

PICKARD'S  
SMALL FIELD

# update for residents

*Hab Housing, Westlea Housing and Swindon Borough Council are excited to be working in partnership on the planned new development on Pickard's Small Field. And we want you – local residents – to help us make this project the best it can be.*

## “We want to build sustainable communities as well as houses”

December 2007 saw the first big community event that we organised in Swindon (pictured, right, with feedback notes on the reverse of this page). Over a Friday and Saturday the Hab team welcomed hundreds of local residents and explained what it is we're trying to do in Swindon. Our architects were there

talking about design and sustainable construction and we welcomed City Car Club and SCAN, Swindon Climate Action



Network, both of whom brought lots of persuasive and engaging visual material.

And the point of it? We were there partly to listen, to find out what the local concerns are (wildlife conservation; flooding; overdevelopment; and quality, for



example) but we also felt we had a job in explaining that we weren't just about building houses. We want to build sustainable communities as well and that's about everything that goes on in between the houses as much as what goes on inside them: which means sustainable transport strategies, community ownership of public space, the street and utilities; local food networks; car pools; biodiversity; green space strategies; cycle networks; public transport and, of course, pubs stocked with one of the best beers in Britain – Arkells, conveniently brewed in Swindon.

I've just read English Partnership's 'Carbon Challenge' guide – which I think focuses almost entirely on buildings: on their performance, their design and their 'buildability'. Sustainability, as we're discovering, is

about much more than buildings and much more than carbon. It's as much about the spaces in between buildings and beyond. It's also about how we inhabit and use that space. About water, wildlife, transport, waste, food, culture and place.

How we move our society towards that more sustainable existence is one of the great questions of our time, but one thing's for sure: it's not just by building 'eco-houses'.

**Kevin McCloud**, Hab Housing



# December 2007 community event – what you told us

*The community event in December was your opportunity to come and meet the Hab team and for you to give your views about the proposed development of the Pickard's Small Field allotment site (marked with a red line in the photo below).*

We wanted to make sure that we heard from as many people as possible and had a number of different ways to capture your feedback – one to one conversations; post-it notes; and asking you to complete a questionnaire.

We found that the majority of residents are broadly in favour of the development – and some are even expressing a wish to buy. There was clearly an enormous local affection for the site and its wildlife and widespread support for a more sustainable approach to the development.

The most frequently-voiced concerns are, in order of priority:

1. Flooding
2. Security
3. Protection of woodland and wildlife
4. Access, traffic and parking
5. Accessibility for bikes, prams etc
6. Ongoing maintenance of measures to address all of the above

## Housing

We had many comments on the type of housing you would like to see and not see. For example, some people did not want houses that overlooked them or to have 'high-rise buildings'. Lots of people liked the idea of these homes being eco-houses and hoped they would set a trend for Swindon.

## Local environment

The local environment was a hot topic. We were told of the need to protect the local woodland area as there has been sightings of deer in this area.

Local residents also expressed an interest in the local brook and, in particular, improving the brook's flow.

## People

Feedback also indicates that people are high on the local agenda – with a need to understand Swindon's diverse community. It was also noted that there is lack of youth facilities within the area, especially for teenagers.



## Transport

Many are worried about the current local transport infrastructure and the implications of the access route and more pressure on parking.

## Other comments

There were some concerns that we will repeat what are seen as the errors of other local developments; this specifically concerned the lack of front gardens, small rear gardens and shared space. It was encouraging that most people would like to see a community centre that could be used as a shared space. They would like to see many things ranging from healthy living activities to a recycling point to having a farmers market.

## What happens next?

This project is still in its early stages and we would just like to reassure you that we have not yet submitted any planning permission.

We are committed to ensure that we develop a socially sustainable community with strong links to the surrounding neighbourhoods – and part of the next stage is to work with

you in the process. We will do this by holding a number of workshops and public events in the local community so you can discuss the design plans in detail.

You can also be part of the project work we would like to do to look at wider community

issues – for example, the lack of facilities for young people; the improvements to the brook; and how you could volunteer to be part of the Copse project.

We plan to work with existing community groups, local residents and stakeholders and will let you know when these events are set up... so watch this space for more information!

For more information on getting involved, please contact Terri Yewkins or Sarah Offord on 01249 466062 or email: [neighbourhood.involvement@westlea.co.uk](mailto:neighbourhood.involvement@westlea.co.uk)

**NEXT ISSUE: More news and views from our community consultation event at Gorse Hill on 17 May 2008.**