

Meeting with Wates re Stocks Farm development – 5th November 2021

Attendees:

Meryl Baker – Wates

Lorea Johnston – Wates

Holly Gardiner – Wates

James Belvis – i-transport

Robin Shepherd – Barton Willmore

Marlies Koustaal - Cratus

Tony Durrant, Bramley Parish Council

Keith Oborn, Bramley Parish Council

Malcolm Bell, Bramley Parish Council,

Chris Flooks, Bramley Parish Council

Chris Tomblin, Bramley Parish Council/Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

Maxta Thomas, Bramley Parish Council

Nick Robinson, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

Simon Mahaffey, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

Ken Rhatigan – Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

Meryl Baker welcomed everyone. She started off a slide presentation, which Holly took further. Key statements from the presentation are as follows:

- Wates opened with examples of projects that Wates have worked on Basingstoke, such as Kennel Farm, Hatch Warren School, and Hounsme Fields. Wates are aware of BDBC's climate change agenda. Wates Group is still privately owned, and they claim very much community led.
- The current BDBC housing supply shortage was noted, which is a major reason for bringing plans forward now. Wates are trying to address the land supply problem, and with the Local Plan Update not scheduled to be ready until 2024, this land is available and deliverable now.
- On site facilities – they have noted an identified need in the NDP for a skate park, and for a bowling green. There are plans for a co-working community hub – it was noted that the Village Hall is lacking a garden, which this supplies and would be shared space between the two facilities. It will also be a working hub and a café. Wates are still collating ideas for the building. There is also an area of allotments – Wates have proposed double the number that the site would require so would serve the wider community.
- There will be 40 acres of public open space, which will include a trim trail, community orchards, a kickabout space, and ecological enhancements. An Electric car club vehicle will be supplied. Eco enhancements include wildflower meadows, and retaining existing trees and hedges. There will also be new connections into the wider footpath network. Open spaces would be secured in s106 and covenanted to stop any further development.
- 56 much needed affordable homes will be supplied by this site, which will help some of the 4,923 household backlog in Basingstoke. This has increased by 62% in last 5 years. The majority of the development will be 3 beds or less, with a good mix of housing to cater for differing needs. Skate park and bowling green as identified in NDP. Provision of allotments to help with local waiting list. It is rare for developments to offer as much open space as this one does.
- Wates Group environmental targets and statistics - Wates have planted 10,420 trees have been planted in the last two years, 81% of energy demand has been from renewable sources, savings of 8,036 tonnes of CO2 emissions. Wates also picked up on six themes from

the BDBC Climate Change Emergency, and how their proposal is in line with this. The slides give more information.

- Sustainability – Wates have looked at the site in relation to the three pillars of sustainability; social, economic and environmental. Social measures include enhanced pedestrian links, extensive green spaces, new community facilities. Economic measures include a local economic boost, job creation, and financial contributions from CIL. Environmental measures include biodiversity measures, areas for wildlife, electric car charging and EV car club, rainwater harvesting. It was noted that Bramley PC will receive 25% of the £2million CIL levy.
- Highways/access – Wates have been through a thorough technical process with HCC to ensure that the access point is acceptable in terms of design, safety and accessibility. There will be a comprehensive travel plan to encourage sustainable travel – the car club is a key part of this; in partnership with Lex Leasing they will provide one Electric Vehicle. No details were provided on how this will be managed. There has been detailed modelling and close scrutiny of the level crossing. There will be an impact on the level crossing, but this should be surprisingly modest – the longest queue at present takes 357 seconds to disperse – after this development is complete, it should take 3 seconds longer, at 360 seconds. The transport assessment will be open to scrutiny from the Parish Council, BDBC, and HCC Highways, as well as the wider community.
- It was again noted that there will be CIL contributions of £2million which will go towards new school places and existing healthcare infrastructure amongst other infrastructure items. 25% of this will go to Bramley PC. Wates noted that it is rare for a scheme of this type to have the proposed on-site facilities. They are exploring an option for a shop.
- After consulting with waste water suppliers, Wates believe that the sewage network has enough capacity for half of the development and an upgrade for the rest will be delivered within 20 months of application approval. Wates are liaising directly with Thames Water in relation to local concern. Wates stated that they are aware of conditions placed on previous permissions in the Borough with regards to waste water provision, and that this is something that they would agree to.
- Wates noted that greenfield development is a contentious matter, but believe that the proposed scheme and facilities outweigh any concerns.

This concluded the presentation from Wates, who then invited questions from members of Bramley PC and BDBC:

- Cllr Nick Robinson asked about the Wates statement on CO2 emissions and asked for context. Wates stated that this is one of Wates Group statistics and is related to what had been achieved as a saving in 2020.
- Cllr Nick Robinson – will the open space and community hub be open to existing residents? It was confirmed that this would be the case. Open space will be managed initially through a management company. Funding for open space maintenance will come from the income from a residents management fee, which will include the bowling green (initially) and skate park. For the Community Hub, Wates have been liaising with a local company (IncuHive) about kitting it out and running it. They will then take it on as a freehold building and they will rent out rooms etc. Cllr Robinson expressed concern about the management fee covering the bowling green etc. Wates stated that the bowling green would need to take up from a club to enable them to deliver it – Wates need to explore this further. It could possibly be managed by the Council. Cllr Robinson stated that he would be looking for some kind of bond in perpetuity to maintain open spaces.
- Cllr Chris Tomblin – How many leaflets were sent to the local community, and where were they distributed. Wates stated that 950 leaflets were sent out across Bramley, covering the whole of the west side of level crossing and some way to the east. They also noted the website and also the social media posts.

