

# Winchester City Council Blueprint Consultation

## Response from Alresford District Partnership following consultation meeting on 16.11.2010

### 1. Individual characters

#### • Don.

- So long as his job lasts he can easily afford housing in Alresford. If the business were to fail he could have problems finding another job locally, particularly in the specialist manufacturing field – he might have to redirect his remaining years of working life to more IT based work or consultancy, possibly self-employed.
- His business will find it difficult to recruit skilled labour locally (whether it is in Alresford or elsewhere in the Winchester district, as they will not find local housing affordable, either rented or to buy, and so they are likely to be travelling in from outside the district eg from Eastleigh. He will be concerned about the environmental aspect of this – it also adds to his employment costs or reduces the take-home pay of his employees.
- The business also needs good communications - good rail links would enable more transport of goods and people with less carbon footprint. The road access, traffic flow and parking is important in the areas of industrial estates.
- Successful local business leaders can contribute a lot to the local community, and it seems Don has an interest in the environmental issues. If he had to work further away outside the district he would be able to contribute less to the local area.

#### • Jing

- The business world is changing, with more groupings of self-employed people, home-working, rather than separate premises, low capitalisation and financial risk.
- Jing and all businesses like hers desperately need fast and reliable broadband access across all the district including the villages and rural parishes – for business premises and for working from home.
- Good small scale business premises are needed for high tech companies/ self-employed people, with low rents for start-ups.
- There is potentially a good skills base among young graduates for high tech IT based business. But only the most successful young entrepreneurs going to be able to afford to stay in the Winchester district and especially in places like Alresford once they reach an age when they want their own property – young people with high aspirations are going to want to buy rather than “pour money down the drain” in rent. So they could be possible candidates for shared equity or lower cost “affordable” private sector housing.

#### • Debbie

- Will probably have to move out of the area to access housing to live with her partner, unless they can find cheap rented flat.
- 5 - 10 years on they will probably want a house to bring up a family, and will not be able to consider buying, even on an “affordable” private sector development, because of their low income level and lack of capital for a deposit. So they will need social rented housing, initially two bedrooms and ideally three, and would be candidates for a local connection low cost rental property on an exception site. If they have to move into social housing in another part of the district eg Winchester estates it will be harder to hold down local jobs in Alresford.
- Increasingly their friends will face the same problem and if their generation are forced to move out it will make the local working community less sustainable,

leaving Alresford to be increasingly a dormitory town for the middle classes. This will make it harder to recruit local people for the service jobs and trades in Alresford.

- Local workers are going to continue to need childcare – pre-school, after-school and breakfast clubs, holiday play schemes, etc.. Alresford is well placed with these services available on a local community run basis, but will they continue to be viable at a price that lower paid local families can afford, with fewer public sector subsidies and reducing tax credits? Also the most reliable, flexible and affordable child care is from grandparents – if young families can't get low cost social housing locally and move away they will lose this benefit..
  - There is going to be an increasing need for care staff to support the ageing population (see Pam) and this would be a economic and better quality service if the care workers can afford to live locally. Also if the young families have to move out they will not be around to help care for ageing parents.
  - Lack of evening public transport is likely to limit Debbie's social life. Assuming her partner has a van or car she could have problems when they have a family if they can't afford a second car.
- **The Davis family**
    - They have a lot to contribute to the local community and its sustainability, in social and environmental aspects. The time and cost of their commuting probably restricts what the parents can contribute in terms of voluntary/community activity, but the children are likely to be benefiting from good local schools and facilities, including child care, sports and youth activities.
    - The children will have excellent local college opportunities for post 16 education. They may move away to university but if they want to get jobs/apprenticeships locally they are likely to have to continue to live with their parents for several years because of the lack of low cost rented housing. So it may be well over 20 years before the parents could consider downsizing to a smaller house.
    - Limited public transport especially in the evening is likely to be an increasing problem for the teenage children in accessing entertainment facilities and social life in Basingstoke or Winchester.
    - They would all benefit if one or both parents was able to find work nearer home. Working from home at least part of the time with more IT links might be a possibility for either of them. This would also help to reduce their carbon footprint.
    - An alternative to reduce travel costs and time would be to move nearer to their jobs in Portsmouth or Basingstoke, but this would mean compromising the quality of life and environment they value in Alresford.
    - NB fast reliable broadband access is essential in the outlying villages as well as the town of Alresford – at home and in business premises – see above under Jing.
    - Broadband access is also essential for schoolchildren for homework, research, and those in outlying villages are thus at a disadvantage in their education.
  - **Ben and Sarah**
    - They have the same problem as Debbie and her partner in finding affordable housing, but have better jobs and earning potential. They might be able to afford mortgage payments on a small 1 or 2 bedroomed property but would need capital to get the deposit necessary. So they could be tempted to move to an area such as Eastleigh where house prices and therefore deposits would be less. The opportunity to rent or perhaps have a shared ownership property on an exception site development for local people would give them a chance to save up for a deposit or wait till mortgages become more easily available.
    - In five or more years time they would be likely to want a 3 bedroom family house.
    - They could be an asset to the community with careers in local businesses and could contribute a lot to local community life. Their age group and potentially a young

