



# Cocks Crescent: situation analysis and options to move forward

Published February 2019



## Contents

1. Introduction and key points
2. What we have done
3. Diagnosis of process up to now
4. Where we are now
5. A wildcard – developing with the school sites?
6. Different options for moving forward

Appendix 1: list of those interviewed

Appendix 2: indicative views on height & design

Appendix 3: co-designing for deliverability

## 1. Introduction and key points

This note outlines our work in quarter 4 2018 and sets out some possible options for the Cocks Crescent site. The key points are:

- Nobody wants to see the site left empty. This is very clear and very nearly unanimous.
- There are different views about the right trade-offs between volume of housing versus spend on the Malden Centre
- However, our judgement is that with the right co-design process it would be possible to find a compromise that would work for most local stakeholders (though not all). This should be a co-design session to work up a development brief within the framework of the existing SPD. (Going back on the SPD would cause a major delay, and, as long as the process is well managed,, the SPD can serve as a framework for evolving an approach which is both broadly supported and deliverable).
- What may be harder to secure local consent for is the volume of housing that is likely to be necessary on a site with a high Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL).<sup>1</sup> The PTAL is already between 3 and 4 bd 520 homes on the 2.2 hectares site (not including Blagdon Open Space.) The density matrix has of course been removed from the newest Draft London Plan. However, with a 50 per cent affordable policy both at the Kingston and the GLA level, density pressure is clearly only increasing. Some influential local residents are not supportive of such high levels of affordable housing and also believe it will not be necessary
- There are different ways for integrating a co-design approach with your procurement / JV approach. We set out some of these together with some pros and cons in section 6

## 2. What we have done

We have done three main types of analysis:

1. We have visited the site and neighbouring streets several times to form our view of what might and might not be possible
2. We have analysed key policy documents including:
  - The SPD (both draft for consultation and final)
  - Cocks Crescent SPD Consultation Statement
  - The SPD's Annex 3 "*Responses to the Cocks Crescent Supplementary Planning Document*"
  - The GL Hearn Viability Assessment from April 2016
  - Further documents as provided by stakeholders from the community (including campaign leaflets, copies of email correspondence from MICO, Groves Association Leaflet and various others)
  - The relevant section of the draft London Plan specifically Policy D6, optimising Housing Density

---

<sup>1</sup> PTAL is a measure of accessibility via public transport. 0 is low. 6 is high.

3. We have conducted interviews with a total of 22 people including councillors, officials and members of the local community and other stakeholders who had engaged actively with the process during the creation of the SPD. A full list of those we have reached out to and with whom we have spoken is provided in appendix one. While this list cannot be fully representative of wider opinion we are as confident as we can be that it has allowed us to draw up the views of those who were very involved in the process and of some who felt excluded.

### 3. Diagnosis of process up to now

We would make the following key points about the process up to now:

- Firstly, *despite good intentions the consultation process was kicked off with too small a group and (arguably) too clear an intent to reach a certain end.* The New Malden Futures Group (NMFG) is made up of dedicated well-intentioned individuals who care about the area and worked hard to get to a good outcome. It was right to form such a group. And the passion, time and commitment of its members should be warmly commended. In addition much of the detailed engagement was well and professionally run. (The walking tour was particularly praised – “really useful”) However, ultimately it was not able to help form a wider consensus for the following main reasons:
  - Focusing on one group (even a coalition) naturally leads to other groups feeling excluded from the process. Although in many ways the process was well run and steps were taken to try to overcome this they were ultimately not effective (“not adequate” according to one who felt excluded)
  - Inevitably, not all groups were engaged with to the same extent. For the Korean community, particularly the elderly, barriers of language and technology were sometimes an issue.
  - The trade-offs between ambition for and spend on the Malden Centre and density with which some key players were happy were almost certainly not representative of the instinctive views of the wider community (certainly without more effective wider engagement) as became clear in the quantitative responses to the Draft SPD
  - There was probably some misunderstanding by some on the level of housing that would be necessary to pay for infrastructure
  - Key issues of what the development should look like were insufficiently taken account of in the engagement process. This was true of both buildings and ‘the town square’ – “it’ll just be a windswept concrete jungle.” Summaries of issues that emerged in discussion show some difference from results in the wider polling in response to the Draft SPD
- Secondly, *when the scale of development necessary to pay for infrastructure became clear (and clearly controversial) that led to the wrong decision being taken on the level of precision in the SPD.*
  - It was necessary to resolve the fundamental tensions and come to a clearer point of view on range of acceptable trade-offs between spend and housing.
  - Instead, however the SPD became vaguer than the initial draft both on
    - what leisure offer was possible (“These details will be considered at a later stage”)
    - and what height would be necessary and where. Specifically the so-called ‘Height Guide’ image combined with lack of precision about what leisure offer would (or would not) be possible, led to high levels of wider concern

