

Buckton Fields, Northamptonshire

Stakeholder Engagement Report
October 2007



Prepared by Camargue (Cheltenham) Ltd
On behalf of Ensign Group Ltd





Ensign Group Limited

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

**ENSIGN GROUP LIMITED
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON PROPOSALS FOR A
SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION FOR NORTHAMPTON AT
BUCKTON FIELDS**

Summary of stakeholder involvement, public consultation and responses

September 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Public consultation and community engagement have become increasingly important in the planning and development process. It recognises the valuable contribution local people can make in helping to create more integrated and sustainable communities.

This Stakeholder Engagement Report sets out how Ensign Group Limited has engaged with local stakeholders in the planning and development of a sustainable urban extension to Northampton at Buckton Fields.

Buckton Fields has been specifically allocated for new housing in the Daventry District Local Plan and has been confirmed as a sustainable location for development to address the housing needs of Northampton. Ensign Group Limited previously submitted planning applications to develop the Buckton Fields site in 1998 and 2000. In developing its revised outline application, Ensign Group has - where possible - taken on board comments raised previously.

Ensign recognises that development is frequently controversial. As such, throughout March, April, May, June and July 2007, Ensign undertook a comprehensive programme of pre-application community engagement on its emerging plans for the development. This included a public exhibition held over two days on 11 and 12 May 2007. Where appropriate, Ensign proposes to continue this process through the post application phase.

This pre-application consultation process has served to fulfil four primary objectives:

- To provide clear and up-to-date information on the emerging proposals for the local community and political stakeholders involved with the site – in advance of submitting an outline application.
- To engage with the local community and provide the residents living near to the proposed site with an opportunity to give feedback on the plans, prior to the submission of a planning application.
- To seek views on the infrastructure required to ensure the sustainability of Buckton Fields.
- For the consultant team to take on board, as far as is reasonable, feedback from the local community and organisations in the evolving plans for the proposed development.

Please note that all consultation was carried out on behalf of Ensign Group Limited.

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

The Buckton Fields site falls within the jurisdiction of Daventry District Council, but is on the border of Northampton Borough Council and would essentially create an urban extension to Northampton – supporting its regeneration. Given the location of the site, in formulating its consultation strategy, the team spoke with officers from both Daventry District and Northampton Borough Councils.

The form of the consultation was specifically developed with reference to the Daventry District Council Statement of Community Involvement (adopted March 2006) and discussed with council officers. From November 2006, Ensign began a process of ongoing communication with Richard Wood, Daventry District Council Planning Policy and Housing Strategy Manager, to seek his advice on the form that consultation should take.

A proposed consultation strategy was subsequently circulated and executed in a systematic way that would ensure full awareness of the extent of Ensign's engagement with elected members, officers and the community. Mr Wood has been kept updated about letters being written to ward members to try and set up meetings, plus any subsequent contact with key elected members from the council. Details of the consultation programme were also confirmed, including dates, venue and details of the marketing collaterals being produced to inform the public and the extent of the leaflet distribution.

Recognising the importance of engaging with key stakeholders in Northampton, the team has been in touch with officers at Northampton Borough Council and reviewed council guidance on how and whom to consult. As part of this process, Lindsey Ambrose, co-ordinator for Northampton Borough Council Area Partnership's, was contacted to confirm the opportunity to speak at a forthcoming Area Partnership 3 meeting to highlight the consultation process.

Our initial proposal for consultation can be found at *Appendix 1*.

Consultation toolkit

The following tools were created/utilised by Ensign to assist in consulting with the community on its proposal for Buckton Fields. They represent a considered response to Daventry District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (December 2006):

- Scheme website – www.bucktonfields.co.uk
- Scheme leaflet – distributed to 12,500 homes in the area
- E-mail feedback address and hotline phone number (used in all scheme materials)
- Exhibition panels for use at a public exhibition
- Stakeholder matrix to identify who should be addressed and in what way/s
- Letters to stakeholders

- Media pack – to communicate the consultation process through the key local media
- Advertises in key local journals highlighting the times of the exhibition

KEY CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

Presentation to Northampton Borough Council - Area Partnership 3

As a key element of its pre-application engagement - and to help inform the public exhibition - Ensign attended a public meeting of the NBC Area Partnership 3 (which borders the site) on **21 March 2007**. The meeting was advertised in advance in a leaflet distributed by the ward members to 3,000 households in the area (see *Appendix 2*). Consultants attending the meeting gave an overview of the pre-application consultation process and how residents and councillors of Kingsthorpe, St David's and Boughton Green could get involved. Attendees also took the opportunity to highlight specific areas of concern in advance of the exhibition.

The meeting was chaired by Leader of the Liberal Democrats **Councillor Anthony Wood** (St David's), and was also attended by councillors **Sally Beardsworth** (Lib Dem – Kingsthorpe), **Richard Church** (Lib Dem – Kingsthorpe), **Maria-Trinidad Crane** (Lib Dem – Boughton Green), and **John Yates** (Lib Dem – Boughton Green).

Targeted correspondence to elected representatives

Ensign **identified and wrote to elected members** including;

- **Tim Boswell MP** (Conservative – Daventry), **Sally Keeble MP** (Labour - Northampton North), **Philip Hollobone MP** (Conservative - Kettering), **Chris Heaton-Harris MEP** (East Midlands).
- The ward members for the site on both Daventry and Northamptonshire Councils
- Members of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and Northamptonshire County Councils as well as Boughton, Chapel & Church Brampton, Pitsford Parish Councils, and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation members.

The letters advised them of the dates for the public exhibition and supporting advance publicity, copies of the leaflets to be distributed were also enclosed, along with details of a supporting website www.bucktonfields.co.uk. Elected members were also invited to a **preview session** prior to the public exhibition. Where appropriate, individuals were offered one to one briefings. In accordance with Daventry District Council protocol, Planning Committee members were informed that a planning officer would be in attendance.

Creation and distribution of scheme leaflet

Approximately 12,500 leaflets advertising the exhibition and outlining its principle components (see *Appendix 3*) were then distributed to properties in Boughton, Church Brampton, Chapel Brampton, White Hills and Kingsthorpe. The leaflet provided information on Ensign's emerging proposal for the site, the rationale for consultation and details of the public exhibition, venue and contact details. (See *Appendix 4* for map of leaflet distribution that took place and *Appendix 5* for the witness report from the Distribution Company).

The leaflet also served to inform people of a **website** www.bucktonfields.co.uk launched simultaneously to provide more detailed information on the proposals prior to the exhibition, PDF downloads of the display boards once the exhibition had started, plus an **e-mail feedback address** and **hotline number**. These communications tools will remain in place throughout the post application phase.

Advertisements in the local media

Prominent advertisements for the public exhibition were placed in both the *Northampton Chronicle and Echo* and the *Daventry Express* newspapers which with a combined circulation of 34,475 are widely read by residents from across both Daventry district and Northampton borough. The advertisements in both publications appeared on 03 May 2007 – one week prior to the exhibition. (See *Appendix 6*)

Proactive media relations

The **newspaper editors from the Northampton Chronicle and Echo and the Daventry Express were contacted directly by phone** to advise them of the forthcoming exhibition, and invite them to meet with the developers for individual briefings.

A press release was then issued on 25 April (see *Appendix 7*) to the wider regional print and broadcast media to gain additional coverage and encourage more people to attend. Editorial coverage appeared in the *Northampton Chronicle and Echo* on 03 May 2007, this was then followed by another article on 05 May 2007, and a feature covering the exhibition on 12 May 2007 (see *Appendix 8*). **Broadcast coverage** – generated by an active programme of media relations, included news bulletins on *BBC Radio Northampton* advertising the exhibition dates and a news item over the course of the exhibition. A news item also ran on *BBC Look East* following the exhibition on 14 May 2007.

