



Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield

OPEN DAY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT REPORT
DECEMBER 2015

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

- 1.1 This *Open Day Community Engagement Report* has been prepared to outline the key themes and comments that have been made by local stakeholders during the Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield Open Days which took place on Saturday 17th and Wednesday 21st October 2015.
- 1.2 The Open Days were held by Urban&Civic (U&C) in order to invite comments from local stakeholders on 8 key issues (noted below) relating to the future development of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site and other parts of the broader area of land included as part of the draft allocation within the *Proposed Submission Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire* (July 2013).
- 1.3 The Open Days were organised as an opportunity for the local community and other stakeholders to visit the site, undertake a guided tour, view a range of consultation material, speak to representatives of U&C and the master planners, town planners and other technical consultants employed to bring forwards development proposals for the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site.
- 1.4 The Open Days are an important element of U&Cs community engagement strategy. Outcomes from the events will be used to inform the preparation of a Development Framework Plan for the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site, and inform the development and priorities of working groups and discussions which will feed into the planning proposals. U&C have also offered the feedback and subsequent discussions to potentially assist the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Scope of the Exhibition

- 1.5 The key issues presented at the Open Day were derived from those identified by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group for consideration through the development of the Waterbeach Neighbourhood plan. The 8 key issues were:
 - Housing and Development
 - Health and Education
 - Recreational Facilities
 - Business and Employment
 - Environment and Conservation: Cultural Amenities
 - Environment and Conservation: Biodiversity
 - Flooding and Drainage
 - Transport
- 1.6 Other exhibition material was provided to describe the history of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site, the process being undertaken by U&C, the next steps and work that will be undertaken going forwards and a suggestion of how U&C would like to work collaboratively with the community and other local stakeholders. The exhibition boards can be downloaded from the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield website (www.waterbeachbarracks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Open-Day-Boards_banners_1000x2000-final_151014_low-res.pdf)
- 1.7 The opportunity to attend the Open Days was presented to local residents through the Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield website and was promoted within the village newsletter which is distributed to all residents, and through U&C's first door drop newsletter to all households. U&C also attend regular Waterbeach Parish Council meetings and the Open Days were discussed and agreed at these meetings. Draft

copies of the displays were also shared with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, with amends made to respond to all their comments and suggestions.

- 1.8 The Open Days were well attended (approximately 400 people). Attendees included primarily local residents, and members of Waterbeach Parish Council, but were also attended by a South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Member and Planning Officers and a representative of an adjoining landowner.

2.0 QUESTIONS POSED**Exhibition Boards**

2.1 A series of questions were posed upon the exhibition boards. These questions were as follows:

Exhibition Board	Question Posed
Housing and Development	What do you like and dislike about where you live?
	What sorts of housing do you think the area needs?
	How should the new development relate to the existing village?
Health and Education	Which facilities do you think are the highest priority?
	Where do your children currently go to school?
	How should new services and facilities link with existing ones?
Recreational Facilities	How can we improve opportunities for leisure and recreation?
	What recreational facilities would you like to see in Waterbeach today?
	How can we improve connections to Wicken Fen and other amenities?
Business and Employment	How can we use the development to benefit local jobs and business opportunities?
	Can new homes improve the local economy?
	What do you think about temporary business uses?
Environment and Conservation: Cultural amenities	How should the development provide setting, interpretation and connection to the historic assets of Car Dyke and Denny Abbey?
	How can we bring the airfield's history and the role of the Engineers alive within the future design and commemoration?
Environment and Conservation: Biodiversity	What type of open space and parklands best protect, integrate and enhance habitats?
Flooding and drainage	<p>We are aware of the existing problems with flooding and are studying the hydrology in detail. So far we know this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New foul drainage infrastructure will be essential to increase capacity across the local area • Major investment in potable water would accompany water efficiency systems in the new development • There are existing water courses and ponds that can be integrated as part of a new sustainable water drainage

	system, and become attractive landscape features.
	Do you agree?
Transport	What do you think of safe cycle routes running to Cambridge?
	What bus services do you want?
	How often do you use the Park&Ride?

Feedback Forms

- 2.2 Feedback forms were provided at the Open Day events. Visitors were asked to complete a feedback form and submit this to U&C; either to be collected at the event venue, returned to either the Waterbeach Barracks Guardhouse, the Parish Council office letterbox or to a feedback box located in the local butchers shop. An address for return by post was provided on the form.
- 2.3 The feedback form presented an unstructured opportunity for respondents to provide comments on the 8 key themes and a box for additional general comments. A copy of the feedback form can be downloaded from the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield website (www.waterbeachbarracks.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2015/10/15.10.14_Feedback-Form.pdf)
- 2.4 Online and printable versions of the feedback form were made available on the Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield website (www.waterbeachbarracks.co.uk). The email address of U&Cs Stakeholder and Community Liaison representative was also provided. Additional comments have been submitted via email and online using these facilities.