- Cllr Simon Mahaffey – he believes that Wates need to think about what they mean about sustainability.
- CO2 impact – the baseline for this site is as a greenfield site, therefore there would be no saving. Wates responded that the figure quoted does not relate to this particular development, but Wates targets overall. Cllr Mahaffey requested sight of the calculations that they have used.
- There is no reference at this stage on the design of houses – Cllr Mahaffey wants to see passive houses, solar panels, heat exchangers, etc, but there is no mention of this in the proposals. Wates responded that this is an outline scheme at present. They are liaising with consultants about sustainability issues. The pond is an attenuation basin. Engineers are looking at reusing water on site to provide a water supply to allotments and bowling green.
- He further stated that open spaces in and of themselves do not promote biodiversity. Wates stated that the site is agricultural at the moment and therefore fairly limited on biodiversity. This scheme has wildflower meadows, and hedges and trees will be left in place.
- Sewage issues in Bramley are major, and have not been dealt with as Wates stated. Wates responded that they do have in writing from Thames Water that the exiting network will cope with 50% of the proposal and deal with rest as stated before. Wates are happy to share more information when they have it.
- Cllr Mahaffey noted that Bramley is cited at Borough level as a place where infrastructure is lacking. Wates responded that the CIL contribution should help with this; however, they did not expand this point and it is unknown exactly how this would help.
- Cllr Mahaffey further noted strategic issues – the level crossing can have up to 48 minute wait times, the Surgery is at capacity, the school is nearly at capacity.
- Cllr Durrant enquired when their transport study was it carried out. Wates confirmed that traffic surveys were undertaken in Sept/Oct 2021. Cllr Durrant noted the Bramley PC transport studies, which were undertaken pre-Covid. Traffic volumes are at present lower than they were pre-Covid, and are likely to increase again in the future. The number of houses will be 140, which means there are likely to be around 200 cars which will cause a considerable burden on the C32. Cllr Durrant stated that he is not convinced their traffic studies really reflect what is likely to happen. Wates stated that the transport assessment has been robustly produced, and would recommend that Cllrs read it before they disagree with it (the study has not been provided for reading at this stage). New houses will not cause a ‘severe’ impact on traffic movements in the village. Cllr Durrant noted that it will form part of the cumulative impact on Bramley.
- Cllr Durrant asked who would be managing the orchards, and how they would be managed. Wates stated that they would be managed by a management company or by the council. The idea is that the local community take ownership of such areas.
- Cllr Ken Rhatigan noted that 140 houses will not have a major impact on the housing numbers for BDBC. The application will definitely go to committee. Wates noted that the land supply figures are a ‘moveable feast’, and that until a complete Local Plan is in place then the BDBC area is going to be vulnerable. Cllr Rhatigan replied that they should be basing plans on what they can deliver, rather than on what the housing supply numbers are, since this may well change in the near future. BDBC will fight the housing land supply issues. Wates should be focusing on what do have control over, rather than what they don’t. Wates stated that these proposals have a much wider offering than just addressing housing numbers and noted the open space plans and chargeable community hub. They also stated that Wates do not land bank and do not hang around on building once they have permission.
- He asked why Wates have come in with an outline application when BDBC need to assess the sustainability in full and would prefer a full application. The proposals cannot be properly assessed until all the data is available. Cllr Rhatigan does not believe that the proposals are supportable in their current form. Wates stated that they would work with developers on the environmental aspects of new houses.

- Wates made a further note on the sewage – the 20 month figure has come from Thames Water, which includes 8 months for modelling. Wates feel that this could well be brought forward if necessary. It is forming part of discussions at present. It should be noted that Bramley PC has received very different information from Thames Water.
- Cllr Flooks asked who at Thames Water is giving them figures, as they not agree with what Bramley PC has been told by Thames Water engineers. He pointed out the very real issues being faced by householders at other new developments in Bramley. Wates stated that their engineers have seen the correspondence on the Bramley PC website, and gave the name of their contact at Thames Water, who deals with pre planning enquiries. Cllr Flooks restated that sewage issues mean Bramley is not suitable at present for any more new houses. He also noted that planning conditions put in on other developments have not been carried out. Wates stated that existing issues at a recent site in Bramley were due to a pump near the site, and that the developer is looking at the issues. Wates noted that the attenuation basins will hopefully prevent surface water entering the sewage system, which is a known issue in Bramley.
- Cllr Robinson noted what Thames Water has said to Bramley and BDBC, and that the existing pipe is not adequate, and that a recent application was rejected on those grounds. He also noted the queues at the level crossing which at busy periods are likely to go past the entrance to their site. There are likely to more trains in the future, which will make this problem worse.
- Cllr Mahaffey noted that Wates and Cllrs are clearly disagreeing on several items of fact and asked for Wates to supply some of the evidence for this. Sewage, transport, CO2.
- Cllr Tomblin echoed Cllr Rhatigan's comments that it is disappointing that there is not a full application at present, just an outline application. The design of the houses will be an important factor in any considerations. Wates stated that they will look at this. The design and access statement will give an indication on some of this.

The meeting closed, with Wates inviting further comments and questions via email.