Targeted consultation meetings

On **09 May 2007** a meeting took place with **Adrian Smith** – proprietor of the Smith’s Farm Shop – to discuss different options to keep the shop within the immediate locality if development at Buckton Fields were to go ahead. **A meeting was also held with Fred Tomlinson** of Boughton Quarry regarding the planning application submitted to create an in-vessel composting facility on the quarry site.

Public exhibition to explain and discuss the proposals

The **public exhibition was then held** on Friday 11 May (4pm to 8.30pm) and on Saturday 12 May (10.30am to 1.30pm) at Kingsthorpe Community College, Welford Road Campus, Northfield Way, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.

Elected members, councillors and a Daventry District Planning Officer attended a **preview of the public exhibition on 08 May 2007**. The Land Director of Ensign, as well as members of the planning team and key consultants covering Highways, Planning, Landscape, Flooding and Ecology were on hand throughout the course of the evening to answer specific questions.

Exhibition boards explaining the proposals and detailed plans were on show at the exhibition (included in *Appendix 9*). Over the course of the two days representatives from the Ensign planning team and key consultants covering Highways, Planning, Landscape, Flooding and Ecology were on hand to answer specific questions. These boards are available as downloadable PDFs on the scheme website.

All communications materials contained a **‘hotline’** phone number as well as a **monitored e-mail address** to enable further comment by people unable to attend on the day. Feedback forms were also distributed at the exhibition and details of a freepost address provided for people who wished to write in with further feedback (see *Appendix 10*).

Ongoing engagement

Ensign has undertaken to keep all stakeholders and interested parties, who were happy to provide their contact details, updated on the progress of the proposals and final submission of the application to Daventry District Council. In addition to responding directly to enquiries, this Statement of Community Engagement will be made available as a PDF from www.bucktonfields.co.uk once the final planning application is registered by Daventry District Council.

Summary of Methodology:

- Discussion and confirmation of consultation methodology with Richard Wood
- Writing to key Daventry District Councillors and key stakeholders from Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, Area Partnership 3, WNDC, Tim Boswell MP, Phil Hollobone MP, Sally Keeble MP and Chris Heaton-Harris MEP, Northamptonshire County Councillors, Boughton Parish Council, Chapel & Church Brampton Parish Councils and other key stakeholders
- Presentation of public engagement programme at Area Partnership 3 meeting
- Writing and distributing 12,500 leaflets
- Launching website
- One-to-one meetings with key stakeholders
- Contacting editors at Daventry Express and Northampton Chronicle and Echo
- Press release to all regional print and broadcast media
- Advert and press release regarding the Public Exhibition published in the local media
- Closed exhibition session for elected members
- Meeting with Adrian Smith (Smith's Farm Shop) and Fred Tomlinson (Boughton Quarry – in-vessel composting facility)
- Public Exhibition plus preview event for councillors and other stakeholders
- Ongoing programme to keep interested parties informed of planning application

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

In total over 300 people attended the exhibition including officers and members of Daventry District Council, members of Boughton, Brampton and Pitsford Parish Councils and local Northampton Borough Councillors. On the whole, the discussions were lively and carried out in a constructive manner.

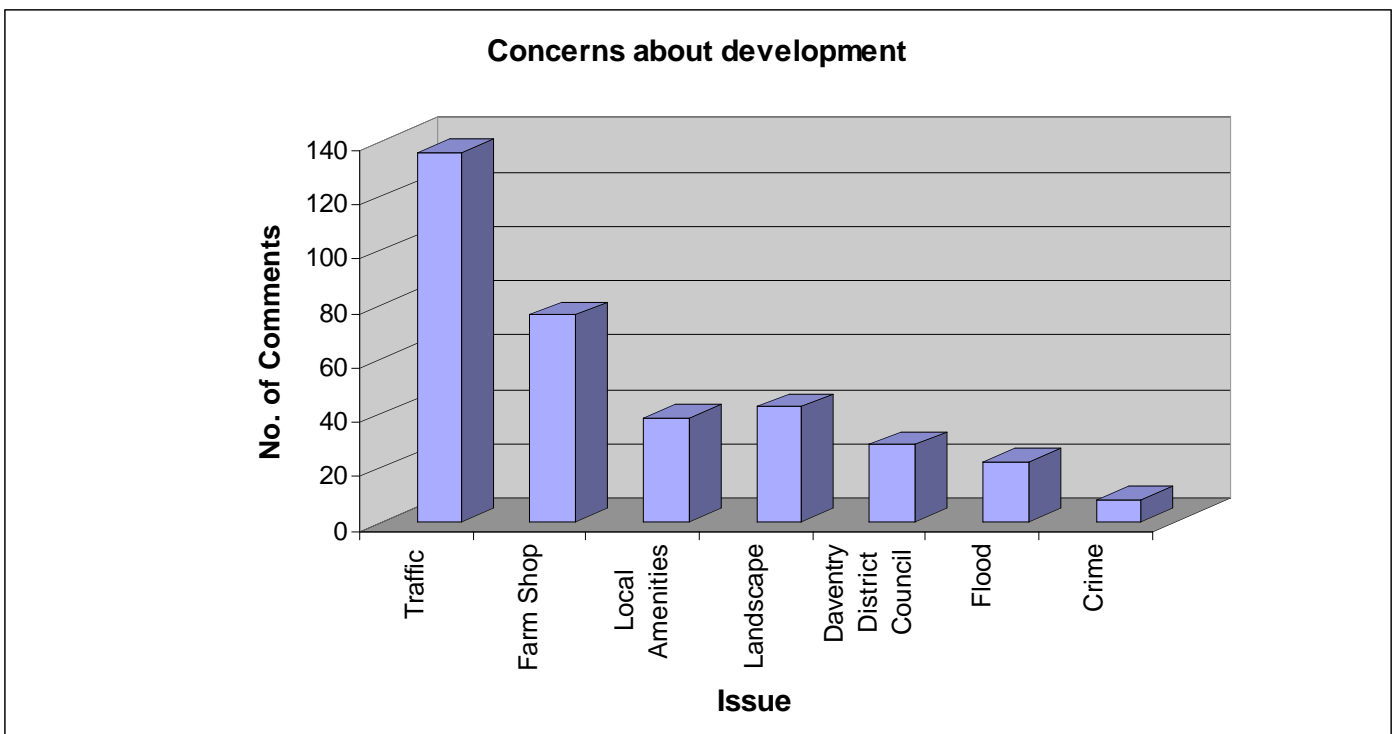
In terms of the comments received, a total of **141** attendees filled in a response form at the event and a further **113** were received by post, e-mail or phone. This means that a total of **254 residents have directly expressed their views on the proposed plans**. Ensign has committed to keeping these people updated on when the application is submitted and further developments with the scheme.

A summary of the issues raised is set out below. Given the interest in transport issues, a separate section has been set out.

Concerns about development

The main reservations concerning development at Buckton Fields can be broken down into the following areas:

- Traffic implications for Brampton Lane, Boughton village, Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe village and Welford Road;
- The need for infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the scheme – including the possibility of a north west bypass
- The future of Smith’s Farm Shop;
- Strain on local amenities; schools, doctor’s surgery, dentist;
- Effect on rural landscape;
- Daventry District Council would give the go-ahead for development at Buckton Fields and not take into account the impact it would have on Northampton residents;
- Flood risk for proposed site and surrounding area; and
- Crime.



Other reasons that were given include:

- Negative effect of development on the value of existing houses in the surrounding area by inclusion of affordable housing;
- Where the incoming population would be coming from; and
- Lack of a green buffer between existing housing and the south edge of the site.

A frequently asked question over the course of the exhibition was for an explanation regarding the increase in the number of homes proposed for the Buckton Fields site in the current emerging proposal compared with the previous application; 1,000 to 1,500. Whilst only **eight per cent** directly stated this concern in feedback, the point verbally made by both members of the public and key stakeholders was that the proposals would be more readily accepted if Ensign were to decrease the number of homes proposed for the site.

Notably, **56 per cent** of feedback regarding concern about the potential loss of Smith's Farm Shop was received after the exhibition – in part as a result of a campaign mounted by the Smith's requesting that customers lobby to keep the shop on site. The campaign also generated coverage in the Northampton Chronicle and Echo.

The exhibition was an important opportunity to address these issues and, discuss in more detail, the impact and benefits that the proposed development would bring.

Wider responses

Ensign recognises that many local residents have a long-standing concern about development at Buckton Fields, as well as at other sites located around Northampton.

However, a number of positive comments were made about the plans:

- **12 per cent** of residents indicated they would support development at Buckton Fields as long as adequate infrastructure was first put in place to deal with the increase in population; and
- A number of people cited their support for provision of more affordable housing in the area and the proposal to build three storey homes only towards the centre of the site was regarded as favourable.

Some of the positive comments were:

- Encouraged that developers were involving the local community in the planning process;
- Good provision for open areas was included in the masterplan;

In terms of housing style, traditional housing is favoured over modern or contemporary design. Every resident that expressed his or her views on housing asserted that this was important so that new development remains in keeping with the surrounding area. The need

to incorporate sustainable products in the design such as renewable energy technologies and water conservation systems was also acknowledged.

In general, people wanted to know when work would start on the development and when the first houses would be available for purchase in the event planning permission was granted. Residents were also interested to know how planning permission for the application to turn the existing Brampton Quarry into an in-vessel composting facility, might impact on development at Buckton Fields.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC CONCERNS REGARDING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensign recognises that traffic is a key issue for local residents in relation to the proposed development at Buckton Fields, and has carried out a number of in-depth studies and surveys to assess how best to minimise the impact of development on the existing transport network.

The exhibition actively sought feedback from people on specific issues and areas of concern regarding the existing traffic infrastructure, and improvements that could be made to cater for development. This was an opportunity to gain insight into the kind of provision people felt was required to effectively cope with any additional population.

38 per cent of people responding to the proposals expressed concern about the current number of cars on the Northampton roads and a fear that development might lead to increased congestion and traffic queues. To a lesser degree concerns that an increase in traffic could contribute to an increase in exhaust and noise pollution and a reduction in car-parking availability were also cited. The issue of how construction activity would impact on the transport network while development was in progress was also raised.

Suggestions for improvements included:

- Bus routes – three per cent suggested direct bus routes linking to key employment zones in the town;
- Delivery schedule – six per cent suggested that adequate transport infrastructure improvements should be in place to deal with additional traffic before construction of new houses started;
- North West Bypass – three per cent felt that completion of the proposed North West Bypass is key to relieving traffic congestion.

In response to the recommendations for traffic infrastructure improvements put forward by Ensign to deal with the predicted increase in traffic, eight per cent of people stated that they would not use the proposed Park and Ride scheme and previous similar schemes had failed to work in Northampton. In addition, with reference to proposed traffic calming measures, it

was noted that Boughton residents specifically felt they would spoil the rural aspect of villages neighbouring the site.

Other considerations

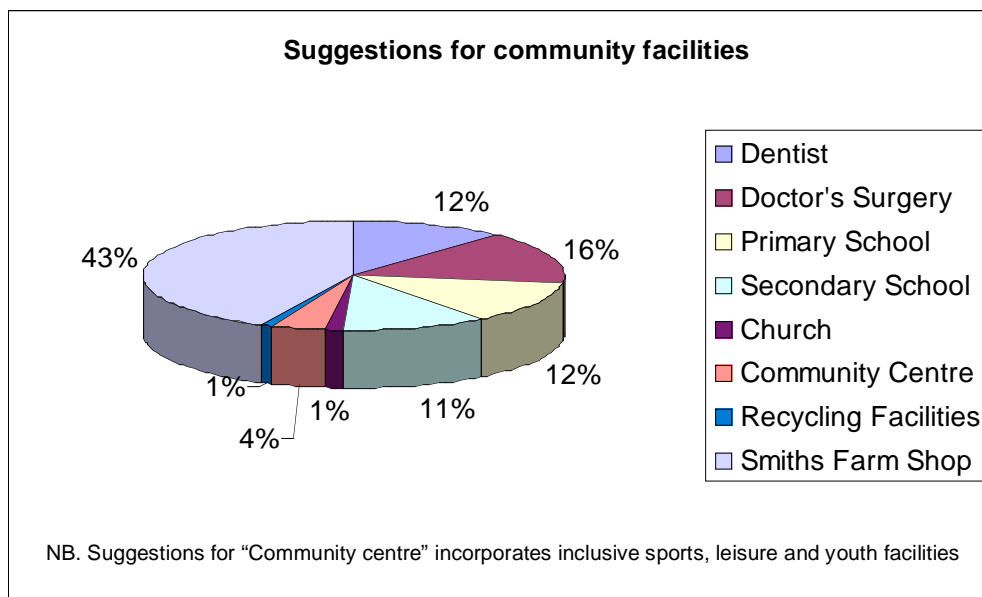
The consultation revealed a number of interesting issues of perception. For instance, representatives of Boughton Parish Council stated at the exhibition that they considered traffic flow in the area to have “grown by 50% since 2001”. They subsequently provided the figures for a traffic count they undertook in October 2001 for comparison with that delivered by Ensign in March 2006. Although the traffic counts were undertaken at different ends of the village it is worth noting that despite public perceptions the figures from the two studies closely mirror each other.

In response to feedback received during the consultation process the transport strategy for Buckton Fields has been refined.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SITE

The proposals set out to offer a sustainable urban extension to Northampton, which will support and enhance the existing development at Kingsthorpe and White Hills. As part of their consultation programme, Ensign actively sought suggestions for infrastructure to possibly include on the site, which would help achieve this goal. This was an important opportunity to understand directly what people felt the area requires and to guide the evolution of the development proposals.

Some of the key suggestions for the site included:



The development team has looked closely at these suggestions in formulating its final proposals. Most importantly given local concerns, it is in dialogue with the Smith's about the possibility of retaining their shop on site or in the vicinity of Buckton Fields.

HOW ENSIGN HAS RESPONDED TO THE CONSULTATION

Public consultation played an important role in the development of Ensign's planning application for Buckton Fields, Northampton, and we welcomed the opportunity to engage with a wide range of stakeholders at the public exhibition. We have consequently worked hard to robustly address those issues raised by members of the public and interested parties and, where possible, constructive comments have been used to help shape the final scheme.

We believe that the changes we have been able to make between consultation and the submission of our application will help to make our scheme better suited to the site and more sustainable.

- Creation of a green buffer between the Whitehills Estate and the site - this will help to minimise the scheme's immediate impact on its neighbours
- Reduction in housing numbers from 1,500 to 1,250 – this will enable us to achieve lower densities and, facilitated by the green buffer further reduce the developments impact on the existing community
- Discussion with the proprietors of Smiths Farm Shop – the final masterplan now provides for the provision / retention of the farm shop

In light of the feedback received during the pre-application consultation process we have taken the opportunity to review our ecological surveys and looked again at areas highlighted by members of the public. The public consultation demonstrated a clear concern about the possibility of flooding. Ensign has been able to respond to these queries and give reassurances that the risk of flooding has been comprehensively assessed and a strategy developed which will meet the requirements of the Environment Agency.