- To cite a few interviewees from 'all sides'; "those fuzzy images looked like they were hiding something." "We needed more clarity on what the SPD is designed to do" "don't put illustrations in it if it is not going to look like this"
- This led to real frustration – even from some of those very involved in the process: "officials were very reticent to any ideas"
- As best we can judge, most people appear willing to accept *some* height on parts of the new development in exchange for improved leisure offering.<sup>2</sup> However, the exact nature of the new development (particularly height) and the leisure offer were not set or assured in the final SPD. The actual nature of the development that would be needed to pay for infrastructure was never clear.
- The result was a fear of what might be built on the site: "One of my biggest fears is ugly and dominant buildings."
- Thirdly and linked to this vagueness, *not enough work was done on how buildings would 'fit 'in' and there was more scope to train participants*. Even those very involved in the process in fact feared that what will be built will be "pretty bad....like most modern blocks." As best we can work judge, next to nothing was done on this subject whatsoever. Others admitted that "a lot of us did not have the skill set"
- Fourthly, *the overall process stopped once the SPD was delivered*. This was described as a "deathly silence." The hard work that the NMFG, council officers and others put into the engagement process did not go anywhere. This understandably disappointed many of the people who were involved: "We need to get on with it."
- Fifth and in parallel, *bad (or perhaps unavoidable) planning decisions have been made on non-council owned portions of the site. These have made it harder to achieve a good overall master-plan* and established unfortunate precedents. (And the weak SPD will not be helpful here). Particularly, the permission granted in 2015 to increase the height of the Spillers Building (New Malden House, 1 Blagdon Road) up to 12 storeys has left some concerned that this sets the precedent for the rest of the development on Cocks Crescent.
- Finally, *there appears to have been quite a high turnover of key council staff* making it hard to maintain local relationships, expertise and build up trust with local stakeholders. This led to real frustration – even from some of those very involved in the process: "it was extremely difficult to get anything done"

#### 4. Where we are now

- This leads to where we are now, with a *number of important conflicting and overlapping tensions*:
  - A site with nothing done despite a broad desire to move forward: "I worry about years' more delay"
  - A wariness of further consultation ("consultation fatigue") despite a general desire to involve a "wider pool" of people

---

<sup>2</sup> Acceptance of eight done in the right way would certainly be the confident lesson we would draw from visual preferences surveys we have run over the last four years online or in co-design workshops in Kingston town centre, Wimbledon, Oval, Peckham, Haringey, Mount Pleasant, Salisbury, Taunton and elsewhere.

- A distrust of the capability of 'the council' to deliver anything acceptable or anytime soon despite a desire for the council to be involved and constrain a private sector developer
- A fear about that what will be built will be "pretty bad" in contrast to a desire for a development with "heart" and which references specifically local ideas ("let's have bees")
- *What everyone agrees on and doesn't agree on.* The good news is that there is a (very near) consensus on some very important things.
  - *Everyone agrees that:*
    - a. Something needs to happen<sup>3</sup> ("We need to get on with it")
    - b. The Malden Centre is important and its use should continue
    - c. The development should "have some heart" and not be a "could be anywhere" development<sup>4</sup>
  - *Most people agree that:*
    - a. Nobody really wants height (5-8 is maximum range to which people we spoke to were willing to agree)
    - b. The way the development looks is important and that something that 'fits in' would be best (and is felt to be unlikely given what is being built elsewhere)
    - c. The Malden Centre needs to be rebuilt rather than refurbished (some insist on this, others merely prefer it)
    - d. Some housing will need to be built to pay for the community facilities
  - *What is disputed:*
    - a. The trade-off between community facilities versus the height and density of the site and the need for plans to be viable and therefore deliverable (Some see the improved leisure centre as a "fantastic opportunity", others are far more sceptical)
    - b. The need and desirability of a public square within the site (some are very positive, others fear it will be an ugly windswept canyon for which a third of the Blagdon Open Space will have been needlessly sacrificed)
- Below are some of the *key strengths and weaknesses* of the current situation as we see them