3.0 BROAD RESPONSE TO KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 A total of 61 feedback forms have been submitted to U&C. Five further emails were received.
- 3.2 Analysis of the comments made by stakeholders has been undertaken. The following common trends within responses can be identified for each of the 8 key issues.

Housing and Development*The Principle of Development*

- 3.3 The responses provided upon the feedback forms outline broad support for the principle of the development of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site to provide new housing. Notwithstanding this, the responses include a range of concerns which are noted in more detail below.

Affordability, Type, Quality and Sustainability of New Housing

- 3.4 A number of responses signal support for the provision of affordable housing through the development of the site. Many respondents note that the existing value of property in Waterbeach limits opportunities for families to move around and up the housing ladder locally as their circumstances change. Respondents suggest that access to the housing market for first time buyers is constrained within Waterbeach.
- 3.5 On this basis, there is a preference in the responses for the provision of a variety of house types and sizes. Respondents suggest that a range of market and affordable houses can support the formation of an integrated community and also help to meet local affordable housing needs. Respondents highlight a requirement to increase the currently limited local supply of suitable accommodation for older and disabled people.
- 3.6 One respondent suggested that existing accommodation at Waterbeach Barracks could be utilised to help supplement the supply of affordable housing locally in the short term. The respondent noted that this would also support the existing primary school based upon the suggestion that pupil numbers had decreased since the closure of Waterbeach Barracks as a military facility in March 2013.
- 3.7 Comments suggest that there is a preference for high quality traditional housing design, a low density layout, generous streets and open spaces. However, varied house design was generally considered to be important.
- 3.8 The suggestion that new housing is constructed to high environmental standards in order to limit future energy demands is a strong trend. Respondents also highlight the opportunity to utilise renewable sources of energy to meet future household energy needs.
- 3.9 One respondent suggested that plots for sell-build accommodation should be provided within the development.

Potential for Impacts on Existing Character and Facilities of Waterbeach Village

- 3.10 Some respondents express concern that new development could impact upon the existing character and facilities of Waterbeach village, in relation to the potential scale and pace of housing development. These respondents suggest that, whilst development could take place at the site, this growth should be limited in scale, should be integrated with the existing built form of the village, should be within small phases and that an open character with generous green spaces should be provided. In relation to this issue, one respondent suggested that "strong landscaping" to the existing boundaries of the site should be limited.

3.11 One respondent suggested that development should only take place upon the existing Waterbeach Barracks land and that all existing green spaces, including fields and the airfield should be retained. This response also advises that consideration should be given to preserving several of the existing “RAF” buildings through consultation with the Waterbeach Military Heritage Museum.

3.12 One respondent requested that further information (mapping) is provided to indicate potential timeframes for development and the provision of new facilities.

Opportunity to Support New Facilities

3.13 The opportunity to provide new facilities that would benefit the existing village as well as new housing was generally welcomed by respondents. The opportunity for new housing development to support a new supermarket was noted by one respondent.

Potential for Environmental Impacts

3.14 A limited number of respondents highlighted concerns in relation to wildlife and ecology through the delivery of housing. These respondents noted the importance of retaining existing natural features and vegetation as well as creating new wildlife corridors through the site.

3.15 Two respondents outline that farmland in this part of Cambridgeshire is “*the most productive*” in England. These respondents suggest that existing land in arable use should be retained for this purpose and excluded from the development of the site.

3.16 One respondents suggested that additional sewerage facilities would be required and that odour impacts emanating from the existing Waterbeach Waste Management Park could be a concern.

Health & Education

3.17 Responses to this issue were clear that the requirement for new health, welfare, schools and family services must be given careful consideration. New facilities should be planned to align with increased demand.

Schools

3.18 The provision of new schools was generally welcomed. The potential for a new secondary school was supported within a number of responses. The responses suggest that a secondary school would be a real asset to the existing village and the new community.

3.19 The response to the potential for new primary schools was mixed. A number of respondents suggested that there would be a limited requirement for new primary schools, some suggest that only one new school should be built which could be expanded as necessary to accommodate new demand.

3.20 One respondent suggested that the existing primary school could be an “*important focus*” for the earliest newcomers and that new primary school provision could be a valuable factor in stimulating connections between new residents.

