

Masterplan and consultation event

Friday 17th March 2023



On Friday 17th March(1pm - 6pm) 2023 a stakeholder and resident consultation event was held at All Saints and Martyrs Church' Langley

Due to the public's interest in the proposed build and the Masterplan launch, several steps were taken to ensure that people in the surrounding areas had a chance to take part. These included:

- The development of a Facebook group to create interest and discussion- 300 members *
- 500 leaflets posted by hand to the surrounding houses
- 20 posters placed in local shops and businesses
- Door knocking around the immediately affected properties
- General word of mouth via groups meetings

Attendees on the day

53 people attended the day as well as Rochdale Councillors , the Big Help and BYA Architects.

25 people left full details and and want to become more involved, volunteer or attend meetings over the coming months.

Everyone who took part in the consultation lived or worked in the area and there was a mix of rented and owned tenants who gave their views. 70% of attendees identified as female

The following report is based on the views of local people from the Masterplan event and social media

** The original meeting scheduled for 10th March was cancelled due to an amber weather warning. Therefore another 500 leaflets were posted, amended posters replaced and more door knocking in the immediate vicinity undertaken.*



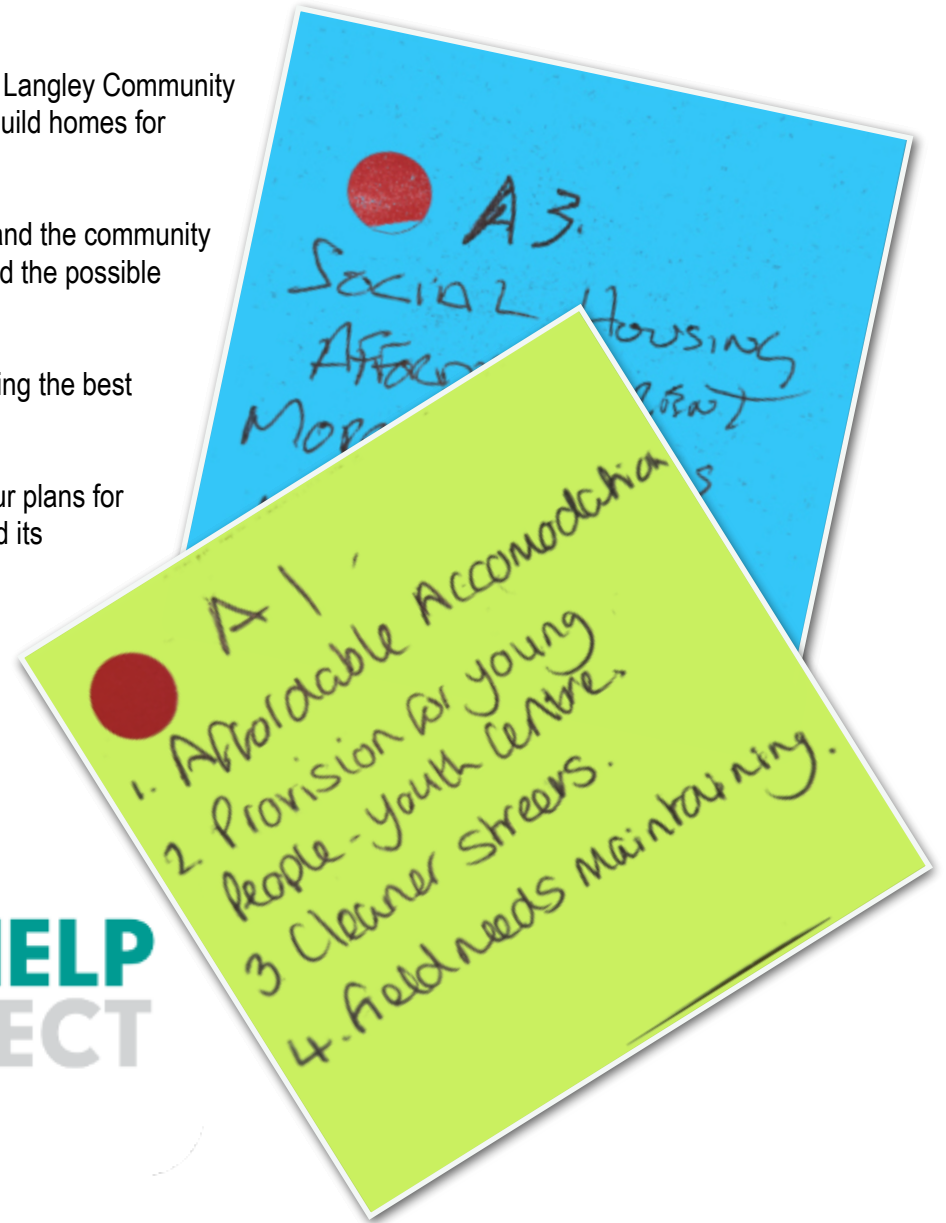
Where it began

In October 2022 Big Help were invited by Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) to support The Langley Community Benefits Society (LCBS) in their delivery strategy surrounding provision of sustainable new build homes for people local to Langley.

The opportunity to collaborate with RBC and LCBS captivated the imagination of Big Help and the community consultation event on 17th March 2023 was the culmination of multiple work-streams around the possible construction of 30, affordable, warm and safe homes for local people.

The feedback from stakeholders has been incredibly valuable as we look forward to delivering the best outcomes for the community of Langley.

The consultation event was designed to get feedback from the local community to inform our plans for the future. The development is by no means certain to go ahead. However, if it is to proceed it is essential to hear from local residents and other interested parties to ensure that any development matches the needs of local people.