*Cocks Crescent status quo – SWOT analysis*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>Site</i></p> <p>a) Large site largely council owned. The ball is very much in your court for negotiations</p>	<p><i>Site</i></p> <p>a) Site is spatially constrained with difficult access in some directions</p>

<sup>3</sup> In fact one person (while saying this) did not 100% convince us that they meant it so this is, strictly speaking, near unanimous.

<sup>4</sup> A range of excellent ideas have emerged in conversations, in what we've read or in what we have heard at public meetings. These include the motif of bees and installing an Anthony Caro sculpture

<p>b) Site has some real strengths (above all the potential of Blagdon Road Open Space)</p> <p><i>SPD</i></p> <p>c) Vague SPD – with a consequent very wide range of options available to you</p> <p><i>Views</i></p> <p>d) There is a near-consensus that something needs to be done on the site</p>	<p>b) Recent permissions and some existing buildings create unfortunate precedents and make good master plan harder</p> <p><i>SPD</i></p> <p>c) Vague SPD – leading to a strong fear of the future for some and concern for nearly everyone</p> <p><i>Local views</i></p> <p>d) Politicised history. Some people will be 'waiting for you to fail'</p> <p>e) Probably some 'who will never be happy'</p> <p>f) Contradictory desires on volume of housing vs. infrastructure (esp. the Malden Centre)</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p><i>Site</i></p> <p>a) Lovely, popular value-enhancing development is still possible – particularly around Blagdon Road Open Space</p> <p><i>Process in future</i></p> <p>b) To 'draw a line', honestly critique strengths and weaknesses of process till now and move on with wider base</p> <p>c) To 'fill in' some detail in the SPD using your role as landowner to set indicative master plan with co-design within clear economic &amp; planning constraints (see below)</p> <p>d) To take advantage of new NPPF on up-front community engagement and design guides (see below)</p>	<p><i>Site</i></p> <p>a) Risk of further unhelpful planning applications on or near the site which make good master-planning even harder</p> <p><i>Process in future</i></p> <p>b) There is a high possibility of tensions (<i>which have not yet really emerged</i>) between desires on height with pressures for affordable housing which will push up required volume</p>

### 5. A wildcard – developing with the school sites?

- Several have suggested to us that it would be possible to develop the Burlington Infants and Juniors Schools (including possible amalgamation) in conjunction with the Cocks Crescent site.
- Properly understanding the feasibility of developing and expanding the school is beyond the scope of this report. However it would, in principle, have several advantages
  - it would open up the site to the east potentially resolving important connectivity issues
  - it would permit expansion of the schools which would ease pressure on school places (which would presumably increase with new housing at Cocks Crescent)

- This is all attractive in principle. However, we worry that it would be far too complicated in practice. You already have lots of balls 'in the air' on this site! Disadvantages includes
  - You would need a new SPD which would involve considerable extra work and delay
  - You would need considerable work with other funding streams and other processes
  - There's no guarantee at the end of this additional work that this would be deliverable
  - Nor is it clear from what we have tentatively learnt that all members of the schools' governing bodies or wider community would be supportive. Work would be required.
- So, without having fully appraised the potential, our instinct is;
  - don't pursue this option – it will cause too much delay and additional complexity
  - However as you move forward with Cocks Crescent you should investigate what deliverable modest changes to any emerging master plan would build in future flexibility with redeveloped school sites. Options and actions might include
    - Could any terrace of houses or medium rise flats looking onto Blagdon Open Space from the East have a 'gap' in them to permit future connectivity?
    - Ensuring that an understanding of possible school requirements of the Malden Centre facilities informs decisions for the centre
    - Ensuring that the right teacher (or ideally) head teacher is at any future co-design sessions and that the issue of future 'interoperability' with the schools is on agendas for co-design sessions and the procurement process (see below)

## 6. Different options for moving forward

*What you can do in the short term.* We would suggest the following actions are probably ones to take under all scenarios.