Like flood risk, the impact of the proposals on the local and strategic highways network has been extensively assessed. It was clear from consultation that many consultees have more faith in new road programmes than in policy shifts to secure a modal shift to public transport. Nevertheless, Ensign has reviewed consultation responses and is looking at:

- Proposals to include bus routes to employment areas;
- A commitment to phasing so that improved public transport measures are in place before development; and

- A willingness to work with stakeholders to ensure any traffic calming measures are honed to reflect local concerns

CONCLUSION

This was a positive programme of consultation, which saw over 300 members of the public and interested parties attend the exhibition. Ensign has recognised the issues raised and has looked to take the feedback on board in creating its final application. Should this outline application be successful, the programme can also play a role in helping inform subsequent detailed applications for the site.

In addition, Ensign has committed to keeping the wider stakeholders informed of the progress of its plans by:

- Writing/e-mailing where addresses have been passed on
- Updating the website
- Engaging with key local media
- Keeping elected representatives informed

Prepared by Camargue – September 2007

APPENDIX 1 – Buckton Fields Proposal for Public Engagement

28 November 2006

Overview

Camargue is working on behalf of Ensign Group Ltd, which is considering submitting an application for residential development at Buckton Fields, Boughton in Northamptonshire.

The application site is approximately 50ha in total and Ensign would be proposing a mixed-use development including approximately 1,500 residential dwellings together with:

- Employment;
- Primary school;
- Park and Ride;
- Public open space; and
- Associated community/transport infrastructure.

The site falls within the jurisdiction of Daventry District Council, but is on the border of Northampton Borough Council. We recognise the importance of ensuring both councils are kept up to speed with our development proposals and welcome the opportunity to discuss and engage with elected members, officers and the community.

Having spoken with officers at both Daventry District Council and Northampton Borough Council, this document sets out a proposed programme of public engagement, including a review of the tools the Group would look at using.

Programme assumptions and approach

Ensign is committed to carrying out appropriate and effective pre-application consultation. Due to the size, location and importance of this development for the strategic growth of Northampton, it will be important to give all interested parties a chance to view the proposals and discuss their thoughts with members of the project team. The programme is based on the assumption that an application will be submitted in Spring 2007.

First phase December 2006/January 2007 – initial engagement and development of materials

- Map out key stakeholders - create master database to co-ordinate all communications and ensure we are in a position to respond swiftly to questions

- Approach key stakeholders to establish one-to-one/small group meetings. We would look to approach ward members, Tim Boswell and Sally Keeble MPs, parish councils and community groups
- Development of website setting out proposals for the site – including a feedback mechanism to ensure the public has a chance to comment and engage with the development team. The site will be updated as necessary.
- Establishing a 'helpline' to ensure the team is able to respond swiftly to issues arising and to make up-to-date information available at all times
- Creating a scheme leaflet explaining our proposals and the process for feeding back comments – this would be widely circulated in the areas of Daventry and Northampton adjacent to the site. The leaflet would cover: the vision, details of the site, information about the public exhibition, the proposals, key benefits, what next and contact details

Second phase – active engagement

- Hold pre-application consultation meetings with key stakeholders
- Identify date/venue for public exhibition. We would propose holding the exhibition over two days in a single venue close to the site. Letters and leaflets would be used to invite the local - and wider - community
- Issue scheme leaflet to residents living close to the site – including Boughton, Chapel Brampton and areas within Northampton Borough falling adjacent to the site
- Write to identified stakeholders including wider members of Daventry District Council/West Northamptonshire Development Corporation/Northampton Borough Council and local MPs. We would enclose a copy of the leaflet and clearly set out the consultation process

Media relations

- Place advertisement in local press informing of the exhibition (Northampton Chronicle & Echo/Daventry Express)
- Hold a press briefing for key local media in advance of exhibition – issue press release to wider media
- Write directly to media following the exhibition/at submission of application to set out the consultation conclusions and how we have responded to comments

Post exhibition

- Respond to any outstanding questions – including issues raised on the helpline and website
- Amend scheme as appropriate and communicate the changes
- Develop Statement of Community Engagement for submission with application
- Hold follow-up meetings with key stakeholders as appropriate

Boughton Green

FOCUS



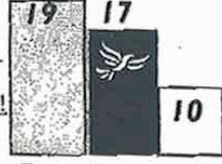
LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS

www.northampton.libdems.org.uk

March 2007 Edited by Trini Crake, David Perkins & John Yates

Only the Lib Dems can beat the Tories in May

Labour have lost seats across Northampton and cannot win in May!



Councillors on Northampton Borough Council

Con L D Lab

HOUSES



John Yates & Trini Crake at Buckton Fields, near Whitehills, where new plans are being drawn up for development.

Dallington Grange

New houses will dominate the skyline if the planning application for 3,500 houses on the Dallington Grange site is approved. The plans can be viewed at www.dallingtongrange.com or at the council's planning department.

If you would like to object, write to the Council at Cliftonville House, Bedford Rd. Northampton or email planning@northampton.gov quoting ref.no. **WN/2006/0193**. The application will be decided by the unelected Development Corporation, set up by the government with Tory support to drive through massive development in and around Northampton.

Buckton Fields

Presentation by the Developers before the planning application is submitted

Area Partnership

Wednesday 21st March
7pm-9pm

Kingsthorpe Community College
Welford Road Site
All Welcome

HOUSES



Pavement repairs

Trini Crake has reported pavements in need of repair in **Barley Lane**. Lib Dem plans for an extra £500,000 to be earmarked specifically to deal with pavements was voted down by County Tories

Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground

The Tory run County Council want to take away this playing pitch on Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground so that they can build 250 houses on the Kingsthorpe Middle School site. John and Trini say this is too much development that will add to the congestion in Kingsthorpe. We musn't lose parkland to development.

Liberal Democrats- Putting Northampton First

Public Exhibition

Buckton Fields – creating a sustainable urban extension for Northampton



Come and have your say
Kingsthorpe Community College, Welford Road Campus,
Northfield Way, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 8AP

Exhibition dates
Friday 11th May 2007, 4pm to 8.30pm
Saturday 12th May 2007, 10.30am to 1.30pm

Buckton fields

A track record in creating new communities

The Ensign Group is a subsidiary of Martin Grant Homes – a privately owned company, founded in 1978 with a reputation for constructing high quality homes and apartments throughout the Home Counties. The company has expanded its operations throughout the south of England, building a reputation as a major force in both strategic land acquisition and new home development.

It has become increasingly clear that Northampton needs more homes and the government has set significant targets to ensure that those housing requirements are met. The Buckton Fields site has been identified by the Daventry District Local Plan as one of the most suitable locations for a sustainable urban extension to provide new housing for the area.

Through their work, Martin Grant Homes and Ensign have gained a sympathetic understanding of the environment both in terms of the external appearance of their homes and their consideration for the surrounding countryside. Wherever possible the designs incorporate regional characteristics ensuring that their homes complement the surrounding area.

Each property is meticulously planned and professionally built to the highest possible standard. Attention to detail and strict site supervision combine to produce individually designed executive, family and first time buyers' homes renowned for their elegance and lasting quality.

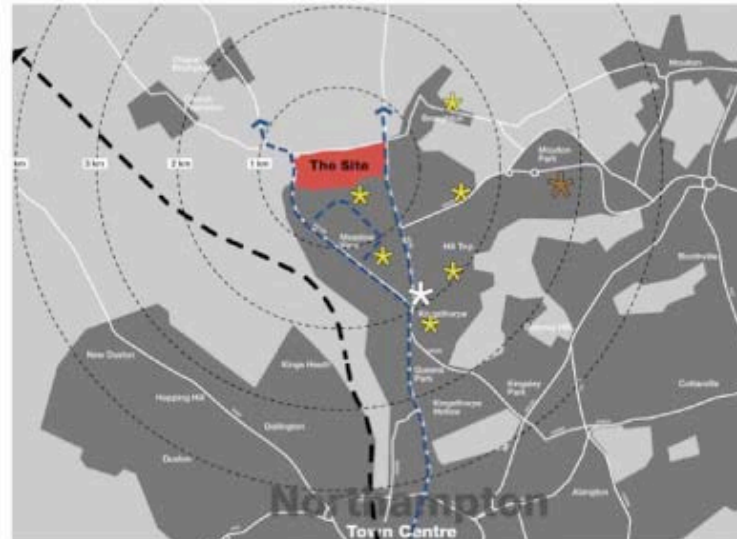


Drawing on a breadth of experience as a developer of sustainable communities, Ensign understands the importance of maintaining the vitality of the local economy, as well as delivering much-needed homes.

