

# A Vision for Hethersett Community Planning Weekend - Report Back 23 March 2010

(continued from the front page)

Hethersett Land Ltd, part of the Ptarmigan Land Group, is working with landowners to explore how the suggested housing strategy could best be delivered. To help inform this process Hethersett Land commissioned JTP to engage local residents and stakeholders in an assessment of the issues and opportunities for Hethersett and its surrounding areas, including Little Melton, and to develop a new Vision for the future. The Vision will help shape Hethersett Land's submission to the JCS process.

## Participation

Many people who attended the Weekend were opposed to the GNDP decision to allocate strategic housing growth to Hethersett. However, a significant number accepted that significant new housing was inevitable and that it was therefore important to participate in the development of the proposals to ensure that what comes is appropriately designed to the highest quality and will bring significant benefits to Hethersett.

*"Let's establish a group of people who come together, to oversee things, to establish a framework."*

## Next steps

If the JCS is found to be sound by the Inspector at the Examination in Public in the summer, it is likely to be adopted in late 2010 or early 2011. South Norfolk Council will then start to prepare a Site Allocations Development Plan document to identify the specific locations for housing within each identified growth settlement during 2011. Ptarmigan Land is working towards submission of an outline planning application for land at Hethersett during 2011. If planning permission is granted, development of the site would be likely to commence in 2013.

## Village Forum

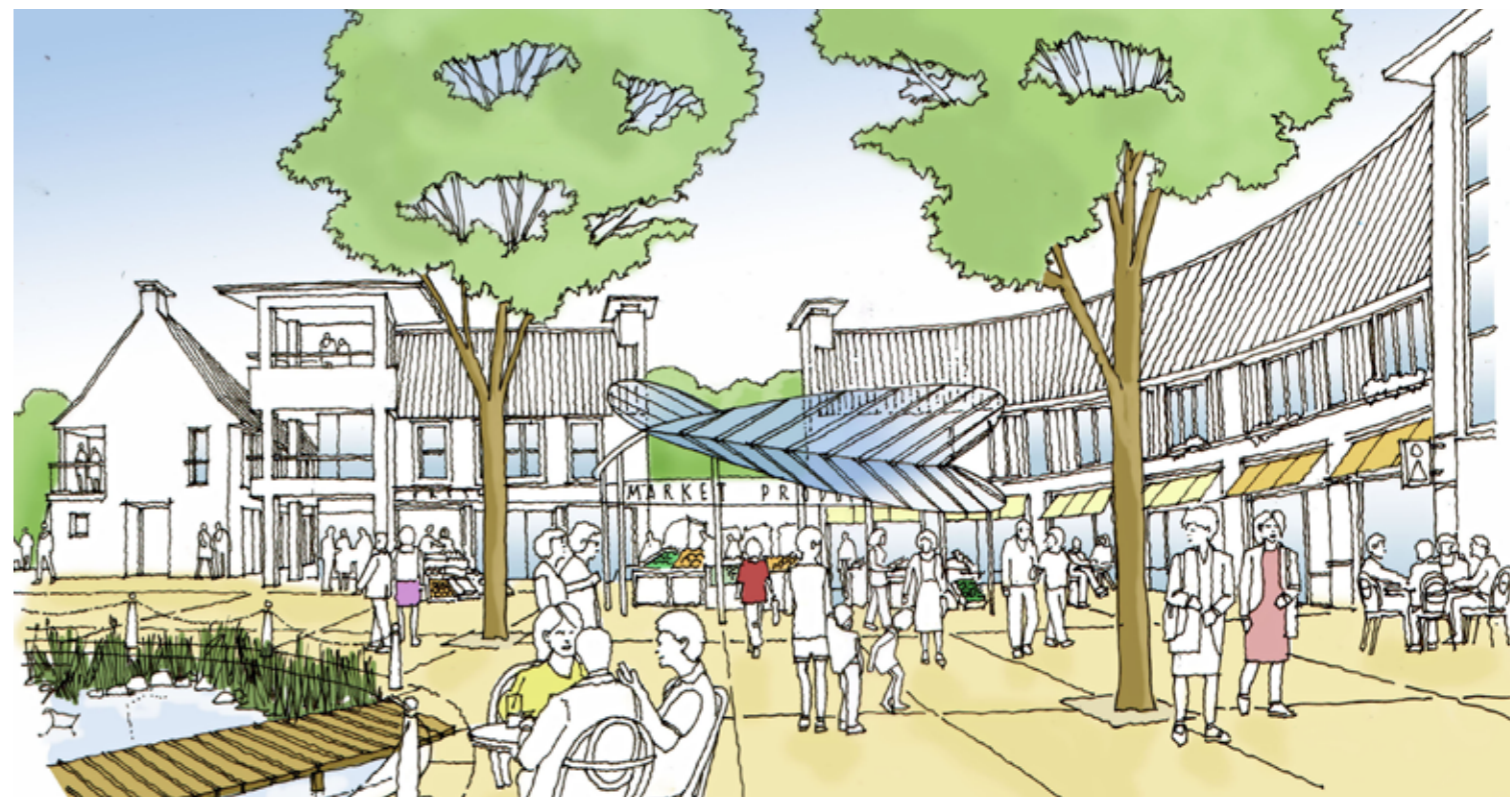
To enable local people to continue to participate in the development of proposals for Hethersett, John Thompson announced that the first Hethersett Village Forum will be held at 6.30pm on Thursday 13 May at The Hethersett Village Hall, Back Lane. Everyone is welcome.