- *Draw a line under where you are now*
  - Publish a short clear document in everyday language of 'where you are now.'
  - Be open and honest that despite the hard work of many people the process has not entirely worked. However, you need to be clear and careful about why it didn't work, to make sure you don't repeat errors or over-promise
  - Explain that you are trying to make a fresh start. Whilst building on what's been done and without ignoring all the hard work done by residents, officials and professionals to date you also want as wide an involvement as possible
  - Set out clearly the trade-offs and tensions that have already emerged (for example between infrastructure spend and affordable housing) and that are likely to emerge in future. As far as possible set out the relationships between extra infrastructure and extra housing<sup>5</sup>
  - Set out clearly some of the fears but also some of the hopes of the community

---

<sup>5</sup> This will require updated viability analysis and will also need to be presented as a range and with caveats. Above all between now and the development coming forth, prices and policy will change. This will need to be clearly set out and explained unambiguously in writing and during workshops

- Pick up more clearly that the SPD did on the common desire to ‘give the development some heart’ and ensure that it ‘could not be anywhere’
  - Commit to a co-design approach as you move forward
  - Commit to working on ‘meanwhile’ uses for the site (though be careful this does not turn into ‘process wash’)
  - As an adjunct to this, you might want to consider publicly sharing this report or its recommendations.
- *Pull together a two pager ‘term sheet’ of the site with all the physical, planning and other constraints summarised in one place.* The process has gone on for a long time. Officials have changed. So have councillors. National and regional planning policy has changed since the SPD was prepared. It would be helpful to all key council stakeholders to have a really robust summary of what constrains.
  - *Ensure you have clear responsibilities, a clear timetable and the right team internally on the site.* This is an important site for delivering new housing to meet the council’s needs and also for your provision of services and interaction with the wider community. You need to make sure you have the right team and that they have up to date information (including updated viability analysis).
  - *Try to ‘fix’ some of the little things on responsiveness. This has come fairly consistently even from people who are basically onside*
    - Clearly the process became fractious and emotive. That tends to lead to criticism of ‘the council’ and officials which is frankly very unfair. And this became a genuinely difficult process to run – particularly in the latter stages
    - Nevertheless we have received fairly consistent feedback that council officers were unresponsive (even from those who were basically supportive). Particularly on little things like acknowledging receipt of e-mails. If this echoes wider feedback this might be a part of the process to try to improve
    - (We should emphasise that the most of the worst feedback we have received appears mainly to be about people who have left and that we have also received very positive feedback on officials as well)

Beyond, these four moves, there are *different potential options for moving forward. These have different pros and cons and will be differently attractive to Kingston Council.* As we see it the range of approaches you could in theory take is:

1. *SPD only.* Council to use the SPD as the basis for a tender for either sale of land or JV with developer / Registered Social Landlord (RSL)<sup>6</sup> Community would be consulted as per required planning norms but further co-design would not be run beyond what has already taken place.
2. *Options for tender.* Council to draw up more detailed plan (or range of options) working with professionals as the basis for a tender for either sale of land or JV. These more detailed options would be in the council’s role as landowner not as a planning document and would have to fit

---

<sup>6</sup> This paper is not giving you advice on the right commercial framework for development though we would imagine a JV would be more sensible on several levels.

within the SPD and clear commercial constraints.<sup>7</sup> Community would be consulted as per required planning norms but further co-design would not be run beyond what has already taken place.

