

Case Study

Linden Homes – Stakeholder engagement for mixed-use development

Introduction

Award-winning homebuilder, Linden Homes, contracted Mistral to carry out full community consultation as well as organise and publicise a public exhibition regarding its plans to redevelop a site in Dorking in the South East of England. The proposals were for a significant and potentially controversial development which included 88 apartments in a number of buildings (to include 30 affordable homes) and a 70-bed residential nursing home.

Objectives

The objectives of the consultation and public exhibition were to communicate details of the proposals to local stakeholders and to obtain their views on the proposals. The exhibition was held prior to submission of the formal planning application to Mole Valley District Council. This allowed feedback on the plans to be taken into account and any alterations made prior to submission. Identified stakeholders included: residents living near the site; local groups and organisations serving Dorking; relevant district and county councillors and Member of Parliament.

Strategy

Local research was undertaken to gauge the employment and housing climate in the local area. Ward councillors were contacted, prior to the public exhibition, to engage them early in the process, and meetings arranged with them and Linden prior to the exhibition.

Leaflets were designed, printed and door-dropped to around 750 houses in the roads surrounding the proposed development site. The leaflets included a pre-paid reply slip for anyone wishing to submit comments via post.

In addition, an advert was placed in the Dorking Advertiser; posters were produced and displayed in the local area; individual letters were written and sent to all ward councillors; county councillor and MP; the planning department, town centre manager and other key stakeholders.

Results

Over 70 people visited the exhibition in total and 53 people fed back their comments on the proposals. As a result of the consultation, the plans were amended and a subsequent newsletter was designed, produced and distributed to provide detailed and digestible information about the proposal changes made in response to public feedback. The newsletter successfully engaged stakeholders, resulting in submission of a number of positive support letters to the local planning authority.

