

# Case Study: Community consultation at Oakgrove, Milton Keynes

Crest Nicholson with Milton Keynes Partnerships and Hyde Housing Association have developed a vision for Oakgrove.

There will be up to 1,300 homes, including affordable housing, a neighbourhood centre, a public square and 14.5 hectares of open space. Oakgrove incorporates exemplary sustainable design features, for example for dwellings we have committed to achieving:

- Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, achieving a 44% reduction in CO2 emissions and a water use of only 105 litres/person/day.
- Homes and Communities Agency's Quality Standards.

The commercial and leisure buildings will achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' and will incorporate renewable energy to reduce CO2 emissions by 10%.

## Our public consultation

Crest worked with our partners to put in place a series of engagement meetings with the local community. We retained a specialist communications company to ensure we really understood neighbourhood needs and concerns – and that they understood the proposals. A comprehensive consultation strategy included regular Key Stakeholder Group meetings, a two-day public consultation event, fortnightly meetings with planning officers and consultation with other stakeholders such as the Parks Trust.

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In July 2008 the two-day public consultation took place, with more than 250 residents attending a lively and successful event.

The masterplan proposals were, in general, well received. The public had concerns about the proposed number of dwellings (then 1,500) and the number of six storey buildings within the development. In response, we reduced both of these elements. There were also concerns about provision for education and community facilities, traffic and highways, all of which the partners followed through with the relevant authorities.



A follow-up newsletter was sent to all invitees detailing the outcomes from the exhibition and how the plans have progressed.

The partners have now submitted an outline planning application for a mixed-use development containing up to 1,300 homes, which will be a broad mix of two, three, four and five bedroom houses, apartments and mews cottages.

## Long-term management of the community

The key to the long term success of the development is the continuing maintenance of the common infrastructure coupled with active management of the community areas. It is proposed that the areas of open space will be managed by the Milton Keynes Parks Trust and the residential and community areas will be managed by an organisation led by Hyde Housing Association. In addition, the site will require a highly integrated energy management system with a combined heat and power plant administered via a site specific Energy Services Company