhibitions were the most popular kinds of heritage material. Plans and documents, and fossils and bricks were also supported.

4.14 In terms of the provision of services, visitors were asked which type of formal open space they would like to see as a result of the development, 29 percent of visitors preferred a football pitch, followed by a cricket pitch (at 24 percent). 19 percent of visitors did not specify a preferred pitch type, and 3 percent stated there was no need to expand on the existing facilities provided by the village.

4.15 Option 1 for the provision of the local centre was preferred by 51 percent of visitors. Option 2 was preferred by 35 percent of visitors, while 14 percent did not specify a preferred option. Option 1 has been chosen for the location of the local centre as part of the submitted proposals.

4.16 For the location of the school 40 percent chose option 2, within close proximity to Bedford District Offices, principally due to its central location and the potential to encourage children to walk to school. This was closely followed by option 1 (32 percent), located to the north of the site, which was chosen in the submitted proposal for reasons including the potential for future expansion and its proximity to formal open space.

4.17 Additional comments were received from visitors. The most frequently cited issue was concern over the size of the proposed development and the number of new houses provided in relation to the existing settlement. Visitors were also concerned over the density and character of the proposed development in relation to the existing village; the increase in traffic levels associated with the proposed development; and the need to retain a chimney and/or kiln in the proposed development.

4.18 In response to the concerns regarding the demolition of the chimneys and kilns a column of light is proposed to be located within the local centre. The column of light would provide a new focal point/landmark within the site and local area. This is detailed in the Design and Access Statement. The proposed urban form would resemble the pattern of the kilns, as detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

4.19 In response to the consultation events the proposal would retain many of the historic buildings, including the Bedford District Office, with a view to converting them. A heritage centre is also planned in response to the consultation events.

Summary

4.20 The consultation events aided in establishing the features of the brickworks and

village the residents valued and wished to see improved/changed. The land use Masterplan as proposed illustrates a local centre with retail element and health services, a site for a lower school, employment land, open space and recreation ground, and retention of historic buildings. The inclusion of such facilities is, in part, due to consultation with the public and key stakeholders.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

1.1 The level of consultation undertaken as part of the development of the proposals at Stewartby Brickworks is considered to comply with national, regional and local guidelines for community involvement.

1.2 Stewartby is located within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area, and the applicants have sought to work proactively with key stakeholders to ensure that housing targets are met, whilst providing much needed infrastructure to the town.

1.3 The applicants have proactively engaged with Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire County Council and the public using a variety of methods. Public exhibitions, leaflets, meetings and general correspondence have been used to consult with the community and key stakeholders (including service providers). This consultation has led to changes and alterations to the scheme, which is detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

1.4 In conclusion, the level of public and stakeholder engagement has fulfilled the requirements of national, regional and local SCIs. This has meant that the views of these groups have been considered in designing and altering the proposals. The report and accompanying Design and Access Statement illustrates the work undertaken to ensure that effective public and stakeholder consultation has been carried out.

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS AND METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT

Project Team Representative	Stakeholder Engaged (Company/Organisation and representative)	Date consulted (month, year)	Form of engagement (meeting, letters, etc)	Follow up engagement (letters, meetings – where relevant)
STRATEGIC				
G Gardner (Hives Planning); W Trott (Hanson); Doug Smith, Mike Ibbot, Mark Stewart (TP Bennett).	David Bailey, Paul Rowland – Bedford Borough Council	27th September 2007	Meeting – relationship between Hanson HQ and brickworks redevelopment discussed transport, employment. Requirement for public consultation discussed.	
G Gardner (Hives Planning)	David Bailey, Richard Woodall, Paul Rowland – Bedford Borough Council	15th December 2006	Meeting – Discussion of LDF, Nirah, Hanson HQ application, Hanson brickworks strategy document, housing numbers within the Growth Area, initial proposals for brickworks redevelopment.	
G Gardener (Hives Planning); K Kropf (Roger Evans Associates)	Paul Rowland, Bedford Borough Council	21st February 2007	Meeting – discussion regarding proposals and scope for Environmental Impact Assessment.	
R G Williams (Arnold White Estates); David Szymanski (Hanson Building Products)	David Bailey – Director of Planning Sean Field – Chief Executive Bedford Borough Council	16th March 2007	Meeting - This meeting discussed the overall situation of brickworks was discussed, including NIRAH implications and the possibilities of a	