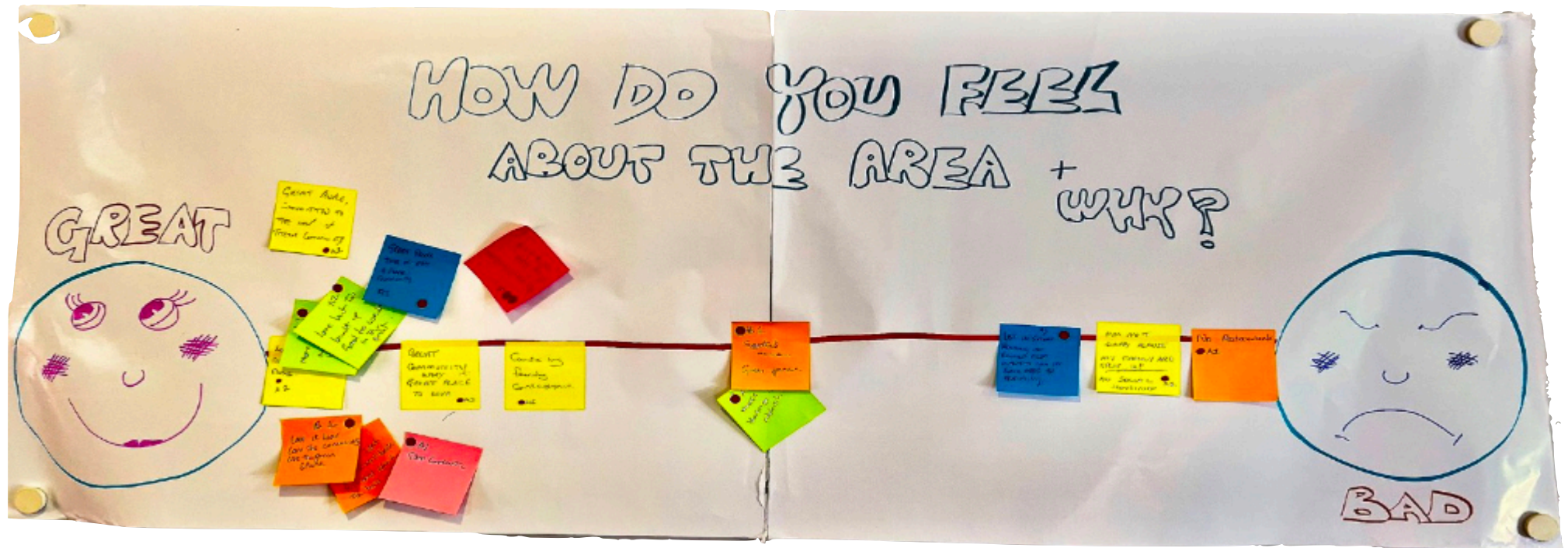


Participatory Appraisal Consultation findings *

The overall image shows people who attended the event are generally happy to live in the area.

The only negative comments were about the lack of social housing and families being split up due to this. This has been a theme on social media and comments on the day.

The positive comments included a consensus that there was a strong community spirit and people really don't want to live anywhere else. Additional comments included the estate being untidy, no supported accommodation and some poor quality housing **.

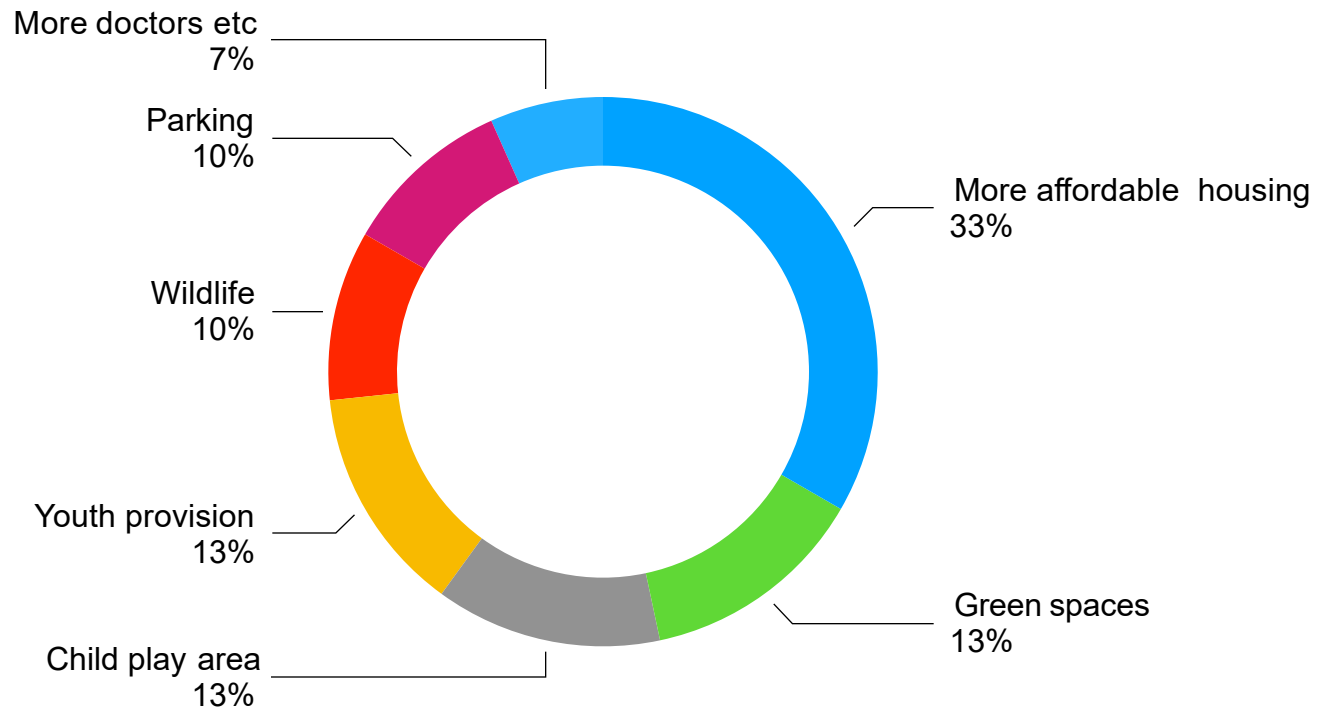
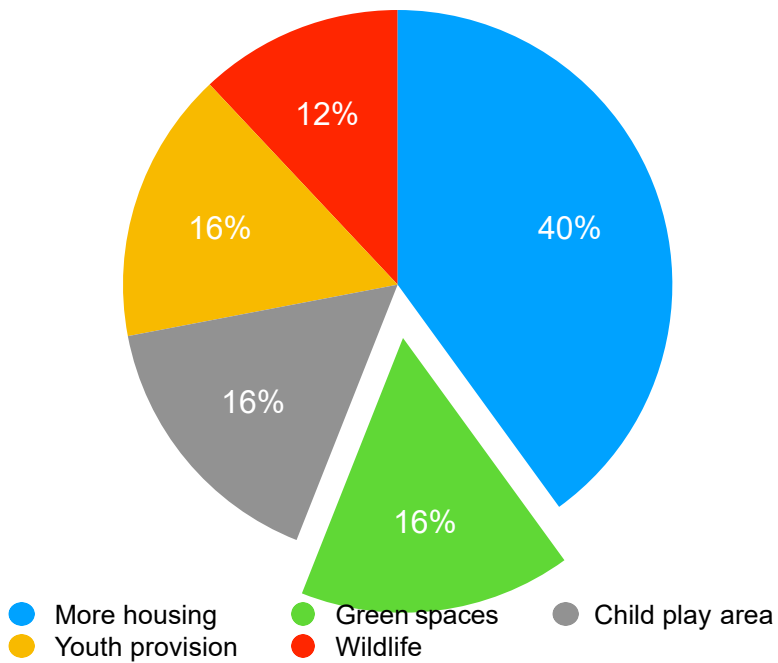