Working together with the local community and interested parties is integral to creating the right development at Buckton Fields. Therefore, a wide-ranging consultation process is underway to ensure that the requirements of the local community are fully considered by Ensign in its proposals.



Ensign Group Limited



- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  Train link |  Distance from site |  Neighbourhood |  Existing bus links |
|  Local centre |  Education facilities |  Major employment area |  Road network |

Our Proposals

A sensitive urban extension to Northampton

The Ensign Group is preparing a planning application to create a high quality mixed-use development at Buckton Fields, providing a sustainable urban extension to Northampton. The site is located immediately to the north of the existing White Hills residential district.

The development will include approximately 1,500 homes offering a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses and apartments including a substantial proportion of affordable housing.

Each home will be built to EcoHomes "Very Good" standard, and designed to complement the local architecture. Building materials will be selected to reflect those traditionally used in the area.

Creating inclusive communities

The scheme will feature public open spaces, children's play areas, and playing fields that can be accessed by new and existing residents to pursue outdoor leisure and sports activities. A primary school will also enhance education choices in the surrounding area and provide families with a place to educate their children locally.

Additional on-site facilities will include a local centre with a grocery store, shops and doctor's surgery to act as a community hub.



Construction

The team is committed to building a high quality scheme, which offers efficient uses of energy and water, and minimal environmental impact during development.

The construction programme will be planned to take place in three phases across the site to reduce its impact on the environment, and ensure that disruption to local residents is kept to a minimum. Ensign will also work with Daventry District Council to ensure reasonable hours of work to minimise the impact of construction traffic, especially at peak times.

Modern building methods and effective planning will be used to reduce waste and the amount of time spent on site helping to reduce environmental impact. If planning permission is granted, subject to receiving the appropriate approval on reserved matters, construction should commence within 12 months of receipt of outline planning permission with first occupants moving in nine months later.



Delivering transport infrastructure

The Buckton Fields site is particularly well served by existing transport routes and facilities, including bus routes and the Sustrans national cycle network.

Ensign is carrying out careful studies to assess how best to minimise the impact of the development on the existing transport network. Providing a comprehensive range of public transport improvements, as well as safe pedestrian and cycle ways, will prevent a disproportionate number of cars dominating the development.

Additional provision is likely to include:

- Additional bus routes and new services
- A new Park & Ride facility
- Highway improvements

Minimising environmental impact

Development at Buckton Fields will include measures to protect and enhance the local ecology. Existing hedgerows will be retained within the development to establish wildlife corridors throughout the site. These will be complemented by additional new scrub and managed grassland habitats to encourage and promote biodiversity.

The site lies outside the flood plain, however a Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to confirm that flooding will not be an issue for development at Buckton Fields.

Come and have your say



Public Exhibition

The Ensign Group will be holding a public exhibition on its plans at:

**Kingsthorpe Community College,
Welford Road Campus,
Northfield Way, Kingsthorpe,
Northampton, NN2 8AP on**

- 11th May, 4pm to 8.30pm
- 12th May, 10.30am to 1.30pm

Members of the local community and interested parties are invited to attend so they can find more out about the scheme and discuss their thoughts and ideas regarding the emerging proposals with the project team.

Commitment to consultation

Committed to developing a sustainable inclusive community, Ensign is keen to work in partnership with Daventry District and Northampton Borough Councils, local residents and all interested parties to ensure the delivery of a high quality scheme that meets local needs for the site and for the Northampton area.

Contact us

To let us know what you think about the proposals please come along to the public exhibition or contact us using one of the methods highlighted here:

Call us on freephone: 0800 988 9141

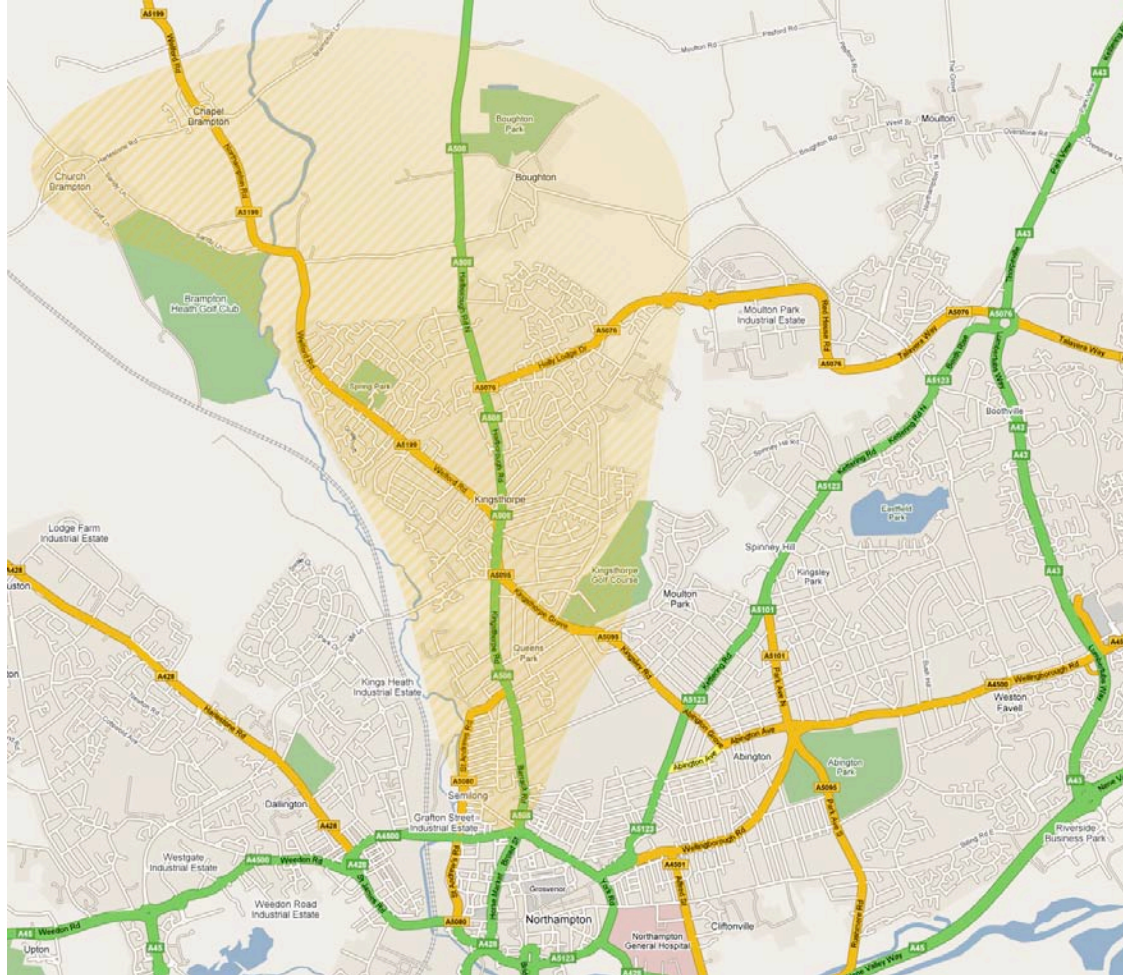
Write to us: Buckton Fields, Freepost GR2172,
Camargue House, Wellington Road,
Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 2BR