family is important to preserve the vitality of the community, and the fact that they work locally and are not commuters is very beneficial to economic and environmental sustainability.

- **Pam**

- She needs to be able to downsize to a smaller property, which should be 2 bedroom to allow family members/carers to stay. Alresford is well provided with affordable housing for private purchase.
- If she stays longer in her current property she may need help with gardening/ house maintenance, etc. She may have to pay for this and therefore downsizing may help her to reduce her living costs and free up some savings.
- Later on this may be needed to pay for home or residential care.
- If she cannot keep her car due to cost or health factors there is local community transport plus buses to Winchester and a good range of stimulating activities which can prolong quality of life for older people in the community. There are also opportunities for voluntary work which can help to keep her active and give her a sense of purpose.
- Access to health and social care needs to take decreasing mobility and mental acuity into account, possibly using technology eg telecare systems.
- Local planning needs to respect the older age-group's typically decreasing pedestrian agility, and their increasing anxiety in noisy, boisterous surroundings and fear for their physical security.

NB People currently approaching retirement expecting to spend their final years (which could be 30 years) in Alresford, want to plan for the future and take all the above into account.

## Key points

- Economic sustainability of the community requires low cost affordable rented housing for local people (mainly 2 and 3 bedroom ) to allow lower income local workers and families to live in Alresford and provide workforce for local employers, ensuring that the district doesn't become solely a dormitory town for the middle classes. This also allows family members to stay local, providing inter-generational support eg childcare/care of elderly, and provides a mix of ages so that the town doesn't become a retirement ghetto. This means development of exception sites in Alresford, and also small local affordable housing schemes in the villages, in both situations for people with local connections..
- Higher income families will want a range of affordable housing, including four bedroom properties, to buy.
- Alresford's active community life, good schools and local facilities are highly valued, making it attractive for people to retire or to move back when they start families. These all depend on having a range of age groups and locally active people, not just commuters to towns at a distance in Hampshire or further afield. Job opportunities in Alresford are also important for residents of the surrounding villages in terms of lifestyle and environmental advantages.
- Local shops, medical facilities, etc are essential but developing technology (eg the internet) may increasingly change the way people purchase, access health care, etc. Are the things that we currently think of as drivers for planning eg need for local shops, post office and schools going to be valid for the future?

- The business world is changing, with more groupings of self-employed people, home-working, rather than separate premises, low capitalisation and financial risk. This could increase the scale of local business activity and reduce commuting.
- Fast and reliable broadband access is essential across all the district, and this is a particular problem in the villages and rural parishes – for business premises, for working from home, for school students, and for access to internet based shopping and other services.
- Better public transport (both scheduled and flexible community transport) is needed to reduce car usage and the carbon footprint, and to enable older and young people to access services and facilities in Winchester and other towns. This is even more pressing a need for people in the surrounding villages – if there is no transport available older people will not be able to continue to live there.
- Motivation to contribute to the Blueprint consultation is likely to be higher in the middle to older age groups who can see themselves continuing to live in an area like Alresford for the next 20/30 years and feel have a stake in its development. Younger people are more likely to be mobile and “vote with their feet “ to find the conditions and community they want and so their input may be under-represented.