			forthcoming closure as a result of emission issues.	
R G Williams (Arnold White Estates); Geoff Gardner (Hives Planning)	David Bailey, Richard Woodall - Bedford Borough Council	29th June 2007	Meeting – discussion of strategic planning issues, including scope of Environmental Impact Assessment, gypsy and traveller aspirations, timing of the development, and transport, energy, heritage issues.	
R G Williams (Arnold White Estates)	Hew Jones / Elizabeth Wade - Bedfordshire County Council	31st July 2007	Meeting - Discussion regarding opportunities at Stewartby and the importance for the relevant sections of the County Council to become involved.	
G Gardner (Hives Planning); K Kropf (Roger Evans Associates)	Richard Woodall, Paul Rowland – Bedford Borough Council	7th August 2007	Meeting – Stewartby as a brownfield windfall site and discussion of elements to be included in the EIA.	
R G Williams (Arnold White Estates)	Hugh Jones / Elizabeth Wade - Bedfordshire County Council	10th October 2007	Meeting - This meeting was attended by all representatives of the Team and discussed an overall approach to development which would unable key functions from the County Council to get involved.	
R G Williams (Arnold White Estates)	Richard Stay / Alistair Burt MP - Bedfordshire County	26th October 2007	Meeting - This was a meeting with Councillor Richard Stay and the local MP. The	

	Council		impending closure of the brickworks was discussed together with the need for proactive support by the County Council, national and regional Government.	
G Gardner, D Butcher (Hives Planning); K Kropf (Roger Evans Associates), M Orhland (Stuart Michael Associates)	Representatives from Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council	8th November 2007	Further pre-application meeting and discussion of scoping responses.	
G Gardner (Hives Planning); K Kropf (Roger Evans Associates)	David Bailey – Bedford Borough Council Rep from Bedfordshire County Council	8th January 2008		
EDUCATION				
D Butcher (Hives Planning Ltd)	Robin Fiander, Education department of Bedfordshire County Council	31st January 2007	Meeting to discuss general education requirements for large development within the Marston Vale	
OPEN SPACE				
D Butcher (Hives Planning Limited)	Gill Cowie, Planning Officer, Bedford Borough Council	27th February 2007	Meeting to discuss potential community leisure requirements for Stewartby residents.	Follow up letter to Gill Cowie 10th September 2007 to request opinion on level of open spaces and community facilities to be required.

THE MARSTON VALE				
Representatives from Hanson, Arnold White Estates, Hives Planning, Roger Evans Associates and Stuart Michael Associates	James Russell and Ian Foll of the Marston Vale Community Forest	2nd June, 20th July, 7th September and 3rd October 2006	Discussions regarding the requirements of the Marston Vale Community Forest, for contributions, woodland, Green Infrastructure, biomass exploration, crop trees	
TRANSPORT				
Martin Ohrland & David Wiseman (Stuart Michael Associates)	Bedfordshire County Council	February 2007	Meeting: To discuss scope of the project and to identify any necessary assessments as part of the Transport Assessment.	Meeting: July 2007 – To discuss scope of the application and discuss contents of Transport Assessment and Travel Plans. Trip Rates applied for modelling work carried out by Hyder Consulting Ltd were also discussed.
Martin Ohrland & David Wiseman (Stuart Michael Associates)	Hyder Consulting	May 2007	Meeting: To discuss the potential for Hyder to undertake modelling assessments using the SATURN Traffic Model. Letter: Letter sent identifying the trip rates to apply to the modelling and scenarios requiring	

			assessment.	
Martin Ohrland & David Wiseman (Stuart Michael Associates)	Stagecoach	February 2007	Meeting: To discuss various options for improving the level of service through Stewartby.	
Martin Ohrland & David Wiseman (Stuart Michael Associates)	Network Rail	May 2007	Meeting: To discuss potential to improve the level of service along the Marston Vale Line, whilst also discussing various issues associated with the site.	Meeting November 2007 – To discuss the level crossing surveys and potential use of all crossing facilities.
Martin Ohrland & David Wiseman (Stuart Michael Associates)	Highways Agency	January 2008	Meeting: To discuss the contents of the draft Transport Assessment and identify any issues associated with the proposed development.	
UTILITIES				
Mark Smyth, Bob Hewitt (Stuart Michael Associates)	Anglian Water	November 07	Meeting	Letters, e-mails
Mark Smyth, Alistair Aitken (Stuart Michael Associates)	Scott Wilson, Project Kimberley Team	Sept 07	Meeting	