Health facilities

3.21 A number of responses indicated the need for additional healthcare facilities including:

- GP surgeries
- Pharmacy

- Health centre
- Dentist
- Vets

Recreational Facilities

Swimming

- 3.22 Comments from the local community suggest that there is a desire for the swimming pool at Waterbeach Barracks to be brought back into use. U&C have explained that due to irreparable damage to the swimming pool prior to the closure of the Barracks, it was not feasible to bring the swimming pool into temporary use.
- 3.23 A number of the responses suggest a preference for new swimming facilities to be provided as part of the new development as a priority. Some of these responses also suggested that the existing lake could be used for outdoor swimming.

Other Sporting Facilities

- 3.24 Most responses suggest that provision of new sporting facilities should be made through the development of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site and the broader local plan allocation area. Such facilities include:
- All weather pitches
 - Golf
 - Fishing
 - Archery
 - Tennis
 - Gym facilities
 - Sailing/boating/water sports
 - Athletics
- 3.25 One respondent noted that it will be important that new recreational facilities do not compete with existing recreational facilities within Waterbeach village. This respondent also suggested that the provision of new facilities within the development can help to simulate connections and integration between the existing community and a new community of people living in new houses.

Open Spaces and Amenity

- 3.26 The opportunity for the provision of a country park was supported by responses. Respondents also supported the potential to provide a range of open spaces and areas of amenity, new walking and cycling routes and the creation of new connections to Wicken Fen and cultural facilities. One response suggested that connections to the river should be improved.

Other Recreational Facilities

- 3.27 The use of existing facilities at Waterbeach Barracks on a temporary basis was supported in responses.
- 3.28 One respondent suggested that the site be made available on a temporary basis for local horse riders to use as an alternative to existing local riding facilities.
- 3.29 Other recreational facilities suggested within responses include:
- Library facilities
 - Cinema facilities

- New arts and cultural facilities
- Community spaces, facilities and buildings
- Advices facilities such as space for Citizens Advice
- New faith facilities
- Bridleways

Business and Employment

Independent Business and Shops Providing Local Employment Opportunities

- 3.30 A number of responses in relation to this key issue suggest that it will be important to plan for the provision of a range of employment uses. Some respondents would like to see accommodation for new business and SME's to support local entrepreneurialism. One respondent suggested that businesses would be attracted by the provision of high quality communications infrastructure such as 4G mobile data services, investment in transport infrastructure including public transport and parking facilities.
- 3.31 The development of new shops, pubs, large scale retail and restaurants was identified as an opportunity for new local employment. One respondent suggested that new employment development should be limited to office and retail uses only.
- 3.32 The provision of a range of employment uses was noted as having the potential to help 'internalise' some vehicular trips that would otherwise be made to employment elsewhere.

The Creation of Improved Links to Cambridge and Other Employment Opportunities

- 3.33 Whilst the provision of employment uses on site was generally supported, a number of respondents highlighted the opportunity to provide enhanced connections (road, rail, cycle and public transport links) to Cambridge and other important employment centres such as Cambridge Science Park and Cambridge Research Park.

Use of Existing Buildings for Employment Uses

- 3.34 Two responses suggested that existing unused buildings at Waterbeach Barracks should be brought into temporary use to provide new employment opportunities.

Limiting Employment and Business Uses

- 3.35 Two respondents highlighted concerns that the provision of new retail uses within the development would attract trade away from existing village shops. One response suggested that new employment uses should be limited to a single shop.

Environment and Conservation: Cultural amenities

Consideration of the Setting for Denny Abbey

- 3.36 Some responses highlighted the proximity of Denny Abbey and the important rural/fenland setting and context.

Retention of Historic Features

- 3.37 Many responses highlighted the opportunity to incorporate 'features' of the Barracks and its history into the new development in order to maintain a connection with the sites military heritage which is considered to be important to the village.

Facilities

- 3.38 Most responses suggested facilities which could be provided within the landscape of the development. Suggestions included:
- Allotments
 - Cafés
 - An arts centre to provide facilities for local artists. One respondent highlighted that there are many artists in Waterbeach
 - The retention of a museum for a collection relating to the sites military heritage. A location next to the memorial garden was considered to be appropriate.
 - Leisure and sporting facilities
 - Facilities for live music
 - Library facilities
 - Additional areas of open water within the development reflecting the existing lake
 - Pedestrian and cycle access to the existing lake, memorial garden and Denny Abbey

Environment & Conservation: Biodiversity

Conservation

- 3.39 The desire for the conservation of the existing landscape and vegetation was a clear trend within responses. Most responses to this theme suggest that the existing trees and the lake should be retained and incorporated within the landscape of the development.
- 3.40 A number of respondents suggest that it will be important to maintain connections across the site for wildlife.
- 3.41 One respondent requests that ecological surveys should be made available to the public as soon possible and that local knowledge should be drawn upon to develop a broader understanding of the site. Other respondents suggested that the local Wildlife Trust could be engaged to provide local expertise.

