

Berinsfield

GARDEN VILLAGE



"Keep the community at the heart of everything!"
Community planning participant

The Vision

Ensure new development and community provision at Mount Farm is blended with the existing Berinsfield to create one fully integrated community: create a new linear park running north/south along Fane Drive East stitching together existing and extended Berinsfield; invest in schools and community amenities to benefit the whole community; deliver a range of well designed, energy efficient homes for people of all incomes and ages; provide for effective vehicular access, parking and active travel (eg bus, pedestrian and cycling) across the garden village and beyond; support local businesses and provide new jobs and training, including in construction; enhance green spaces in the existing village connected to a new landscape network for people and nature in the new development; continue community participation in the development and delivery of the Garden Village.

These are just some of the ideas to emerge from the Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village Community Planning Weekend (CPW) held at Berinsfield Community Association (BCA) on 31 March and 1 April 2023.

Background

In June 2019, Berinsfield was awarded Garden Village status by the Government. The area included undeveloped land on the former Mount Farm airfield, all of which was allocated for development in the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Local Plan in 2020 to facilitate a range of regeneration opportunities in the existing village and provide new homes, green space, employment space, services and facilities.

Community Planning

Ptarmigan Land is seeking to develop proposals for the Garden Village by working with the local community and other stakeholders

to design a comprehensive masterplan for Mount Farm and the existing village of Berinsfield as required by SODC Local Plan policy. Ptarmigan appointed JTP, architects and community planners, to facilitate the Community Planning Weekend (CPW) as an opportunity for the community to share local knowledge and help shape a new Vision and the final proposals.

Before the CPW, the JTP team met with a range of individuals, businesses and groups around Berinsfield and there was an opportunity for the community to give views online using the 'Create Communities' platform on the project website berinsfieldgardenvillage.com

At the CPW participants could view a background exhibition, go on minibus site visits, and take part in facilitated dialogue workshops and hands-on planning groups.

Vision Report Back

Following the CPW, the Ptarmigan team reflected on and summarised the outcomes and drew up an illustrated Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village, which was reported back to the community on Tuesday evening, 18 April 2023 at the BCA.

"As the promoter of the land we want to move from a position of talking about it to delivering it!" Ptarmigan Land

Comprehensive Masterplan

After the report back of the Vision, the Ptarmigan team will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to bring together a comprehensive plan, known as a Masterplan Framework Document, which will prepare the ground for an Outline Planning Application for the site.



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The Vision for Berinsfield was drawn up following the Community Planning Weekend public workshops. The illustrative framework includes around 1,700 new homes, at least 5 ha of additional employment land and supporting services and facilities.

Key

♥ Complementary community hubs - existing and new

♥ Parkland and leisure spaces - existing and new

✱ Employment area

✱ Primary schools

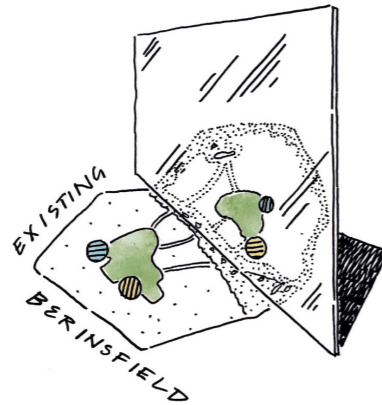
⌋ Proposed new residential neighbourhoods

1. The Green Ditch - Fane Drive Linear Park
2. The Green Stiches:
 - a) Woodland Walk
 - b) Parkland Walk
 - c) Farm Walk
 - d) Wetland Walk
3. New "Community Farm" Centre & existing farm
4. Woodland edge
5. Wetland gateway
6. Landscape corridors full of wildlife
7. Primary access from A4074
8. Potential second access from A4074
9. Vehicular access from Burcot Lane

