



FRAME PROJECTS

Dacorum Community Review Panel

Report of Formal Review Meeting: Marshcroft Garden Suburb

Tuesday 18 January 2022

Zoom video conference

Panel

Tony Burton (chair)
George Bull
Richard Dewhurst
Broony FitzPatrick
Quentin Halfyard
John Kjorstad
Angela Lynch
Carole Niven
Michael Ridley
Andrew Roberts
Max Smith

Attendees

Martin Stickley	Dacorum Borough Council
Jane Hakes	Dacorum Borough Council
Sarah Whelan	Dacorum Borough Council
Fiona Bogle	Dacorum Borough Council
Ronan Leydon	Dacorum Borough Council
Colin Lecart	Dacorum Borough Council
Andrew Parrish	Dacorum Borough Council
Alex Robinson	Dacorum Borough Council
Philip Stanley	Dacorum Borough Council
Rebecca Williams	Dacorum Borough Council
Keeley Mitchell	Dacorum Borough Council
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Joe Brennan	Frame Projects
Kate Trant	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

James Doe	Dacorum Borough Council
Nathalie Bateman	Dacorum Borough Council
Juliet Amoruso	Dacorum Borough Council
Jo Deacon	Dacorum Borough Council
Neil Robertson	Dacorum Borough Council
Chris Taylor	Dacorum Borough Council

Declaration of interest

George Bull is a member of the Community Review Panel and is currently residing adjacent to the site proposed for review, with his back garden sharing a boundary with one of the fields which form the development site.

1. Project name and site address

Marshcroft Garden Suburb, Station Road, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5QY

2. Presenting team

Rob Coles	David Lock Associates
Bob May	Ryan & May
Sam Ryan	Ryan & May
Phil Brady	Stantec
Ashleigh Genco	Harrow Estates

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is an allocated site in Dacorum Borough Council's emerging Local Plan, for around 1,400 dwellings. However, the Local Plan is currently on hold whilst the Council investigates urban capacity within Hemel Hempstead and whether it can avoid losing further Greenfield sites.

The dwellings include affordable, elderly persons' accommodation, first homes and self / custom-build. The proposals also include new vehicular and pedestrian / cycle routes, a local centre with retail, health, community and work spaces, a sports / community hub, allotments and orchards, primary and secondary schools and areas of open space and parkland including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs). The site lies partially within an area of archaeological importance and there are areas of local wildlife in close proximity. The project brief is for an outline planning application (for submission Spring 2022) for a new residential suburb linking the existing settlement of Tring with Tring Station.

Planning officers asked for the panel's comments on:

- the proposed character and appearance of the development and whether it would integrate successfully with the neighbouring land uses and the settlement of Tring
- the location of the proposed housing and other facilities
- the layout (does it respect existing residents, provide sufficient accessibility, etc.?)

4. Community Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel feels that the proposals for Marshcroft Garden Suburb have many positive attributes. It welcomes the way the scheme will better link Tring with its station, and the consideration given to schools, healthcare, transport, walking and cycling routes. The panel admires the approach to the scheme's landscape and to maintaining and increasing the

biodiversity of the site, which will enable access for leisure and recreation as well as wildlife. It also agrees with the decision to create one neighbourhood centre, rather than two. However, it encourages further thought about how the development can be integrated with Tring. It would also like to see an aspirational and ambitious approach to sustainability, low carbon design, ecological value and climate change mitigation. If this site is to be released from the Green Belt, it should be an exemplar for sustainable living. As part of this process, it recommends greater analysis of the wildlife and habitats across the site is undertaken. The panel also asks for further thought about traffic management on the site as well as the implications for the wider area. It recommends that approaches to traffic management are informed by local knowledge as well as traffic modelling. These comments are expanded below.

Integration of development with Tring

- The panel would encourage the design team to explore how the development can be better integrated with Tring and is concerned that, currently, it appears to be envisaged as a separate neighbourhood.
- As currently proposed, the scheme will have its own primary and secondary schools, shops, sports and leisure facilities, access and circulation network.
- It suggests developing the idea of a porous green boundary, which would provide good access with cycling and jogging / pedestrian paths to draw the existing population into the new development.
- The panel also asks for clarity about how the proposed density of 32 dwellings per hectare compares to existing densities in Tring?
- Although the scheme is currently at a masterplan stage, when detailed designs for the new homes come forward, these should draw inspiration from the architecture of Tring.
- The panel highlights that the issue of integrating existing and new communities should be addressed in relation to other Dacorum sites coming forward.

Infrastructure

- The panel asks for further thought about the level of infrastructure required to support Marshcroft Garden Suburb.
- It thinks that improvements may be needed to infrastructure across the Tring area, particularly when taking into account other sites that are still to come forward.
- For example, without measures to alleviate traffic levels, the likely increase in traffic using roads such as Silk Mill Road will be problematic.
- The panel is also concerned about how the development will accommodate new communities before the full extent of the infrastructure has been completed.

- For example, it will be essential that schools and health services for new residents are completed early in the development. This will require careful planning, as these community facilities will be delivered in collaboration with other bodies.

Access and traffic management

- The panel is encouraged by the ambition to eliminate through traffic by ensuring that the development's access road is to be treated as a community road with traffic-calming measures. However, it is concerned about the impact on traffic in the wider context.
- It suggests further consideration of the layout of the local centre, as it relates to pedestrian, cycling and traffic management.
- The panel describes how Tring has embraced cycling in the past and is optimistic that the proposed provision for cycling will be taken up by the local community, particularly given the proximity of the new development to the town centre.
- The panel welcomes the ambition for the development to be designed to offer a full set of opportunities for travel in order to minimise car use.

Cycle / footway between the town and Tring station

- The panel applauds the proposal to create an improved footpath to Tring railway station from the existing town along the southern end of the new development. It feels that this will form an important part of the new development and its links to Tring.
- The panel suggests exploration of the possibility of more development along Station Road, which it feels is likely to have a positive impact on the walking / cycling route to the station.
- For example, it questions whether additional development could be created on the triangle of green space to the south-east of the site.

Sustainability and low carbon design

- The panel expresses its firm belief in the importance of incorporating zero carbon practices in construction and use throughout this scheme. It urges the design team to be ambitious in its approach to achieving net zero, for example, through site layout, energy sources, detailed design and use of materials.
- If this site is to be released from the Green Belt, it should be an exemplar for sustainable living.
- The panel supports an ambition to create a flagship scheme for this proposal—and others to follow in the Borough—that places DBC at the forefront of sustainable development.

- The panel would welcome careful consideration of how the development can be built to fit the architectural context of Tring, whilst at the same time demonstrating current best practice in sustainable design.

Water and drainage

- The characteristics of the area mean that natural drainage will need to be addressed, particularly around the canal.
- The panel looks forward to further detail on the ways in which water is to be managed across the scheme, once more information is acquired from the range of tests and surveys currently underway.
- The panel suggests that a combination of local knowledge and engineering solutions could offer the best solutions to the management of water, in relation to futureproofing against changing weather and rainfall events.

Landscape and biodiversity

- The panel admires the approach to the scheme's landscape and to maintaining and increasing the biodiversity of the site, which will enable access for leisure and recreation as well as wildlife.
- The panel would like to see the management of these elements clearly defined as part of the proposal.
- The panel asks for further thought on how the scheme can create wildlife corridors with and beyond the site boundaries.
- The panel is pleased to see the emphasis in the proposal on retaining the site's mature network of hedgerows and trees, as well as the intention to enhance this wherever possible.
- The panel points out that the existing network of eight paths along the canal is well-known and well-used.
- It also brings to the applicant's attention the condition of the paths alongside the reservoirs, particularly in winter, where weather conditions make them unfit for use; this may become a greater issue as footfall increases.
- The panel is pleased to see the incorporation of a wild area into the scheme but suggests that other elements such as swift and bat boxes are introduced across the development.

Next steps

The Community Review Panel is available, if required, to provide further input once designs have reached the next stage of development.