

Blackbird Leys

Community Planning Broadsheet, June 2019



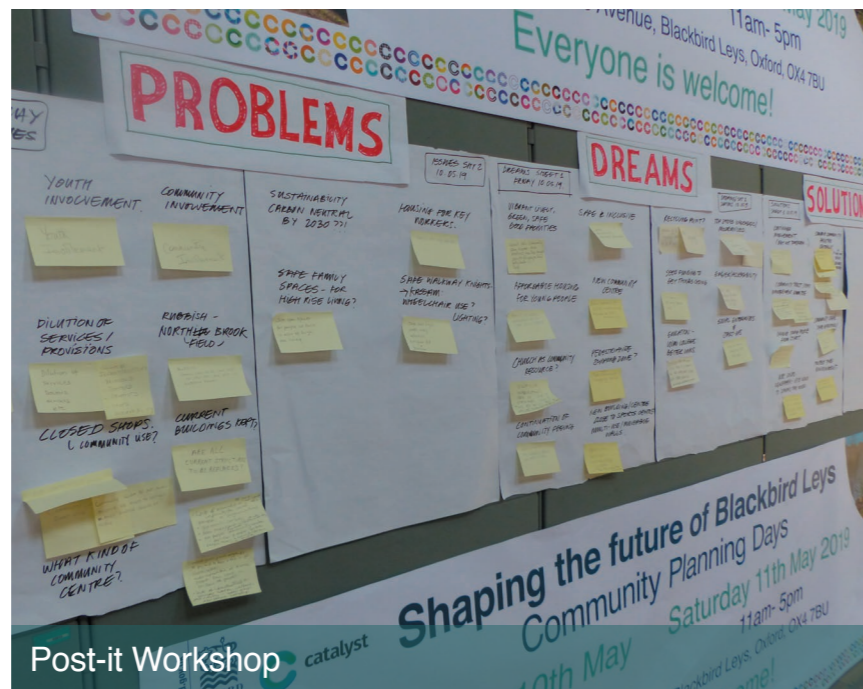
Consultation drop-in



Consultation drop-in



Post-it Workshop



Post-it Workshop



Drawings from local schools



Site visit



Hands-on Planning Workshop



Hands-on Planning Workshop



Over 60 people took part in the Community Planning Days on Friday 10 and Saturday 11 May 2019, which provided an opportunity for local people to share local knowledge and help shape the future plans for the area - through workshops, walkabouts and hands-on planning (HoP) groups.

Oxford City Council and Catalyst are working in partnership to bring improved shops and community facilities, and at least 250 homes to Blackbird Leys.

The project will focus on the District Centre (including the 'top shops') and land between Knights Road and the Kassam Stadium. Across both sites, we expect to build at least 250 homes, as well as improved community and retail facilities, landscaped green and open space and other community benefits.

The development will include homes for social rent and shared ownership as well as private sale.

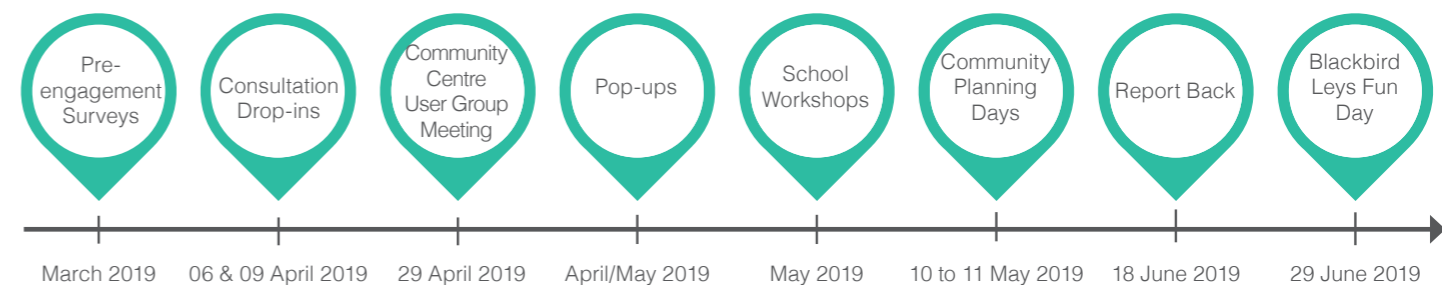
The City Council's policy is for 40% of housing development to be for social rent and 10% for shared ownership.

A key aim will be to address the acute need for new homes in Oxford, including social rent.

Since Spring 2019 we have been working with the local community to develop the basic plan for the development. Please note that we're still in the early stages of the design process, so not all input has been incorporated at this stage and will report back on what we have and haven't been able to incorporate as the design progresses.

Please continue to help us develop the proposals by either speaking to us in person, by completing a comment form or by emailing bbregen@oxford.gov.uk.

Engagement Timeline



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District Centre Ideas



Please note that we're still in the early stages of the design process, so not all input has been incorporated at this stage.