Email us: contact@bucktonfields.co.uk

If you are unable to attend the exhibition, additional information regarding the proposals is available at:

www.bucktonfields.co.uk

APPENDIX 4 - Map of the Leaflet Distribution Area (highlighted area shows distribution)



APPENDIX 5 – Distribution Company Leaflet Witness Delivery Report

Witnessed Delivery Sheet

Customer **Buckton Fields**
Distribution Date
Team Leader **Jeff Smith**

Leaflet Size
Order Number

Street / Road Name	Street/Road Name
Kingsthorpe	Studland road
Branksome avenue	Motspur drive
Bembridge drive	Horsley road
St Andrews road	Naseby street
Norfolk street	Essex street
Cambridge street	Semilong road
St Pauls road	Arnold road
Agnes road	Freehold street
Brick kiln lane	Bunting road
Arthur street	Monarch road
Trinity avenue	Balmoral road
Trinity avenue	Whilton road
Brockhall close	Newnham road
Eastern avenue North	Grosvenor gardens
Wakefield road	Hastings road
Kingsthorpe	Rosedale road
Yelvertoft road	Morris road
Langdale road	Kingsland avenue
St Davids road	Kingsthorpe grove
Harborough road	Eastern avenue South
Garfield street	Addlecroft close
Manor road	Holdenby road

Church Brampton	Golf lane
Sandy lane	Walkers lane
Church lane	Harlestone lane
Church farm	Stables lane
Chapel Brampton	Great close
Back lane	Little close
Pitsford road	Spencer close
Welford road	Cedar Hythe
Boughton	Moulton lane
Church street	Butchers lane
Spring close	Humfrey lane
Howard lane	Devonshire close
Spinney close	Obelisk close
Greville close	Vyse road
Whitehill area	Whitehills way
Central avenue	Birch barn way
Sandhills road	Harborough road North
Greenhills close	Link road
Anchor drive	Acre lane

The streets listed above are a sample of the streets where the literature was delivered and are streets where a member of Mailbox management witnessed the distribution of the literature. This is NOT a list of ALL the streets to which the literature was delivered.

Public Exhibition

Proposal for creating a sustainable extension to Northampton

Ensign Group Ltd is currently drawing up a proposal to create a high quality mixed-use development at Buckton Fields, providing a sustainable urban extension to Northampton.

These plans will include provision for approximately 1,500 homes new homes, plus improved bus services and transport links and a site for a new primary school.

Ensign would like to invite local residents and interested parties to attend a public exhibition to view our proposals and feed back comments prior to a planning application being submitted to Daventry District Council.

The exhibition will take place at:

Kingsthorpe Community College,
Welford Road Campus, Northfield Way,
Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 8AP

- Friday 11th May, 4pm to 8.30pm
- Saturday 12th May, 10.30am to 1.30pm

We hope to see you at the public exhibition and look forward to finding out your views on our proposals.

In the meantime if you require further information please do not hesitate to contact Beth Motley or Sophie Atkins at Camargue on 0800 988 9141 or e-mail contact@bucktonfields.co.uk www.bucktonfields.co.uk


Buckton Fields



Ensign Group Limited

PRESS RELEASE

Issue date: 25 April 2007

Issue number: 15652—BF-PR

Public views sought on new homes plan

The Ensign Group Ltd is inviting local residents from Northampton and the surrounding area to give feedback on emerging proposals to create a sustainable urban extension of approximately 1,500 new homes at Buckton Fields.

The proposals will be exhibited at Kingsthorpe Community College, Northfield Way, Welford Road Campus, Northampton NN2 8AP on Friday 11 May from 4pm-8.30pm and Saturday 12 May from 10.30am – 1.30pm and will also be available to view on the recently launched Buckton Fields website – www.bucktonfields.co.uk.

The high quality residential scheme will deliver much needed housing in an area already identified by central Government as a prime location for growth. Buckton Fields has been allocated for residential development in the Daventry Local Plan and offers a unique opportunity to support the regeneration of Northampton.

As well as 1,500 new homes, Ensign's proposals for the Buckton Fields site include new opportunities for jobs as well as a primary school, park and ride, public open space and all necessary community facilities to create a truly sustainable development.

As part of a commitment to engaging with the community, these plans will be available for local residents to view and discuss with Ensign Group representatives and key members of the development team prior to the submission of a planning application.

Andrew Wilson, Director of The Ensign Group, said: "Ensign is committed to working in partnership with all interested parties to ensure the delivery of a high quality scheme that meets both local needs for the site and housing requirements for the area. A key feature of the scheme will be to carefully phase development to deliver the appropriate infrastructure to ensure the new community successfully integrates with the surrounding area without overburdening the existing facilities.

We see this exhibition as an important step in securing the best possible solutions for the area."

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact Beth Motley or Zoe March at Camargue PR

E: bmotley@camarguepr.com / zmarch@camarguepr.com

T: 01242 577277 F: 01242 527277

Notes to Editors:

Ensign Group Ltd is a subsidiary of Martin Grant Homes - a privately owned company, founded in 1978 with a reputation for constructing high quality homes and apartments throughout the Home Counties. The company has

expanded its operations throughout the south of England, building a reputation as a major force in both strategic land acquisition and new home development.

Maintaining their original philosophy each Ensign property is meticulously planned and professionally built to the highest possible standard. Attention to detail and strict supervision combine to produce individually designed homes that complement the existing environment and surroundings. www.martingranthomes.co.uk

APPENDIX 8 – Press Coverage (relating to exhibition)

Despite residents' campaign, controversial bid returns

1,500 HOUSES PLAN BACK ON

By Wayne Bontoft
Chronicle Reporter

CAMPAIGNERS are preparing to fight plans for 1,500 new homes on the edge of Northampton, five years after they thought they had won their battle.

In 2002, people living in Whitehills celebrated after Surrey company The Ensign Group withdrew plans to build 1,000 houses on 123 acres of farmland next to Brampton Lane.

But the company has announced it is now pushing forward with the scheme again, with plans to build up to 1,500 houses, a new primary school, a park-and-ride and shops in an area named Buckton Fields.

Controversially, despite being on the edge of Northampton, the area falls within Daventry District Council's remit, so councillors in Daventry will decide whether the scheme should go ahead.

■ See page 5



■ An Ensign Group home

Controversial scheme back on despite residents' campaign



Plan for 1,500 new homes resurfaces

Fields off Welford Road could soon be developed

CE picture 070502TC18

By Wayne Bontoft
Politics Reporter

CONTROVERSIAL plans to build up to 1,500 new houses on a piece of open countryside have re-emerged, five years after campaigners thought they had won a battle to stop them.

In 2002, people living in Whitehills celebrated after Surrey company The Ensign Group withdrew plans to build 1,000 houses on 123 acres of farmland next to Brampton Lane.

But the company has now announced it is pushing forward with the scheme again, with plans to build up to 1,500 houses, a new primary school, a park-and-ride and shops.

Farmer Adrian Smith said people living in the area were shocked to hear the development plans were back on the cards.

Mr Smith, who runs Smith's Farm Shop, which is in the centre of the proposed development site, said: "I'm not sure what to say about it all at the moment, my family has farmed on this land for 50 years.

"But I always thought these plans would come back one day, we knew it wasn't going to just go away.

"We've already had quite a few people in the shop asking us what's going to happen, but we don't know."

The Ensign Group will hold a public exhibition at Kingsthorpe Community College on Friday to reveal its plans for the site.

A spokesman for the company

FUTURE of NORTHANTS

Chronicle What do you think?

THE West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, led by Keith Barwell, is responsible for overseeing the future development of Northampton and the surrounding area.