**It was only women that responded to this question.

*Participatory Appraisal (PA) is a method of consultation, designed to be none threatening and offer a fun and alternative method of gathering both qualitative and quantitative results. PA, by its approach is suitable to use with all members of the community as it easily cuts across age or language barriers.

What would you improve locally and why?

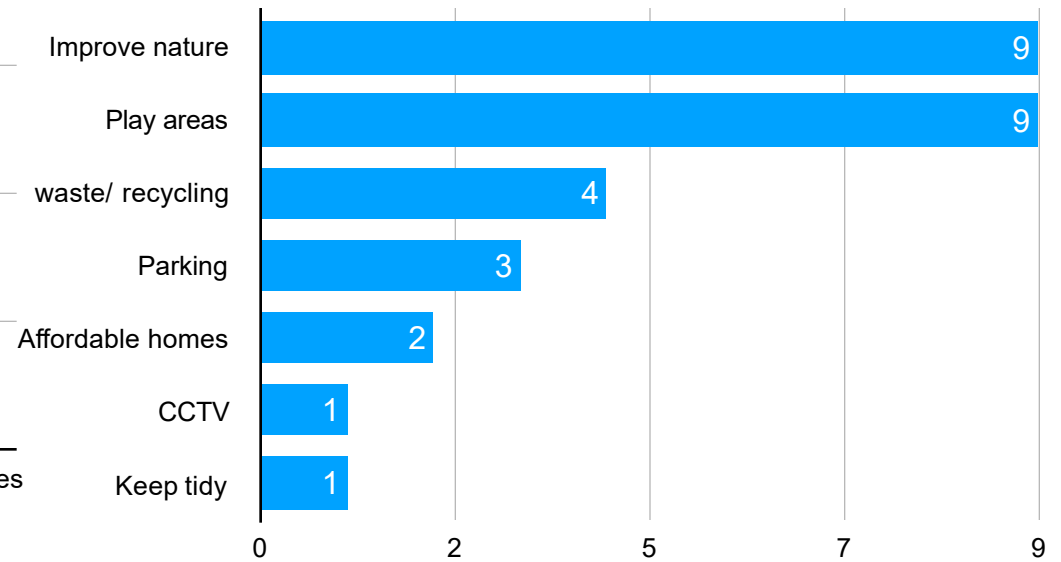
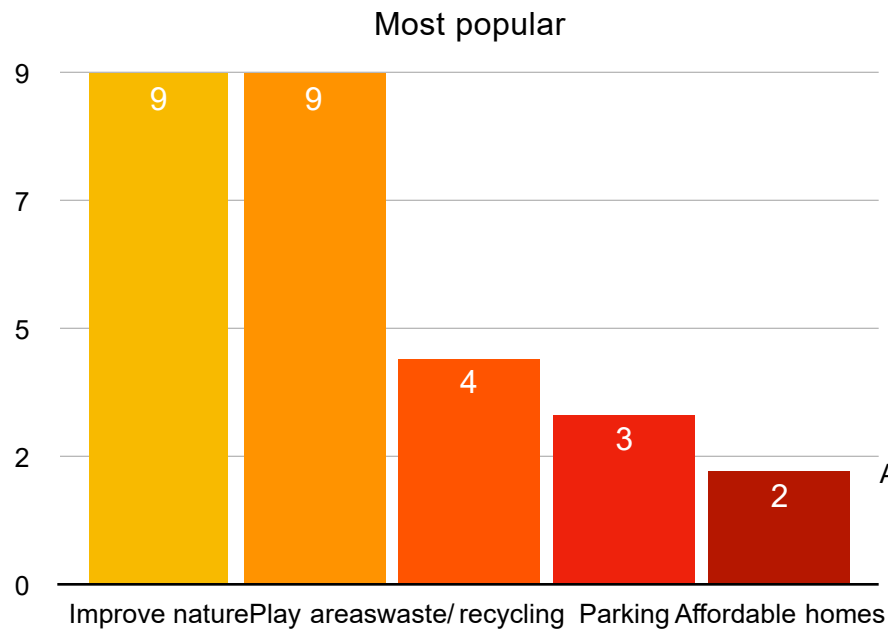
Reply	Number
More affordable housing	10
Green spaces	4
Child play area	4
Youth provision	4
Wildlife	3
Parking	3
More doctors etc	2
Road repairs	1
Housing- not here	1



This question was an open question about the current green space and particularly if the houses were to be built

Open space- what would you like to see?

Answer	How many
Improve nature	9
Play areas	9
Waste/ recycling bins	4
Parking	3
Affordable homes	2
CCTV	1
Keep tidy	1
Homes for disabled	1



