

**Present:**

Jonathan Buckwell – (DHA - Planning Consultant)  
Ella Hammond – Vistry (Strategic Planning Manager)  
Steven Russell – Vistry (Strategic Development manager)  
Miles Willshire – Fairthorn Consultancy (Communication Consultant)  
Cllr Nigel Stratton – PPC (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr David Reilly – PPC  
Cllr Christine Snow – PPC  
Helen Munro – Clerk

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1. **Welcome**

Cllr Stratton welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.

2. **Purpose**

It was agreed that minutes of the meeting will be taken and circulated to all. The minutes would not be confidential. The project team are here to brief representatives of Pembury Parish Council (PPC) and for PPC to clarify any items.

Any future publicity as a result of this meeting should be agreed between PPC and Vistry and a copy is sent out to each other in advance, to get the other parties' agreement to what is being said to avoid the issues that arose from the recent leaflet.

3. **Leaflet**

PPC expressed concern about the implication made in the leaflet that by passing of the Pembury Neighbourhood Plan residents had endorsed the development on site PE3. Residents had been upset by this and it had caused quite a lot of problems for PPC. PE3 is the most sensitive of the sites being proposed in the Local Plan as it is well used for recreation.

Vistry apologised that the leaflet wording led people to think the Neighbourhood Plan and development were linked. This was not their intention.

At the request of Borough Councillors, Vistry had extended the consultation from 500 homes near to the site to the whole village and the deadline extended by another 2 weeks.

There had been just under 100 responses to the leaflet drop. Circa 80% of those responses were negative about the proposal. Circa 20% were indifferent / supportive. Concerns were mainly related to infrastructure especially healthcare, schools and other services.

4. **Public meeting**

PPC recommended that Vistry hold a public exhibition/meeting to show residents their plans and answer questions. Pembury had many elderly residents who did not all use the internet but who would attend a public exhibition and meeting.

Vistry expressed their concern about holding a public meeting at this stage for example because it tends to exclude working people/people with younger families who may not have the time to attend and prefer to look at a website in their own time. Drawings were indicative only and showed in principle that the 81 houses proposed fitted onto the site for TWBC. Residents do not always understand this process and want to see the detail which would be included at the Reserved Matters stage which may be quite different from the Outline drawings.

Vistry agreed to take this suggestion back for consideration as they wanted to be transparent with residents.

5. **Development - general**

- a. Vistry confirmed they do not currently own but have the option on the land in question.
- b. The number of houses proposed in an Outline application could not be increased once granted permission. However, the number could be reduced.
- c. The Neighbourhood Plan will be taken account of in the development process. This would be especially relevant at the Reserved Matters stage.
- d. Detailed matters are not approved at this time. TWBC may ask them to make changes or guide them to make changes.
- e. The plans are in line with the draft policy in the draft Local Plan. The principle of a large green area to the south of the site with a cycle and pedestrian path linking to PE1 & PE2.
- f. They are doing landscape and drainage studies as part of the planning Outline planning application.
- g. There is one vehicular access proposed.
- h. Most of the properties are likely to be 2 storeys but will be reviewed at the Reserved Matters stage.
- i. It was too early to say what the mix of housing types would be.
- j. There would be 40% Affordable Housing, but the mix is not fixed between social housing for rent and affordable housing to purchase. Vistry will team

with a registered housing provider for social housing and the mix will be dependent on local need and Government policy at the time. They cannot determine that this is for local people as that would be the responsibility of the social housing provider. Currently one local housing provider has a waiting list so it is possible that local people would take priority. TWBC determine housing policy. It was possible to list conditions in the future Section 106 agreement between the developer and TWBC. PPC could consider raising this with TWBC when responding to the planning applications.

- k. They are working on highways matters with Kent County Council (KCC) and National Highways. Developers from PE1, PE2 and PE3 are using the same transport consultant, and a single plan is being developed across the sites and costs shared. This includes traffic calming, junctions and cycle and pedestrian paths.
- l. At the development stage, vehicles would need a construction management plan with lorry routes and construction worker parking would be created as standard. They expect the site compound parking for operatives to be within the site although there is no guarantee.
- m. They have spoken to TWBC and have had formal pre-application discussions. They have also consulted with KCC and National Highways. Traffic studies are being done now.

**6. Development – Concerns / queries**

- a. Concern about the air quality and noise nuisance from the A21 was raised. Investigations are currently ongoing, and the Outline plan will take the findings into account. An acoustic fence might be needed and would be landscaped. This would be included at the Reserved Matters stage.
- b. Concern was raised about the topography of the site and overlooking existing houses. The draft outline plan shows dwellings on the higher ground which would have a greater impact. Vistry would look to work with the existing topography so far as is practicable, as it is best practice not to make unnecessary significant changes to landform on sites like this.

Overlooking of houses from Hastings Road was unlikely as they planned to keep existing vegetation on the boundary to screen the development. There will be no houses directly off Hastings Road which will reduce the impact. Homes are also far away from the boundary. The development would not be hidden away. The aim was to balance hiding the development with creating a pleasant townscape.

- c. There was concern that just building family homes encourages people from other areas to come to Pembury and not provide homes for local people. The

Neighbourhood Plan shows that there is a need for smaller homes and bungalows.

Vistry to consider the possibility of including bungalows and larger 2 bedroomed dwellings when doing the detailed design as per the Neighbourhood Plan. The types of homes built is dependent on supply and demand. It is no longer necessarily the case that 3 and 4 bedroomed homes are the best financial option for developers.

- d. Traffic issues were raised. Traffic congestions along the A21 plus the busy Hastings Road created high pollution levels.
- e. Problem parking in Hastings Road was raised. Vistry to use the Kent Parking Guidelines. They would prefer to allocate parking on plot.
- f. The problem of the existing sewage system was raised, there being a combined sewer for both surface water and foul sewage. This needed to be replaced with separate sewers. Water companies seemed always to agree that they had sufficient capacity but then did not carry out the requisite works. South East Water has an obligation to meet the drainage and sewerage needs from new housing coming forward. Developers pay a fee to fund the improvements to the service, so developers are in the water companies' hands.

A sustainable drainage strategy is being created to deal with surface water drainage. This would include ponds or dry grass basins to hold water after rain which is then slowly released into the existing surface water system.

## 7. **Next Steps**

- a. Vistry are likely to submit the Outline application in the first quarter of 2024.
- b. The site is likely to be managed by an independent Management Company which could either be resident or third party controlled.
- c. Vistry will contribute to infrastructure, but this varies according to each site. For PE3 there is a need for secondary education. Primary education in Pembury is currently under capacity.
- d. So far as Vistry understand it from discussions with other developers, the development of PE2 is slightly behind PE3. And PE1 is behind PE2.
- e. The delay to the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan has impacted the timing of the application. The Local Plan Inspector has not raised any significant concerns about site PE3 to date. Whilst the Inspector's Report is yet to be published, if he had significant concerns Vistry would have expected this to have been raised by now.

- f. TWBC submitted their response to the Planning Inspector's queries in November 2023.
- g. Vistry will submit the application in advance of the Local Plan being formally approved, but TWBC may choose not to grant permission until such time that the plan is adopted.

The meeting closed at 15.57.