Flooding & Drainage

- 3.42 Flooding and drainage is a key concern locally as outlined on most responses to this issue. Many respondents highlight issues of historic flooding within the village. A number of respondents highlight flooding in 2014/15 which they attribute to recent development on Bannold Road.

Detailed Evidence and Flood Mitigation

- 3.43 Given the concerns outlined above, many responses request additional detail in relation to flood mitigation proposals for the development of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site and that such proposals are supported by a robust evidence base. Notwithstanding this, a number of responses indicate support for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and acknowledge that flood risk will be given necessary consideration by U&C.

Transport

- 3.44 The key issue of transport attracted the most responses to the consultation. Most of the completed forms include comments relating to existing transport issues and suggestions of opportunities for improving the quality of existing transport infrastructure through investment. Various responses suggest that comprehensive strategic transport planning will be required to resolve local transport concerns.

Existing Issues and Impact on Existing Village

- 3.45 Many of the responses highlighted an existing problem with vehicles using village roads as a rat-run to avoid the A10 and traffic getting into Cambridge during busy times. This issue is considered to be particularly acute around the church and the railway station.
- 3.46 Most respondents highlight concerns relating to capacity on the A10, poor existing public transport connections to Cambridge, poor pedestrian and cycle links (locally and to Cambridge) and a lack of capacity at the existing railway station.
- 3.47 Many responses suggested that the current situation could be exacerbated unless necessary investment in new infrastructure or improvement to existing infrastructure is made in line with the development of the site.
- 3.48 One respondent suggested that investment in new highway infrastructure should be a priority over any other infrastructure investment.

Investment in the A10

- 3.49 Most of the responses note that the A10 is considered to be 'at capacity'. Various responses suggest that investment should be made to deliver new highway infrastructure to relieve the existing situation. A small number of these responses suggest that a new 'off-line' route for the A10 should be created but most responses on this issue suggest that investment should be made to dual the A10.
- 3.50 The opportunity to invest in improvements at the Milton Interchange is also noted on one response form.

Waterbeach Railway Station

- 3.51 The future of rail provision at Waterbeach featured prominently within responses. There was a mixed response to this issue with approximately two thirds of the responses (to this specific issue) suggesting that the existing station should be retained. Many of these responses outline that the existing location of the station is appropriate for existing residents. Those suggesting that the station should be retained felt that better facilities should be provided - new ticket machines, additional train services, extension of platforms to accommodate 8 carriage trains - and that new car parking facilities would be required to support growth at Waterbeach.
- 3.52 Most of the remaining comments suggest that a new station should be constructed. One respondent suggested that a free/cheap shuttlebus could provide a connection to the relocated station for the existing village.
- 3.53 Two respondents felt that the existing station should be retained alongside the construction of a new station to serve the development to the north.

Bus Service and Other Public Transport Improvements

- 3.54 Alongside investment in rail infrastructure, a number of respondents highlighted the opportunity to improve bus services as sustainable alternative to car and rail transport so that services run 7 days a week including Sundays.
- 3.55 The opportunity to relocate park and ride facilities so that services can be accessed by sustainable transport modes from the new development was noted by one respondent. The current park and ride services and facilities at Milton were considered to be inadequate, with poor facilities, expensive and with limited services. One respondent

suggested that a new park and ride facilities should be provided within the development proposals alongside a retained facility at the Milton Interchange.

- 3.56 The provision of a new guided busway to connect to the existing guided busway network was supported in a number of responses.
- 3.57 One respondent suggested that a river taxi service should be considered which could provide a connection between Bottisham Locks to Jesus Green in the centre of Cambridge.