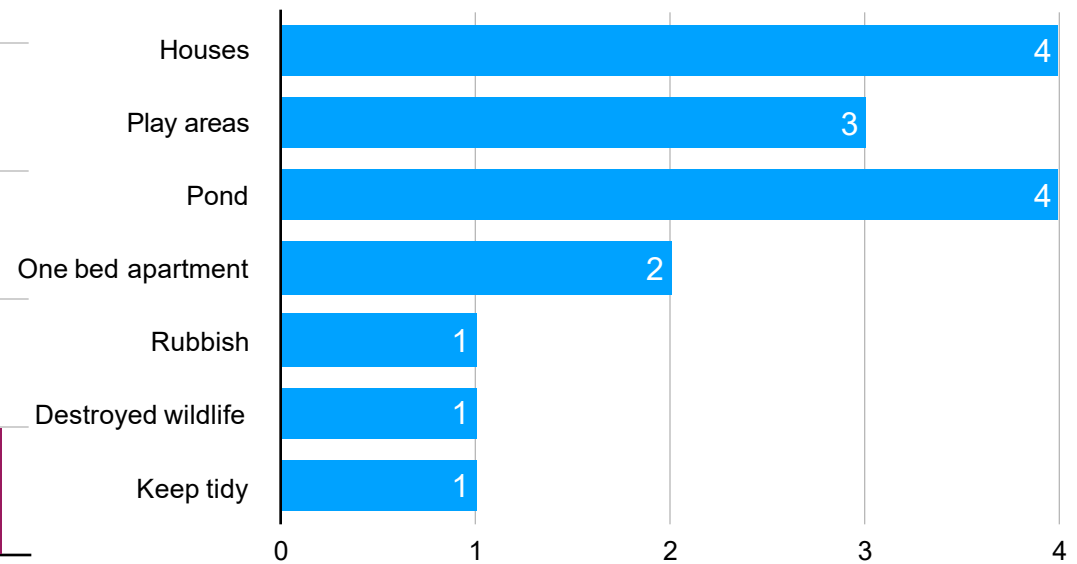
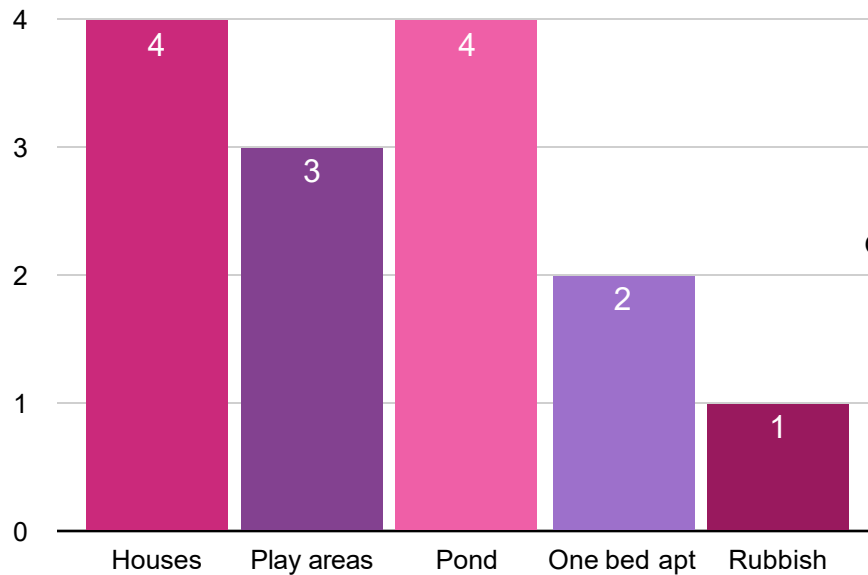
*Some initial negative comments changed following discussions about the possible and a couple of attendees wanted to be local champions for the proposed development.

This question was an open question about the current green space and particularly if the houses were to be built - what don't people want to see?

Open space- what don't you want?

Answer	How many
Houses	4
Play areas	3
Pond	4
One bed apartment	2
Rubbish	1
Destroyed wildlife	1
Keep tidy	1
Homes for disabled	1

Most popular



*There is now a local team of people working with the partnership to promote wildlife and environmental development

What people had to say

'What a good idea! Seen the plans, it's far from Grange Walk, the flats on Borrowdale have been taken into consideration with the view, the rest of the wasteland will be landscaped (long time needed) houses by the boundary of St Mary's, the rest landscaped? I'm not sure what the issue is?'

'I'm have a split opinion. I don't want any houses built on the field but then who is to stop a private development flattening the whole lot which no input what so ever '

'The estate cannot cope with any more properties. The infrastructure needs to be taken into consideration before any permission is given . You cannot get a doctors/ dentist appointment. Traffic is really heavy especially at school times, there is no where to park its absolutely horrendous.'