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# A Vision for Hethersett Community Planning Weekend

Report Back 23 March 2010, Hethersett High School



A Vision for a new neighbourhood centre at North Green next to existing Village Hall

## A new Vision for Hethersett

Over 350 people participated in the Vision for Hethersett Community Planning Weekend on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 March 2010 to discuss the proposed extension of the village. Local people took part in two days of discussions, workshops and hands-on planning groups to explore local and site-specific issues and possible solutions and principles for growth. Following the two public days the team from John Thompson & Partners (JTP) analysed the outcomes and developed an illustrated Vision for the future, which was reported back to the community at 7pm on Tuesday 23 March at Hethersett High School.

## Background

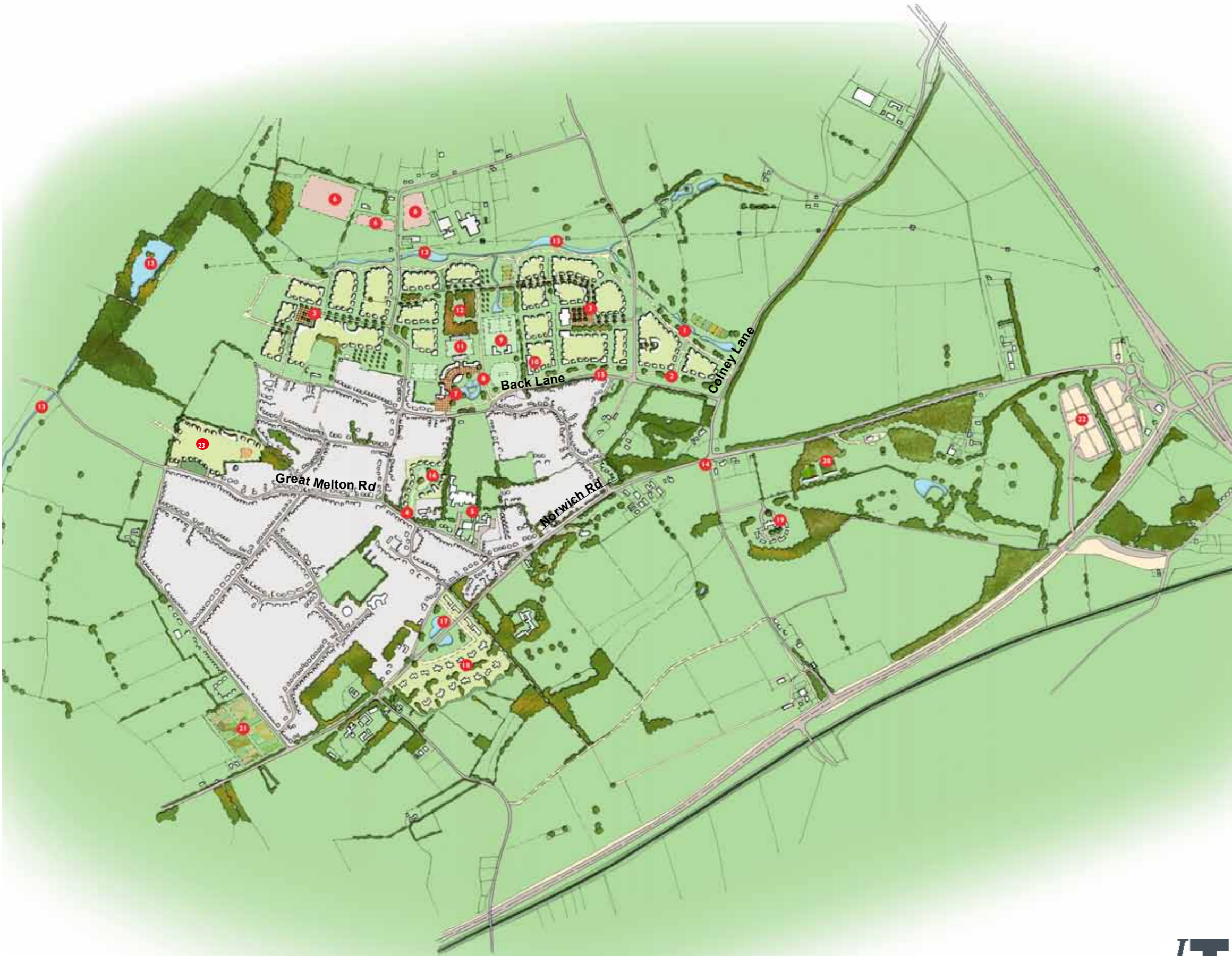
The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) have prepared a draft Joint Core Strategy (JCS) indicating that Hethersett could accommodate at least 1000 homes and associated development, plus possibly a share of a further 1800 homes not allocated to specific villages. The JCS has now been agreed by the Councils