Key

- New public square with pedestrian priority
- Vehicle route to south
- New mixed use buildings with retail / community / potential residential above
- Potential mixed use pavilion within public square
- New residential blocks
- Opportunity for mews streets
- Landscape improvements
- Opportunities for landmark buildings
- Servicing
- Connections to public open space
- Existing buildings

Knights Road Ideas



Please note that we're still in the early stages of the design process, so not all input has been incorporated at this stage.

Key

- Create potential new connection across Northfield Brook
- Enhance existing connection to Kassam
- Enhance ecological areas along Northfield Brook
- Enhance access points with new entrance courtyard
- Take into account existing homes' privacy and access across the site
- Homes overlooking pedestrian and green routes to create safety
- Potential new road that is accessed off Knights Road
- Potential emergency and refuse access only
- Views to nature
- New landscaped public space
- Vehicular routes through site
- Existing buildings
- Pedestrian routes through site



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Key Themes

The following key themes are a summary of the various discussions, 'pop-ups' and design workshops that have taken place to date. All quotes are from participants in the process.

Regenerating the District Centre

There was strong support for the redevelopments and improvements in the District Centre which could boost Blackbird Leys as a great place to live, work and play, as long as there is a balance between the built environment and green space. Participants stressed that careful phasing and management will be key to the success of the project to minimise the impact of construction on businesses and community. The centre must be well cared for in the interim with good cleaning, rubbish collection and maintenance of buildings and public realm.

"What is happening in the interim? You've got to keep things going in the short term."

Housing at Knights Road

It was agreed that more housing is needed locally, especially affordable housing for young families and key workers. However, there was concern from local residents about loss of views and amenity on the Knights Road site and how local wildlife might be affected, especially along the green corridor to Spindleberry Nature Park. The need for better lighting and tree maintenance was raised by those who use the lane behind Northfields School and that towards the Stadium. Any development at Knights Road site should be well integrated with the landscape and bring improvements to the brook which could be enhanced and managed as an ecological and community resource.

"We used to play in the stream but I wouldn't play in it now, it's too overgrown and dirty."

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Community amenities

A strong community spirit is evident in Blackbird Leys and it is well served by committed community groups and council services, despite the pressures of resourcing and the ageing fabric of community buildings. The green, open environment and variety of local parks and playgrounds are greatly appreciated.

"I'm really happy, I love living here....I wouldn't live anywhere else."

"One of the nice things about the estate are all the tree lined streets."

Vibrant, mixed use District Centre

The top shops are well used by local residents and visitors to the Leisure Centre and development in the District Centre must be carefully phased with businesses and residents in mind. There is an opportunity to create an attractive, mixed use destination with high quality public space for all. Suggested uses included new homes, shops, public green space, offices, live/work accommodation, community and wellbeing facilities, business start-up space and a 'Hackspace' for makers – and even a beach!

"Provide space and seed funding for social enterprise and start-ups."

"Shopping has changed, so maybe we could have a different kind of shops here which could be an attraction and make Blackbird Leys a kind of destination."



Post-it Workshop



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Key Themes (Continued)

Community facilities in the District Centre

The original concept of the District Centre was to create facilities around a village green. It was agreed that a joined up, holistic approach to the provision of future community facilities is needed taking into account the community infrastructure that already exists. There is an aspiration to see more social spaces in the area, such as a café or restaurant. People would welcome a newly built, flexible, affordable Community Centre with local people involved in its development and future management.

“The original idea for Blackbird Leys was a church with a village green – keep this in mind.”

“We need a People’s Place at a People’s Price!”

Getting around

The District Centre, Knights Road and the wider estate should be designed to be fully accessible for all users. There are examples where conflicting measures have been put in place, for example, barriers that deter motorbikes also stop wheelchairs. Participants would welcome an improved bus service and there was support for cycle tracks and enhanced pedestrian routes. Shortage of parking in some roads causes frustration.

“Create places to work nearby so people don’t need to drive”

“Access for all in all public areas is so important for equality and diversity - we’re in the 21st century now!”

Learning from elsewhere

It was suggested that as part of the process, different models from elsewhere could be researched to see what might work in Blackbird Leys. One example was The Social Tap in Botley which provides a wide range of services and meets a many local needs and is made economically viable by the micro brewery on site.

“There’s a coffee shop in Sandford-on-Thames that has 400 volunteers.”

“Think about issues creatively and not that it can’t be done - there’s always a solution!”

Ongoing stakeholder and community involvement

There are existing local organisations that would welcome the opportunity to participate in the process, such as the City of Oxford College (technology campus), Mabel Pritchard School and Longlands Care Home – all of whom play important roles within the Blackbird Leys community. There are also individuals and groups who would like to develop and manage a new community facility - “for us and by us”. More community involvement and consultation should continue, especially with young people and diverse local groups. Communication with the community about the consultation process and progress of proposals should continue.

“Keep the dialogue open so that people don’t feel decisions are being made behind their back.”

“It’s really important to be part of a planning group and not just consulted.”

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