'I've lived on Langley for 56 years I once lived on Grisdale Drive when I was in infants me and friends always played on this land and it's always as always been bog land same as now always soaking but why is it when it comes to building homes for Langley people we get the rubbish every bit of good land construction companies got I'm all for housing for local (meaning local) people but within 2-3years they will start sinking we was promised so much when Riverside took over but all we got was crap windows doors kitchens and now service charges for things we don't even receive.'

'Try building and the estate will do everything to stop it. Keep off our fields'

'We've needed affordable housing for years as opposed to private development The most negative comments are the not on my doorstep type.'

'Silly question? After the houses are built and there is still land left over, what's to stop another developer coming along and building on that land. Or will the Big Help own all the land and guarantee that the land that is left will be never be built on.'

'I love wildlife more than people. I came to the consultation as I wanted to do everything in my power to stop the build. After a conversation with Big Help, who confirmed their plans to help wildlife in and around the development, I would now support and offer to participate in these plans.'



Residents ideas for using the field space

Local polls and voting

Two voting mediums have been used to gauge local opinion about the build verses the field being left untouched.

A Facebook poll asked ‘ **Do you want new houses on the land** ’



58% said yes and 42% said no

These figures were endorsed by a local priorities vote using ‘Bank notes’ of £100, £10 and £1 amounts. The residents could use the money as they wished. Affordable houses came top with £1,966. Second was protect green spaces with £1,360. Nature play areas £667, support for elderly £408 youth provision £375, food pantry £225 and better transport £12. This mirrors the views and feelings across all the consultation.

Overall findings and trends

The people who attended the event and who communicated on social media are very divided about the building of the properties.

Residents who are supportive feel that this a good thing and that there isn’t enough affordable housing on the estate.

People who do not want the houses are general unhappy they will lose their view, their field and that it will continue months of building in the area after other developers have been building locally for a while.

Other areas of concern via social media have been:

- The houses will not remain affordable
- They will not go to local people

Most common questions asked during the consultation and replies

Where is the money coming from to fund this project?

The funds and the covenant to make the project viable is being provided by Big Help Project (or one of its subsidiary companies). This will be confirmed further down the line.

Who will be building the houses?

Big Help Project and the Langley Community Benefit Society have formed a delivery company called Big Help Langley Developments Limited. This company has 9x board members (4x from Big Help Project, 4x from Langley Community Benefit Society and 1x from Rochdale Borough Council).

Once we are clear upon the direction of travel that the development is taking we will tender the works including local contractors to ensure we keep as much of the local construction funding in Langley as possible .

How are the houses going to be allocated?

Langley Community Benefit Society will be responsible for local lettings.

What criteria would be used?

The principles will be adopted from the lettings policy from Rochdale Borough Council.

Are any of the properties going to be made accessible for people with disabilities?

Yes. Once we have feedback from the consultation the levels will be set. However, no less than 20% will be fully disabled accessible.

How much will the rents be?

Rents will not exceed the Local Housing Allowance set for Middleton.

Who will manage the properties and maintenance?

The properties will be maintained and managed by Big Help Langley Developments Limited. The delivery model will be identical to the method already used by Big Help Project who own and manage over 4,000 homes.

Will there be sufficient space for parking?

Yes. The plans clearly show parking spaces.

Will they be rent only or could you end up buying them after so long?

Rent only. There will be NO potential for a right to buy situation down the line given that homes will be locally rented in perpetuity.

You've previously mentioned these homes will not have right to buy or right to acquire. With that in mind and the rents being 'affordable' will there be any incentives to assist families in saving for their first house purchases? Like an exclusive credit union membership to enable them to move on and release the property up again for other families get off the waiting list?

The plan is to make the houses available for affordable rent only in line with the Local Housing Allowance rates for Middleton.

If the locals are insisting on keeping the area 'as is' will you walk away?

We will be making decisions following feedback received from the consultation event.

Why would you deprive the locals of the last green space available? I'm not interested that you are leaving some space. Big dogs need lots of room. I'm sure the new residents in those apartments will complain about people enjoying the open space.