- What do you think the area needs?
- Are you happy to see more expansion?
- Are you worried about what it will mean for your area?

We want your views. Contact Wayne Bontoft on 01604 467037 or by email on wayne.bontoft@northantsnews.co.uk or write to Future of Northants, Editorial, Chronicle & Echo, Upper Mounts, Northampton, NN1 3HR.

said: "Ensign has maintained an interest in the land for some considerable time. We believe development at the Buckton Fields site is necessary to support the sustainable growth of Northampton and the regeneration needed in the town.

"It is an ideal area for development as an urban extension of Northampton."

The company wants to build a mixture of three and four bedroom houses on the land.

They hope to submit a planning application for the development during the spring. Construction would start within a year of the company receiving planning permission and people would move into the first new houses nine months later.

Despite being on the edge of Northampton, the area falls within Daventry District Council's remit, so councillors in Dav-

entry will make a final decision on whether the scheme should go ahead.

The display of Ensign's plans will be held at Kingsthorpe Community College in Northfield Way from 4 pm until 8.30 pm on Friday and 10.30 am until 1.30 pm on Saturday.

The plans are also available online at www.bucktonfields.co.uk.

You can also have your say online...

YOU can now give your views online. All you have to do is go to our site click on the blue register button at the top of the home page, fill in your details and add your comment.

www.northamptonchron.co.uk



An impression of how the development might look

See plans

A PUBLIC display of plans to build 1,500 houses on the edge of Whitehills will be held next weekend, not today as stated in the *Chron* earlier this week. Plans for the 'Buckton Fields' development will be on show at Kingsthorpe Community College in Northfield Way, Kingsthorpe from 4pm to 8.30pm on Friday May 11 and 10.30am to 1.30pm on Saturday, May 12.

APPENDIX 9 - Exhibition Display Boards

A track record in creating new communities



Who we are

The Ensign Group is a subsidiary of Martin Grant Homes - a privately owned company, founded in 1978 with a reputation for constructing high quality homes and apartments throughout the Home Counties. The company has expanded its operations throughout the south of England, building a reputation as a major force in both strategic land acquisition and new home development.

Ensign's commitment to creating a sustainable development

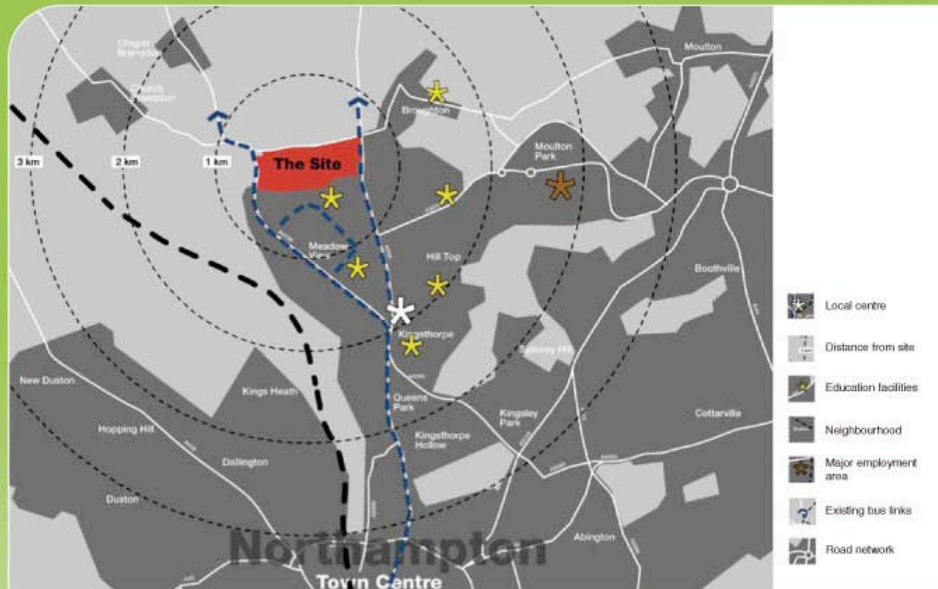
Through their work, Martin Grant Homes and Ensign have gained a sympathetic understanding of the environment both in terms of the external appearance of their homes and their consideration for the surrounding area. Wherever possible the designs incorporate regional characteristics ensuring that homes complement the existing community.

Each property is meticulously planned and professionally built to the highest possible standard. Attention to detail and strict site supervision combine to produce individually designed executive, family and first time buyers' homes that enhance their existing surroundings and are renowned for their elegance and lasting quality.

Ensign recognises the ambitions of the Daventry and Northampton authorities, and the Government, in respect of meeting housing needs for the area. Drawing on a breadth of experience as a developer of sustainable communities, the company understands the importance of maintaining the vitality of the local economy, as well as delivering much-needed homes.

Working together with the local community and interested parties is integral to creating the right development at Buckton Fields. Therefore, a wide-ranging consultation process is underway to ensure that the requirements of the local community are fully considered by Ensign in its proposals.

Our proposals



A sensitive urban extension to Northampton

The Ensign Group is preparing a planning application to create a high quality, development at Buckton Fields, providing a sustainable urban extension to Northampton.

The Buckton Fields site is bordered to the west by the A5199 and to the east by the A508. It is located 4.5km from Northampton town centre, immediately to the north of the existing residential district of White Hills, which lies within the boundary of Northampton Borough Council. The Buckton Fields site itself lies within the boundary of Daventry District, therefore the final planning application will be submitted to Daventry District Council.

Approximately 50 hectares in total, the proposed mixed-use scheme will provide approximately 1,500 homes. These will deliver much-needed private and affordable housing for the area, catering for a diverse mix of residents and helping to create a vibrant and active community.

The team is committed to building a high quality scheme, which offers efficient uses of energy and water, and minimal environmental impact in development. Convenient public transport links with safe pedestrian and cycle ways will be included to prevent disproportionate numbers of cars dominating the development.

Creating sustainable communities



The indicative masterplan lays out the residential areas, infrastructure and community facilities for Buckton Fields and clearly locates it in relation to the surrounding area.

The scheme will feature:

- Public open spaces and children's play areas - these will be accessible to members of both the new and existing communities providing quality places for outdoor leisure pursuits and activities;
- A primary school with places for approximately 250 pupils will enhance primary education choice for both existing and new local residents. The new school will be highly accessible by foot and by cycle;
- A local centre with a convenience store, shops and community facilities as necessary which will cater for local needs and act as a community focus; and
- Up to 7,070 sq. metres of high quality business space creating employment opportunities to enrich the local economy and secure the right balance of employment and residential uses.

What types of home will be built?

The scheme will offer a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses and apartments, including a substantial proportion of affordable housing, built to Ecohomes 'Very Good' standard.

Ensign has a sympathetic understanding of the environment both in terms of the external appearance of their homes and their consideration for the surrounding countryside. Wherever possible the designs of homes at Buckton Fields will incorporate the regional characteristics and architecture of the local area and the selection of building materials used will be as environmentally sensitive as possible. Great attention will also be paid to creating a high quality development that both respects the local landscape and complements the existing environment creating a sensitive transition between the development and the countryside beyond.

Why Buckton Fields?



The annual monitoring report published by Northampton Borough Council in December 2006 includes a housing trajectory which shows that the level of housing planned for the Northampton area cannot be accommodated by sites within the Borough Council's own boundary.

Large-scale developments such as Buckton Fields will therefore play an important part in helping to achieve the council's goals for sustainable growth. Buckton Fields is directly adjacent to Northampton and lies within the boundary of Daventry District Council, and as such is suitably located for sensitive development to help address housing needs for the area whilst also supporting regeneration.