Cycle and Walking Routes

- 3.58 A number of responses received suggest that new walking and cycling connections should be made. Most of these suggestions were focused upon links to Cambridge to encourage sustainable modes of transport for travel to work and services within the city. Of note, the following improvements were suggested:
- Cycle connection for Sustrans Route number 11 from Waterbeach to Wicken Fen/Ely
 - Cycle routes into Cambridge along the river and A10/Milton
 - Improved cycle path alongside A10
 - Cycle path between Waterbeach and Horningsea
 - Links to Denny Abbey re-opened.
- 3.59 One respondents suggested that local knowledge could be used to inform the alignment of new cycle routes to connect to Denny Abbey and Wicken Fen.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The majority of comments received following the Open Day's undertaken by U&C on Saturday 17th and Wednesday 21st October 2015 are positive and acknowledge that the potential development of the Waterbeach Barracks & Airfield site and the wider part of the draft local plan allocation is an important opportunity to deliver new housing, infrastructure, open spaces and facilities which can serve the new community and the existing village.
- 4.2 Of note, one respondent highlighted the importance of understanding the character of the existing village and its community. The respondent suggested that it will be important to take positive steps to integrate the new development with the village. The respondent commented that ensuring that the new community has a connection with the existing character of Waterbeach and its heritage can help to foster integration whilst also providing the opportunity for the development of the site to establish its own identity which can be part of the wider story/history of the village.
- 4.3 Notably, the feedback received through this consultation provides valuable information relating to the type of facilities which could be delivered to support the existing community at Waterbeach village. For example, there was clear support for a new secondary school and for new swimming facilities to be provided.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding this broad support for the principle of development, the feedback received indicates that local stakeholders have concerns relating to the potential for new development. These concerns relate to the scale and rate of growth, the relationship between the character of the existing village and new development and concerns relating to the capacity of existing transport infrastructure to accommodate additional demands.
- 4.5 The common trends resulting from the consultation are outlined within the following table.

Key Issue	Summarised Common Trends
Housing and Development	The current supply of affordable housing is a key local concern.
	The provision of new market, affordable housing to meet local need was welcomed by most respondents.
	The provision of suitable accommodation for older and disabled people was also supported.
	There is a strong desire for new housing to be constructed to high environmental standards in order to limit future energy demands.
	The opportunity for innovation to utilise renewable sources of energy to meet future needs was highlighted by respondents.
	Respondents outlined concerns that the potential scale of development would impact the character of the existing village.
	Integration between the existing village and new development was generally supported.
Health and Education	Comments on this issue suggest that new health, welfare and school facilities would be welcomed but the delivery of these facilities should be planned to align with increased demand as development commences.
	The potential for a new secondary school to serve the new development and the existing village was strongly supported.
	The response to the potential provision of new primary schools was more mixed. There was support for new

	provision but a suggestion that the number of new primary schools should be limited.
Recreational Facilities	Many respondents regret that the swimming facilities at the Barracks could not be retained on a temporary basis.
	There is a strong desire for new swimming facilities to be included within the development proposals alongside a range of other sporting facilities.
Business and Employment	There is general support for the provision of new employment space within the new development.
	Space to accommodate new businesses and SMEs to support local entrepreneurialism would be welcomed.
Environment and Conservation: Cultural amenities	Many responses highlighted the opportunity to incorporate 'features' of the Barracks and its history into the new development to maintain a connection with the sites military heritage.
	Considering the setting of Denny Abbey.
Environment and Conservation: Biodiversity	Existing landscape features such as vegetation, trees and the lake should be retained and incorporated into the landscape of the development.
Flooding and drainage	Flood risk is a key concern locally.
	Respondents highlighted local flooding in 2014/15 which they attribute to development at Bannold Road.
	Respondents request more detail in relation to flood mitigation measures that could be implemented and that such measures are based upon a robust evidence base.
	There was support for the delivery of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and acknowledgement that this issue will be given the necessary consideration by U&C.
Transport	Most responses to the consultation highlight that the A10 has existing capacity issues, reference issues with capacity at Waterbeach Station, rat-running of traffic through the village, poor public transport and cycle links to Cambridge and poor walking and cycling links locally.
	A limited number of respondents suggest that a new off-line route to Cambridge should be created for the A10.
	Other respondents suggest that this route should be dualled with improvements made to the A14 junction.
	There was a mixed response to the future of the railway station. Some respondents felt that the station should be retained in its current location but that facilities should be improved. A smaller number suggested that a new station should be provided. Two respondents suggested that the existing station should be retained alongside the delivery of a new station serving the new development.
	Improvements to bus services were suggested including extending the operation of services to Sunday.
	The potential to relocate the park and ride facilities at Milton to a position closer to Waterbeach was supported.
	The provision of a new guided busway to connect to the existing guided busway network was supported in a number of responses.
	New/enhanced cycle routes to Cambridge were supported.
	Improved local cycle routes were also welcomed.

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