We are looking to enhance the green space by increasing the level of diversity in the park through sensitive activities including planting of traditional Birch, Maple, Yew, Oak, Willow (these are good for planting in areas where flooding is common including the bottom of the site adjacent to the Church) and fruit/ nut trees which offer other unique benefits including pollinators for bees and other insects.

In addition to the above we want to promote other species including bats and wild birds. Therefore, it is our intention to insert bat and bird boxes onto the properties and surrounding area including Swift Bricks to promote Swifts and other migratory birds to nest in and around the homes.

In addition to the above we will provide more bins given that there are some areas where large amounts of detritus form. We will also insert lighting into areas where lighting is poor.

Please define 'locals' i.e. who is allowed to buy or rent? What are the rules? Will it be in the contracts of the land purchase?

The rules will be set by Langley Community Benefit Society in co-ordination with Rochdale Borough Councils lettings policy.

Will you pay compensation for the disturbance and loss in value to surrounding properties brought on by this development. There will be more people in the area, more cars, more bins etc?

We expect the value of the area to increase in a range of aspects.

As this is a mixed build i.e. family homes and apartments can you demonstrate the research done that this mix of property is required?

The consultation is designed to gain feedback to inform the specific mix of homes to be provided. In the event that the project goes ahead.

Recommendations

The following points are direct recommendations made from the concerns and issues raised during the consultation to help reassure local people that their concerns are at the heart of this project and future projects that the Big Help Langley Developments CIC partnership embark on.

- It's clear that there is a lot of mistrust that comes from historical work in the area and private developments and fear about losing the land and the wildlife. This is not across the board as many residents feel the land is unsafe, dirty and neglected and so if the development is approved its a must to take the concerns of the local people into account and develop a usable space with a guarantee that the promises will be honoured.
- Wildlife is a main concern for people who use this space for dog walking, relaxing and as an aid to mental health issues. Therefore any future plans need to have a long term strategy for the development of a green space that encourages and respects wildlife, but is sustainable and used by local people.
- Urban myths around this project are also encouraging a bullying and aggressive culture towards those that want the houses. Its therefore important that everything is shared with local people via social media and one to one contact to ensure that everyone is kept informed.
- There is a stigma around one bed flats and currently the development has several. This was a particular concern from young parents who want to use the field for their children to play but feel the image of the one bed flat is often perceived to be allocated to less desirable tenants . With this in mind it's maybe sensible to allocate them for people who wish to downsize. As part of the programme the Langley Community Benefits Society, supported by local people, will be responsible for a lettings policy to ensure a robust strategy for allocation that considers the community and the dynamics of the area.
- Several people raised on Facebook, concerns for anti-social behaviour in the area. As part of the new lettings policy its recommended to work with all new tenants to produce a local neighbourhood agreement* developed in partnership with the community and local service partners. This document will highlight the level of service and support the tenants in and around the new build can expect from local service providers but also what is expected of them as local tenants.
- There is concern over the lettings policy and whether it will remain homes for people with a local connection, therefore it's essential that local people are allowed to be part of the discussions moving forward via meetings and a forum to discuss.

- There is a lack of understanding around the rent structure and what Local Housing Allowance (LHA)* means in the context of these properties. Again clear messages will be provided going forward, to help residents understand where the figure comes from and that if people lose their jobs the rent is usually covered under their benefits.
- There is a feeling that any build is about 'lining the pockets of developers and back-handers'. Its only over time when the Big Help and partners begin to support the community that this will start to disappear from the wider conversation. In the meantime everyone needs to be kept fully informed with progress via email and social media platforms where appropriate.
- Its important that if the development of housing on the land happens, people are taken on the journey. Its therefore proposed that there is a public and stakeholder forum to allow local voices but also to continue to honour both sides of debate.



Report was published 3rd April 2023