Ⓜ Potental mobility hubs - bus stops

↔ Potential bus routes

⋯ Potential walking and wheeling routes



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Community Farm Centre



New Central Park



Northern Woodland Edge

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Key Themes

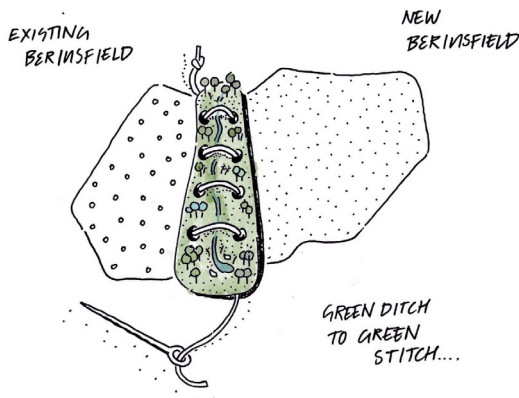
The following key themes represent a summary of the views of the participants through the community planning process. All quotes are from participants of the process unless otherwise stated.

One Berinsfield

Berinsfield is a unique village with a strong sense of identity and neighbourliness. People are proud of their local heritage and what the community offers to its residents today. New development must deliver investment into community amenities and infrastructure so that existing village facilities do not become overstretched, but rather development is seen to bring benefits to both existing and new residents. Participants at the CPW wanted to ensure that the growth of Berinsfield builds on the village's existing strengths in a way that creates one Garden Village not a "them and us" situation. Berinsfield Garden Village must grow as one integrated community, not two separate settlements.

"You've got to mesh the two together so you don't get old versus new!"

"Nobody should feel anything is too far away from where they are."



Trust and delivery

Many participants said that they felt there have been many consultations and promises made in the past with little positive actually happening as a result. To build trust in the process residents want to see stakeholders coming together, including Ptarmigan and SODC, to deliver the best possible masterplan for existing and new residents. Good and regular communication is vital and some "early win" projects should be identified and delivered with the community.

"It's great having new ideas but we have to move things forward."

Housing

New housing should be energy efficient, well designed and built, with a balance of affordable and for sale homes, and provision of some larger family homes and accommodation for the elderly. Participants also wanted to see investment in existing homes to reduce energy bills and water usage and provide other sustainability and quality of life benefits.

"If you build larger houses, you'll attract people who want to stay and work in the village, and put investment into the village!"

Green and blue landscape framework

Villagers appreciate the green spaces and walking routes in Berinsfield and the views and access to the surrounding countryside. There was concern about the potential impact of new development on the existing ecology at Mount Farm, though development must deliver enhanced biodiversity. The new development at Mount Farm should create a network of linked green spaces connected to the existing village to provide attractive and varied spaces and linkages for people with opportunities to design in sustainable drainage and enhance habitats for nature. The central field in Berinsfield is greatly valued and participants wanted to mirror this in the new development with east west linear routes connecting both spaces via a new linear park along Fane Drive East.

"Protect and enhance existing green space network within the village and mirror it across into the new development."

Fane Drive East Linear Park

The physical design and layout of the Garden Village is key to creating an integrated community and avoiding a "them and us" situation. As such, designing a linear park parallel with Fane Drive East, connected with the existing and future landscape and active travel networks, and with the stream opened up and celebrated, was seen as a way to provide a beautiful new asset at the heart of the Garden Village, adding value, bringing existing and new residents together and providing a destination to attract visitors from elsewhere.

"It would be nice to open up the ditch, have places where you can hear the water flowing."

"Green stitching can bring the two areas together."



Key Themes (continued)

A VISION FOR

Berinsfield

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Berinsfield Garden Village CPW, Hands-on Planning Workshop

Invest in existing village facilities, then add others

Participants appreciated the variety and quality of shops and amenities on offer in Berinsfield, which are well run and well used by residents and those from surrounding settlements. There was concern that some community facilities have become too expensive for some residents to use. With new development comes the opportunity to invest in the existing amenities and provide new ones. There was a desire to retain and invest in the established village centre focus in Berinsfield and mirror it in the new development with a new hub with complementary amenities to expand the offer and encourage villagers to visit all parts of the Garden Village. Participants saw opportunities to diversify sports provision, provide greater focus on arts and culture, including a museum to interpret the village's unique heritage. The village currently has limited food and drink provision and many participants wanted a new family pub overlooking the new linear park, to serve villagers and act as a destination to attract those from outside.