3. *Co-design before tender process.* Council to draw up more detailed brief (or range of options) working with professionals and residents and local stakeholders as the basis for a tender for either sale of land or JV. Again, these more detailed options would be in the council's role as landowner not as a planning document and would have to fit with local planning policy and clear commercial constraints. It would be possible in this process to give local residents a say in the selection of JV partner and (later) in the selection of architects and urban designers.
4. *Co-design during tender process.* Council to draw up more detailed brief (or range of options) working with professionals and residents and local stakeholders as part of the tender process for either sale of land or JV. In a process which would need further detailed design, those tendering would be invited to contribute to this process. Again, these more detailed options would be in the council's role as landowner not as a planning document and would have to fit within the SPD and clear commercial constraints. It would be possible in this process to give local residents a say in the selection of JV partner and (later) in the selection of architects and urban designers.
5. *Co-design after tender process.* As part of the tender process, the council would insist that the winning partner would run a co-design process (defined in the contract) along the lines described above.

Based on our work to date, we could give two main points of advice about these options:

- *Our advice would be not to follow options one or two.* They would be unpopular locally, would probably lead to renewed controversy and would not fit with the approach you are committed to taking. Given the desperate need for housing and with a tightly-run process you probably could 'get it through' but you will need to decide if that is the approach you want to take.
- *Our advice would be to go for either options three, four or five.* Our preferences would be options three or four. Some of the key likely trade-offs are set out below:

*Pros and cons of options three to five*

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
3. Co-design <u>before</u> tender process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maximum council and community influence on development</li> <li>● Best chance of 'setting the land value'</li> <li>● Probably the least risk in the short to medium term</li> </ul>	<p>If not well run.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potentially greater risk of options emerging which are not deliverable<sup>8</sup></li> <li>● Potentially greater risk of putting off some JV partners</li> <li>● You need the right facilitators and reasonably up to date viability</li> <li>● Requires revenue spend in short term</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> This should not be too hard thanks to the vagueness of the SPD.

<sup>8</sup> Trade-offs will need to be explicit with a forced ranking and decision-making process to avoid the danger of unresolved and mutually contradictory 'wish lists'

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you have right capabilities to commission &amp; manage?</li> </ul>
4. Co-design <u>during</u> tender process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Compromise between highest levels of influence &amp; higher likelihood of deliverability</li> <li>● Probably gives you the greatest level of understanding</li> <li>● Potentially involves residents in helping select JV partners which could be incredibly empowering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More complex to design &amp; deliver</li> <li>● Many of the requirements of option 3 still apply though in a more complex framework</li> <li>● Work required to understand interaction with council tender process</li> </ul>
5. Co-design <u>after</u> tender process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lower risk of non-deliverable option</li> <li>● Probably maximises number of potential JV partners &amp; thus of delivery</li> <li>● Permits greater scope for developers / designers to do something 'surprising'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increases risk of JV partners 'overpaying based on unrealistic assumptions</li> <li>● Contract needs to be very tightly and well-drawn to be meaningful</li> <li>● Risk of much reduced council and community influence on and control over development</li> <li>● Probably carries maximum political risk of perceived 'faked' consultation</li> <li>● Permits greater scope for developers / designers to do something 'surprising'</li> </ul>

Appendix three sets out some of the approach normally used in a co-design approach and some mini-case studies. (We can readily expand some of these if that would be helpful).

As you think about them a good approach would be to divide your key principles into three:

1. Things that definitely cannot change;
2. Things that are currently set, but on which there could be some flexibility; and
3. Things that haven't yet been set and are up for discussion.

\* \* \*

We hope that this note is a helpful pre-cursor to your future decisions about how to move forward.