As a mixed-use development it would offer a high standard of accommodation plus provision for the retail and commercial sector to ensure Northampton continues to thrive and maintains its status as an economically successful and socially vibrant town.

Minimising environmental impact



In developing the masterplan for its proposed scheme at Buckton Fields, Ensign has been concerned to ensure that any development will include measures to protect and enhance the existing local ecology and create a high quality landscape.

Considerations include:

- Retention of existing hedgerows to establish wildlife corridors through the site;
- New scrub and managed grassland habitats in the proposed public open space areas to encourage and promote biodiversity and species enhancement. This will also provide the opportunity for existing and new species to be incorporated into the development;
- Measures to encourage bat activity, for example, bat boxes;
- The provision of an Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS) during the construction phase and a long term Ecological Management Plan (EMP) will both be developed to ensure conservation and maintenance of habitats and species within the site.

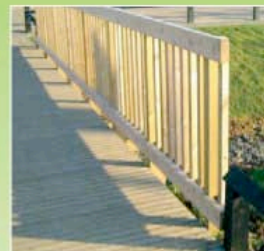
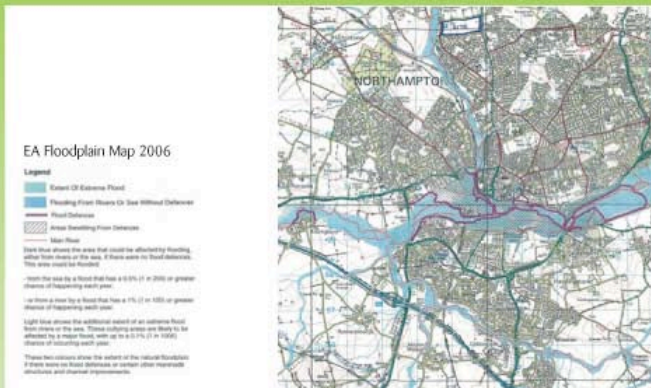
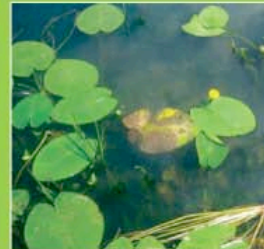
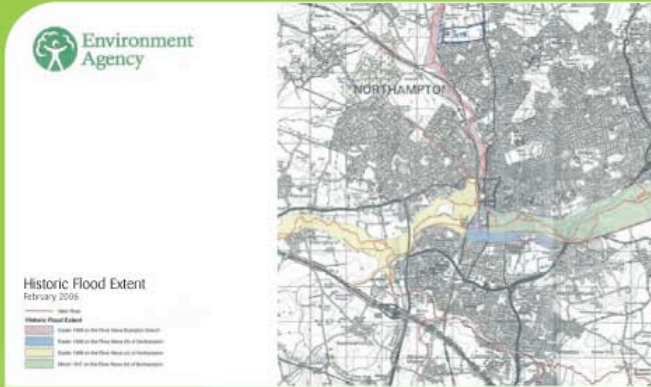
Sustainability

Ensign will incorporate the following additional measures where possible to ensure an environmentally sustainable development:

- Improved energy efficiency of homes to reduce energy bills;
- Grey water harvesting;
- Use of renewable energy resource;
- Recyclable building materials;
- Construction waste recycling; and
- Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs).

If planning permission is granted, subject to receiving the appropriate approval on reserved matters, construction should commence within 12 months of receipt of outline planning permission with first occupants moving in nine months later.

Flood risk assessment



The Environment Agency has identified that the Buckton Fields site sits outside the floodplain. Having modelled the effects of extreme rainfall conditions, including the effects of climate change on the River Nene, the Agency has identified that the site is outside the predicted 1 in 1000-year flood level.

Ensign has carefully evaluated the Environment Agency's data to ensure it has a true understanding of the nature of the site in relation to the issue of flooding in the construction of the proposed scheme. A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to confirm that flooding will not be an issue for development at Buckton Fields.

Construction and delivery



While work is in progress, every effort will be made to ensure that disruption to local residents is kept to a minimum. Ensign will work with Daventry District Council to ensure reasonable hours of work and minimise the impact of construction traffic, especially at peak times.

The construction of new homes and associated infrastructure will be planned to occur in three phases across the site to reduce its impact on the environment, and to ensure the development is supported by the necessary infrastructure.

The key principles, which underpin the phasing strategy, are:

- Minimising impact of the development on the surrounding area;
- Integration of the new and existing communities;
- Ensuring the necessary landscaping is in place at an early stage;
- Establishing links to the existing pedestrian walkways and cycleways to provide access points and routes to anticipate traffic generated by development;
- Ensuring an effective mix of house types to create a successful community that grows at a sustainable rate.

Modern methods of construction (MMC) and effective planning will be used to reduce waste and the amount of time spent on site helping to reduce environmental impact. Houses built using MMC typically require less energy to heat because of increased levels of insulation fitted in the walls and roof, and also less air leakage from the building.

Benefits of MMC during development include:

- Faster delivery of homes;
- Minimal disruption and disturbance to the area surrounding the site;
- Use of more sustainable materials;
- Reduced time on site during construction;
- Reduced resource consumption.

Benefits of MMC to the home owner include:

- Reduced fuel bills;
- Higher standards of design quality;
- Fewer defects in final building.

Delivering transport infrastructure

The Buckton Fields site is particularly well served by existing transport links and facilities, including bus routes and the Sustrans national cycle network. A comprehensive traffic strategy will be put in place to reduce the level of traffic generated by development at Buckton Fields.

Ensign is carrying out careful studies to look at the accessibility and sustainability of the site, the traffic flows generated and the impact on the surrounding roads and junctions.

As well as minor road improvements, providing a comprehensive, balanced range of transport options will ensure the delivery of a truly sustainable urban extension.

Increases in traffic could be handled by:

- A Park & Ride site and bus service to the town centre;
- New bus services to key employment and retail areas including the town centre, Kingsthorpe and Moulton Park;
- Measures to improve the overall quality of bus journeys, such as improved shelters;
- New crossings of the main roads and other initiatives to promote walking and cycling;
- Contributions towards traffic calming measures in villages surrounding the site;
- Small scale highway improvements to increase capacity at key locations.

Providing wider benefits for Northampton

The development at Buckton Fields will deliver a transport strategy that will also result in significant benefits for the wider area in Northampton.

New bus services and bus enhancement measures will significantly improve the level of public transport provision from the town centre through Kingsthorpe.

This will:

- Improve the level of service to the town centre and allow it to grow sustainably;
- Provide improved alternatives to the car for existing residents in Kingsthorpe;
- Provide better connections to the town centre but also to a range of employment, retail, leisure, health and other facilities in the area;
- Brampton Lane will be improved to meet current design standards and assist traffic flows;
- The provision of a large Park & Ride site at Buckton Fields will assist the delivery of growth in Northampton town centre. The Park & Ride site will allow the town centre to expand with high quality parking provided around the edge of the town to reduce traffic flows on key routes into the town centre.



APPENDIX 10 - Exhibition Feedback Form



Ensign Group Limited

Feedback Form

We value the views of the community and invite you to record any suggestions on our proposals for Buckton Fields. All comments will be considered individually and will assist us in developing the plan further in line with the community's wishes.

Please complete the form and leave it on the table as you leave. Alternatively, you can post your feedback form to: Sophie Atkins, Camargue, Eagle Tower, Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, Glos, GL50 1TA or email contact@bucktonfields.co.uk.

The development team will consider all comments as the plan evolves in preparation for submitting a planning application later this year.

1. General Comments

2. We are committed to creating a sustainable and vibrant community Buckton Fields. What facilities and infrastructure would you like to see to help achieve this? For example, shops.

Please note that your name and address details will not be passed on to any other organisation and will only be used expressly in connection with this consultation.

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Email _____

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