and sent to the Government for testing. The JCS will be examined by an independent Inspector later in 2010. Assuming the JCS passes its examination, the Councils will then identify specific areas of land for development in the GNDP area, including at Hethersett. (cont'd on back page)

*"I don't want it and we don't need it but it's what the council wants. So we might as well make it work!"*

## Hethersett Village Forum

**6.30pm, Thursday 13 May  
Hethersett Village Hall  
Back Lane, Hethersett NR9 3DB**



**The Vision for the Future of Hethersett**

Following the Community Planning Weekend the team from JTP incorporated the key ideas raised by local people into a Vision for the future growth of the village, based on sustainable eco-village principles and local design traditions. The masterplan shows the proposed expansion to the north of the village in a series of hamlets, each separated from one another and from the existing village by green wedges of productive landscape, new wetlands and pedestrian and cycle paths. A secondary village centre is proposed that will link the existing and new communities, focused around a picturesque village green and including a range of new facilities and a new Primary School. A network of green open spaces is proposed, with a new South Green at the entrance to the village (opposite the King's Head pub) linking through to a new Mid Green adjacent to the existing village centre, and then on to North Green.

**Key to masterplan**

1. **Eco Corridor:** with allotments, SUDS, swales, community orchards, play space, paths
2. **Green Buffer:** landscaped open space separating new hamlets from the existing village
3. **Norfolk Hamlet:** traditional low density settlement with central focal point open space
4. **Existing Village Centre:** with environmental improvements and traffic calming
5. **Expansion of High School:** primary school relocated to enable High School expansion
6. **Business Zone:** area west of meat processing plant identified for business use
7. **Secondary Village Centre:** with shops, cafe, pub, parking, events space, farmers market, sports changing facilities
8. **North Village Green:** cricket green and pavilion, seating areas, public art installation
9. **New community primary school:** with playing fields, multi use games area
10. **New community medical centre:** GP surgery, dental practice, car parking
11. **Football arena:** with full size football pitch and training area with viewing terraces
12. **Woodland activity zone:** with zip slides, assault course, natural play area, BMX bike track
13. **Wetland/SUDS landscape:** with bird hides, boardwalks, interpretive signage, footpath links
14. **Improved junction of Colney Lane with B1172:** with segregated cycle route to Watton Road.
15. **Upgraded Back Lane:** to form principal access to new hamlets and secondary village centre
16. **Mid Village Green:** new picturesque village green adjacent to existing village centre
17. **South Village Green:** new, expanded south village green
18. **Traditional Villa development:** low density homes
19. **Care Home and supported housing:** residential care home with supported housing
20. **Agricultural row houses and allotments:** New allotments and integrated row housing
21. **Allotments/productive landscape:** green barrier to ensure barrier to coalescence
22. **Extended park & ride**
23. **Development proposed by others**