Nicholas Boys Smith, Kieran Toms, David Taylor

**CREATE streets**

## Appendix 1: list of those interviewed

### Internal interviewees

Organisation	Name	Role
RBKuT	Cllr Jon Tolley	Portfolio Holder for Resident Engagement
RBKuT	Cllr Lesley Heap	Beverley Ward Councillor
RBKuT	Cllr Mark Durrant	Beverley Ward Councillor
RBKuT	Cllr Simon Edwards	St James Ward Councillor
RBKuT	Cllr Jaesung Ha	Beverley Ward Councillor
RBKuT	Jo Moulton	Head of Culture
Achieving for Children	Matthew Paul	School Places and Burlington School
RBKuT	Youngji Yang	Engagement with Korean community
RBKuT	Duncan Brown	Assistant Director of Regeneration & Strategic Housing
RBKuT	Chloe Clay	Urban Design & Development Lead, Strategic Planning
RBKuT	Lisa Fairmaner	AD, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure

### External interviewees

Organisation	Name	Role
New Malden Residents Association	Liz Meerabeau	Chairperson
The Kingston Upon Thames Society	Anthony Evans	Secretary
New Malden Future Group & New Malden Residents Association	Frances Marsh	Committee Member
New Malden Future Group	Zbig Blonski	Member
MICO	James Giles	Chairperson
Groves Resident Association	Barbara Delamere	Chair
Groves Resident Association	Sandra Flower	Treasurer
Kingston Independent Residents Group	Mary Clark	Leader, former councillor

MICO; New Malden RA; Beverley Lib Dems	Andrew Bolton	Committee member (MICO, Lib Dems) ordinary member NMRA
Korean Senior Citizens UK	Sun Hwa Lim Griffiths	Founder
Formerly RBKuT	Terry Paton	Former Councillor

## Appendix 2: indicative views on height & design

In this appendix we outline a summary of some of the responses to key questions we asked. It should be emphasised that these results should **not** be used as robust or representative evidence of broader hopes and aspirations. Instead further more extensive and comprehensive work should be carried out, with a significantly larger number of people being involved.

Nevertheless they do demonstrate some tentative trends and may be useful when considering the parameters of future co-design/engagement conversations and questions. While everyone we spoke to was keen to emphasise that they were expressing a personal view or judgement, it is nevertheless likely that some of their answers reflect broader perceptions.

### On a scale of 1 to 5 how well would you say the process worked?

- Average score was **1.36**

### Do you feel you were listened to on a scale of 1 to 5?

- Average score was **2.36**

### In your ideal world what would mix of land use be?

- Wide range of responses were given
- Community Facilities (including the leisure centre and green space) were mentioned the most.
- Housing and affordable housing were also prominent, with the latter mentioned more than the former.

### What are your top 3 hopes for what should be built?

- Most often mentioned was the Malden Centre, with the improvement of facilities the overarching theme. Whether that would be achieved via a new centre or via refurbishment varied.
- Other community facilities were the next most often mentioned (such as GPs surgeries and schools).
- Housing was the next most often mentioned (sometimes, though not always, different types of affordable housing)
- A town square was sometimes mentioned

### What are your top 3 fears for what should be built?

- The most mentioned fears were about the failure to fulfil the hopes outlined above, particularly the loss of the Malden Centre, or a general strain on services due to new development.
- The next most-expressed fear was the scale and quality of new development more generally ("ugly dominant buildings," "tower blocks and height".)
- Who the housing is for also came up - some fear a lack of affordable/social housing

In your ideal world what would buildings at Cocks Crescent look like? (high rise and low rise) What do you think they will look like? (high rise and low rise)

One reason for asking these questions was to understand the extent to which respondents **trusted** that what would be built would be in line with what they wanted to see. In this respect the answers were very revealing. No one gave the same answer for both questions, indicating a lack of faith in the plans (and expected process) as they stand. This is in line with negative feelings about the process explained elsewhere in this report.

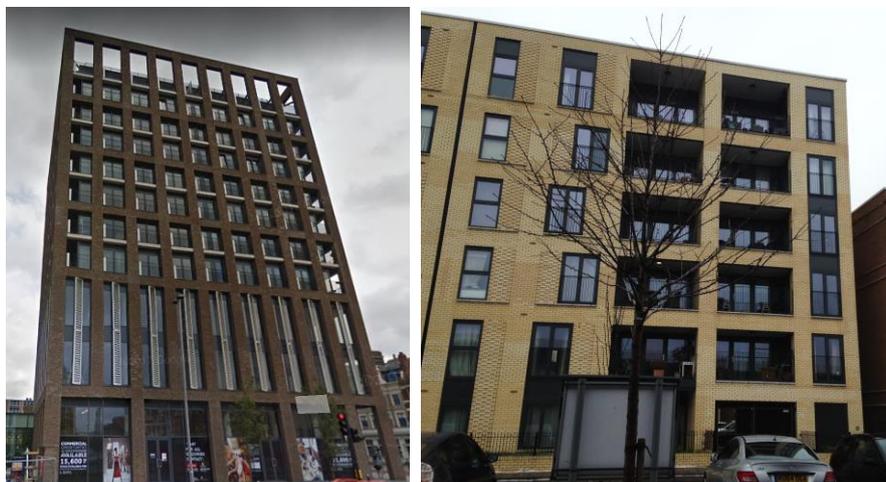
For what it's worth the most popular building types are shown below for high-rise (left) and medium-rise (right). Again it should be noted that the amount of people we polled was insubstantial. However the results may be useful as one thing to take into account when considering what kind of building types should be included in visual preference surveys going forward.

*Most popular types for what should be built (high rise left, medium rise right)*



By contrast what people thought would be built is shown below. It was not the same.

*Buildings that people expected to see (high rise left, medium rise right)*



### In your ideal world, what would highest building be?

- The maximum height given was 7/8 storeys
- Most people said 5/6 storeys

Again, whilst being indicative, these results are very illuminating. All of the heights given (even from supporters of the process) are significantly below the 10 storeys identified in the SPD as the maximum.

### Appendix 3: co-designing for deliverability

- In consultation, residents give feedback on options. These options will have been designed by architects away from the residents. They are then presented to residents, and voted on. In some versions of consultation, residents may have a vote on certain elements of the design. However there is another way to do things: *co-design*. In co-design, the options themselves are worked up collaboratively – residents and architects sit down together, with pencils and paper, and work up the design together in a workshop. This type of co-design workshop is often known as a charrette.
- A Co-design Charrette is a collaborative event that engages local people with expert facilitation in co-creating spatial plans and designs for their place. It is a hands-on approach with stated goals that allows for feedback and design changes, important for gaining stakeholder understanding and support.
- During a charrette A neutral and multi-disciplinary team of facilitators and advisers treats everyone present as having an equal right to take part in the process. Physical, social, commercial and environmental issues are addressed holistically through a combination of sticky note dialogue workshops and ‘hands-on planning’ design sessions. The views of all members of the community, including young people, are sought and taken seriously and everyone is given a chance to exercise their creativity.
- Below is an example of a one-day charrette. This is drawn from the toolkit we at Create Streets drew up with JTP Architects. (You can download the toolkit [here](#))

The day before	Afternoon/Evening – Facilitation team site visit and briefing, Venue Setup.	
Day of Charrette	Morning: 1. Walkabout with community members and briefing 2. Sticky note dialogue workshop 3. Lunch	Evening: 1. Introduction 2. Sticky note dialogue workshop 3. Hands-on-Planning 4. Group report back presentations
	Afternoon: 1. Hands-on-Planning 2. Group report back presentations 3. Way forward workshop	
Post Charrette	Team work to consolidate comments/ideas from participants, write-up key themes and draw illustrations.	
Report back event	Report back presentation using PowerPoint and exhibition of illustrative masterplan with adequate time for community feedback and discussion	

- Co-design tends to result in higher levels of support for the proposed development as any disconnect between residents and professionals is worked through together, towards a final design supported by all. Charrettes can be major exercises over several days or they can be a series of shorter meetings over time.
- The fact that there are open discussions about the design means that disagreements can be discussed and debated in the open. It's very important that you are as up front as possible about the constraints of the process as possible.
- It's also worth adding that quite a lot of firms that 'say' they do charrettes don't, or at least not in the sense that we mean it here, of co-design. We've observed quite often a so-called charrette turning- into something that is far more about designers' agendas. In some ways though, a charette isn't so far away from an open consultation process, which can of course also be open and up front about constraints. But in a charrette the design work is carried out there and then, in front of people, using their 'live' ideas and input. This tends to mean that those involved have a strong sense of ownership over the final design. It is not merely one of many designs done by an outsider that they have responded to – instead it is theirs, and their neighbours'.
- It is key that what is designed in the session is informed by an accurate understanding of the constraints of the process – so very important work needs to be done in advance of the session to make sure these are clear, and can be shared accurately in the workshop.

### Co-design and charrettes have been used in numerous schemes in the UK in recent years

- **St Clements Hospital, London** was a listed site and a former workhouse infirmary in Bow, East London. In 2012, the Mayor of London decided to establish London's first Community Land Trust (CLT) on the site. A community planning workshop was held over two days and over 350 local people joined in to help create a vision for the delivery of 250 new homes. The scheme has received numerous awards, including two at the 2014 National Housing Awards, and the Housing award at the 2018 Civic Voice Design Awards.

- **Kew Bridge, London:** This 0.7 hectare site had been empty for over 10 years. A co-design process was undertaken, with over 100 attendees at two workshops. The workshop focused on a thorough explanation of the council's planning brief requirements for the site and further guidance that had been given by a Planning Inspector report which had rejected previous proposals on the site. By being clear about the parameters, expectations were not unduly raised. Instead, participants worked within the framework of the constraints, and ultimately led to a development of 308 new homes plus a range of mixed uses including a pub, restaurants shops and offices.
- In **Graylingwell, Chichester** an empty plot on a former asylum was the subject of a co-design process that involved over 500 local residents and community groups in the preparation of a detailed masterplan. Existing listed buildings have been integrated into a new mixed-use development which includes new community facilities.
- **The Village at Caterham, Surrey.** The old Caterham Barracks site was bought by Linden Homes. A Charrette process involving over 1000 local people took place. It led to the creation of a sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhood, including 361 mixed tenure homes. The development value of the site was increased by over £50 million and delivered a range of community assets.
- **Wick and Thurso, Scotland.** In 2013 the Highland Council ran Charrettes in Wick and Thurso (sponsored by the Scottish Government), to enable local people to shape the future growth of their towns. Members of the public and local stakeholders worked in collaboration with Council officers and project consultants to develop a vision and masterplan for each town, focused on housing and economic development.
- **Whitesands, Drumfries.** A sustainability-focused regeneration of the town centre was undertaken by drawing up a master plan using a co-design 'charrette' process. A series of events over a one week-period involved presentations, workshops, walkabouts and discussions, and included meetings with key stakeholders about the relevant policies and constraints on the site.
- **Nansledan, Cornwall** (*we have written about this development in our publication [A Place to Call Home](#).)* The co-design process began with a two-day briefing session in May 2004. Its aim was to clarify expectations for participants, and to begin to consider the main issues likely to be discussed for which technical information would be required. This was attended by several stakeholders including community groups, local authority councillors and officers, and others who had expressed an interest in the development. This in turn led to six working groups who worked up key themes for the development over the next six months.

The crucial workshop took place between 25th and 29th October 2004, at a local school. Informed by the working groups, it produced principles for the structure, scale and layout of the town, as well as strategic agreement on mixed-use places and communities, great streets, public transport and adaptability of building design. It recommended a density of 36 homes per hectare. The process brought together key local stakeholders: statutory agencies and authorities, the landowner, the masterplanner, the local community and voluntary groups. In total, there were over 140 attendees. Through an 'intensive workshop,' the participants collaborated to articulate a vision for the site that did not suffer from the 'design disconnect' between designers and most members of the public. The report from the workshop explained that the process involved a high level of technical input, and that 'fundamental to the process is the intensive design enquiry; every issue is tested by being drawn.' Problems could be raised, discussed and resolved, as and when they arrived, throughout the process. The co-design came up with a concept proposal underpinned by a set of clear principles. The specific spatial vision that emerged, in 2004, was for

an urban extension of 1,200 homes, over 33 hectares, with a large park around Chapel Stream flowing through the middle. The key agreed principles for the design of neighbourhoods, in the growth area, evolved over time, but were important in establishing a direction of travel.