

Meeting led by – Project Director at Urban&Civic.

This was the first meeting of the newly formed Growing Baldock Advisory Forum. It was agreed that a summary of discussions would be provided.

The Project Director gave an overview of progress over the last year and next steps in terms of the approval of the Strategic Masterplan (SMP) and submission of the Outline Planning Application.

The SMP was submitted to the Strategic Sites Project Board and North Herts District Council Cabinet for approval and will be taken to Full Council after the May elections. All the engagement undertaken to date has informed the preparation of the SMP. The reason that there was a delay between the last public consultation exhibition and the SMP submission is that the project team have been resolving issues with the secondary school provision.

Cllr AW added that U&C had gone further than other developers in terms of consultation and that there have been a lot of changes to the SMP on the back of residents' comments.

The SMP document is publicly available online and can be accessed [here](#).

Cllr AW queried why the parcel of land BA4 was not included in the Growing Baldock development area. The Project Director explained that this parcel of land is being developed by Chalkdene Developments, which is a Joint Venture between Herts Living Ltd and Morgan Sindall.

There was a comment from BH on the impact of Growing Baldock in terms of water stress in the area. They stressed that this is already a water stressed area with a nationally important chalk stream, so plans need to focus on SUDs, water efficiency and sustainable sewage processes.

MB asked if the purpose of the meetings is for Urban&Civic to tell the group information or for other attendees to contribute. It was emphasised that the attendees need to understand where they can and cannot genuinely contribute. PRODUCT DIRECTOR clarified that the purpose of the forum is for people to comment on and guide the outline planning application, but also to feed into the project over the longer term because this is a 20-year scheme.

There was a discussion around which topics should be discussed at future meetings. Attendees expressed a desire to speak in more detail about the provision of community spaces at Growing Baldock. There were concerns about the potential for new competition with the existing community spaces but also requests for additional spaces to be developed for other community groups to use.

The Project Director agreed to set out a plan for future sessions which would prioritise topics which will directly feed into the Outline Planning Application.

The Herts County Council education officer provided an update on the secondary school provision for Growing Baldock. Previously there was land reserved north of the railway for a secondary school, now there is land reserved south of the railway at BA3 instead. There is a preference for the relocation of the existing Knights Templar school onto BA3 to create one bigger school to serve the whole of Baldock. There are challenges around funding which mean this option cannot be confirmed yet. There will be community use agreements for the schools in place, agreed as part of the planning application. The education provision on the site is largely agreed between the developer and education authority, rather than the public being able to significantly influence the outcomes.

The meeting closed.

Future meeting dates:

Monday 19th May – 7Product Director to 8.30Product Director – IN PERSON (Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre)

Tuesday 1st July – 7Product Director to 8.30Product Director - online (TBC - Teams or in person)

Wednesday 10th September – 7Product Director to 8.30Product Director – IN PERSON
(Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre)