

18th March 2021

Dear Birdingbury Parish Council,

Since our initial discussions at the end of 2020, we've had our architect prepare some feasibility drawings to demonstrate how a new community facility could be delivered in Birdingbury alongside a number of self-build plots on the Diocese land. I've attached two drawings - one showing self-build plots and the other for a higher number general market housing units. I'd like to reiterate that Landstrom is not a housebuilder - our role is to enable new uses of the land on behalf of the Diocese of Coventry and to manage the process of planning applications and delivery. It is still very early stages and we welcome all feedback from the Parish Council and local residents on how we may evolve our proposals.

In summary, we are proposing that a new community building is provided; along with additional land for parking, play/recreation areas and community orchard. We propose that this area is sited at the front of the field in order to enhance and integrate access to the existing recreation grounds and to reduce the visual impact of any new housing.

Our preference would be to provide serviced self-build plots, as we believe it best caters for all types of demand that may arise locally for new dwellings (from retirement bungalows to family homes), without having to dictate that mix ourselves. Self-build offers the opportunity for people to create the homes they want to best suit their own needs, and are generally delivered to much higher standards for design and construction than normal mass-market housing. Self-build can also be an affordable route to home ownership. We propose to secure a planning condition that requires plots to be offered to those with a local connection to Birdingbury prior to being made available on the open market. The denser market housing scheme is included more for reference and indicative of what could be possible in terms of numbers if the site were to be allocated for housing through the local plan or neighbourhood plan processes. Both proposals would offer the requisite returns for the landowner to be able to offer the land and new facilities to the Parish at zero cost.

I acknowledge and respect the conclusions of the Birdingbury Parish meeting on the 17th November. We are still wishing to have a meaningful engagement with the Parish and to steer our proposals in a way that would give back the most community benefit. I do also appreciate that the Parish Council are unable to commit to supporting any proposals without the full backing of its residents and a cautious approach is very understandable. This leaves us in a slight chicken-and-egg situation, whereby we'd like to engage with the Parish to help evolve a potential scheme, but that the Parish are potentially unable to do so without first understanding the level of local support, which itself will come from being able to have sight of a finished proposal. I am also mindful of requesting anything too onerous from the Parish, as I appreciate that resources can be scarce.

I therefore propose a possible way forward, which hopefully addresses any potential conflicts of interests and risks while also aligning our goals of a positive outcome:

1. We would welcome a meaningful engagement with representatives from the Parish and/or the Birdingbury Club or a new dedicated "steering group" to help suggest some desired deliverables (e.g. size, layout, facilities) to best meet the local community needs. E.g. a community shop, bar, meeting rooms, events hall etc.
2. We'd then like to ask the Parish to formally decide (perhaps by a Parish Poll), *"whether the Parish would be willing to accept the ongoing management, maintenance and freehold ownership of a new community building and associated land, if one were to be granted planning permission and provided at zero cost to the community"*. Alternatively, this same arrangement could perhaps be offered to the Birdingbury Club (assuming that it is a suitable community-run not-for-profit organisation).

3. Landstrom will prepare a planning application for the development, broadly in line with the 'SK02' self-build layout provided here and having regard for all local design input and engagement. It will likely be a hybrid application with the community facilities being 'detailed' and the self-build housing being 'outline' with matters of specific design within each plot reserved for the future occupants, but within a fixed design code.
4. A planning condition will require that the community facilities are built and handed to the Parish prior to the final 50% of plots being sold (and therefore ensuring its timely delivery).
5. The Parish Council will retain its right to support or object to the planning application at the time it is presented. A parish objection at this point could also revoke any commitment made at (2), meaning that the ultimate decision on whether to support the scheme or not is fully withheld until all matters are decided, the designs are formalised, and local comments are heard.

I hope that the principle of this proposal is well received, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further in due course.

Kind regards,



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