The following illustrations were drawn up during the Community Planning Weekend



A Vision for a new South Green at Norwich Road



A Vision for a new wetland area within green wedge



A Vision for a new Mid Green close to existing village centre



A Vision for a typical residential street



A typical hamlet centre showing green open space



Allotments within green buffer zone to existing village

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Key Themes from the Community Planning Weekend

## Scepticism about new development

Many participants at the Weekend were opposed to the GNDP decision to allocate strategic housing growth at Hethersett. A common sentiment was, "leave us as we are!". People are sceptical about the planning system and its ability to control and deliver quality housing developments. Despite significant building in recent years, people feel few benefits have come to Hethersett as a result. It is important that agreements are put in place to ensure that promises are delivered and that future developments bring benefits.

*"When we got the other estates we didn't get an extra doctor, dentist, tinker, tailor, anything!"*

## Community involvement and influence

Many participants accepted that Hethersett's prime location and good transport links meant that significant new housing is inevitable and that it is therefore important to participate in the development of the proposals to ensure that what comes is appropriately designed to the highest quality and will bring benefits to the village. The creation of a Village Forum could help ensure an open and transparent planning process to deliver the best possible development and ensure that the village benefits directly from the 'planning gain' through the Section 106 agreement/CIL.

*"If we're going to get the development, get into the driving seat rather than being wrong-footed."*

## Movement and Transport

The village suffers from congestion at certain times and parking is a problem, particularly near Tesco. Main roads are dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists and there is concern about how extra traffic will be accommodated. The bus service to Norwich and Wymondham is good during the day, but poor in the evening, when the park and ride is closed, so access to Norwich for evening leisure is dependent on cars. A circular bus around the village should be considered and Hethersett and Little Melton would benefit from a cycle route linking the villages. The campaign to provide a cycle route to local employment destinations (UEA, the Research Park, the hospital) should be supported.

*"A real cultural change is needed – we're far too dependent on car use."*

## Strengthening the 'heart' of Hethersett

Hethersett lost its village green in the 18th Century, and today has no distinct centre or 'heart'. Its shops and facilities are stretched out along Great Melton Road and the existing village centre has insufficient amenities, occasional traffic congestion and poor parking provision. The close proximity of the three schools within the centre exacerbates the traffic and parking problems. Many people expressed the aspiration for a remodelled village centre with a village green, but this may require physical change that other members of the community do not want.

*"We need a little focal point where you can meet people."*

## Improving infrastructure

Water and sewerage infrastructure are currently strained and need significant improvement. The health centre is at full capacity and participants complain of the time it takes to get an appointment now. The schools currently struggle to provide sufficient places for Hethersett children and new housing will necessitate significant investment in education. New development can address the need for improved infrastructure in Hethersett by agreeing priorities through Section 106 agreements. Any proposal to build a new high school in Hethersett would require a scale of housing development that residents do not want. One less costly option would be to provide a new Junior School on a site in the new development to allow the High School to expand.

*"Infrastructure is groaning at the moment."*

## Preserving Hethersett's character

Hethersett is considered a good place to live and residents value its character and rural views. The community is concerned that further development may damage the village identity and sense of community. Future development should not replicate recent unpopular housing schemes, rather it should respect and preserve Hethersett's character whilst enhancing facilities and infrastructure. Hethersett should be kept as a distinct entity - there should be no coalescence with Wymondham, Little Melton or Norwich - and it should remain a separate and independent village community.

*"Keep the village feel!"*