“Community facilities are right at the heart of this community!”

“We want to showcase our history.”

Getting around

Villagers appreciate good pedestrian connections within Berinsfield, but mentioned a recent reduction in the River Rapids bus service and current issues around parking and traffic flow in Berinsfield. There is some concern about how new development will be accommodated, including in particular the option to reopen the northern access from A4074 to Fane Drive. A new vehicular access point is required to serve the development at Mount Farm, whilst promoting active travel (eg bus, pedestrian and cycling) throughout the Garden Village, including providing safe routes to schools. Many people in Berinsfield enjoy the pedestrian and cycling links to the surrounding countryside and the new development should incorporate and enhance these connections and links to nearby settlements, including along the Roman Road north towards Oxford. Villagers wanted to feel that they are part of a local, active travel network that in turn will encourage visitors to the village.

“Put in green infrastructure first! Then the network of cycle, paths and road links!”

“Instead of doing cars as a first choice we were thinking of doing electric bikes!”

Employment and training opportunities

There is a range of employment in Berinsfield and within the surrounding area. Many villagers are employed locally (in shops, Williams Jet Traders, Drennan, Wandering Kitchen café at the Lake, etc). Development provides the opportunity to expand the amount of employment space in Berinsfield, support existing businesses and provide new jobs and training opportunities for local people, including in construction. The planning should also accommodate diverse and changing work patterns including increased home working, small workshop and maker spaces and spaces for co-working.

“Take the opportunity to create more jobs and raise skills levels.”

Young people

Young people engaged with in Berinsfield appreciated the ease and safety with which they can get around the village, enjoy green spaces and make the most of the facilities on offer. There are fewer facilities for older teenagers, and there was a desire for additional sports (rugby, cricket, tennis) more equipment at the skate park, and other ideas included a parcourse, climbing wall and after school clubs, especially related to art, drama, music and dance.

“There’s a lot of call for different sports.”

Schools

Schools play a key role in building neighbourhood communities through the various relationships made within the school, at the school gates and by the potential use of their facilities out of hours. With new development at Mount Farm will come investment in primary schools within the Garden Village and financial contribution to a new secondary school, most likely in Culham Garden Village. For the primary schools, careful thought will need to be given to refurbishment and new build options, the locations of the schools and how they relate to neighbouring facilities.

“The primary school here has space to grow, but we desperately need a secondary school nearby.”

Community involvement and “early wins”

Participants welcomed the opportunity to share their concerns and aspirations around the growth of Berinsfield and are keen now to “get on with it.” The community wants to see partnership and collaboration between key stakeholders and for residents to be fully involved in the ongoing process to ensure the best possible outcomes. One suggestion was to unify the management of the green spaces in existing Berinsfield into one community not for profit organisation to deliver “early win” environmental improvements in the existing village and with expansion to cover the new development over time. In the longer term, participants discussed creating a Garden Village not for profit management company, including local residents, that builds on the good work already being carried out by groups and individuals within the Berinsfield.

“It’s great having all the ideas but we need something to pull them together, so we need to create a community network meeting.”

“Make sure everyone knows what’s happening. Even if there’s a bump in the road, everyone should know about it.”



PTARMIGAN LAND

The Vision for Berinsfield Garden Village community planning process is organised by JTP on behalf of Ptarmigan Land. For more information, please visit BerinsfieldGardenVillage.com or contact the JTP Community Planning team at community@jtp.co.uk on Freephone 0800 0126 730 or write to us at Freepost JTP (no stamp required).

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