Sustainable development

Benefit of the proposals

The racecourse is acutely aware that the proposals must be sustainable - 'sustainable' in the sense of safeguarding the future of its business, protecting its 'brand' and attractive setting, and also protecting and enhancing its immediate vicinity and the community of which it is part.

Upgrading the racecourse will secure the continued success of a first class leisure attraction in the town, which is good for Newbury's international profile and its economy.

The proposals will create a mixed-use community incorporating not just the enhanced racecourse, ancillary retail, leisure facilities and existing health club, but also a new hotel, replacement nursery, replacement golf club and driving range, residential development with a significant element of affordable housing, associated local community facilities and open space.

The residential proposals assist in meeting the housing requirement for West Berkshire, which will need to be accommodated within the district. The racecourse is well placed to provide these dwellings in a sustainable manner. A large proportion of the site its previously-developed land within the settlement boundary, and the scale of development is such that a mix of uses can be accommodated on site and local facilities can be provided.

The site is located close to a major employment area and to the local amenities and services in the town centre. The racecourse is adjacent to the Newbury Racecourse railway station and the proposal incorporates measures to improve cycle and pedestrian movement through the site and linking into adjacent areas. This minimises the need to travel, particularly by car, and is in line with the sustainable communities approach advocated by the government.

Sustainable modes of travel

Public transport is key to minimising the amount of traffic generated by development. Newbury Racecourse is fortunate in that it is located close to the town centre and local public transport services. The racecourse is in discussion with local bus operators regarding the provision of a bus service to the new residential areas and the racecourse itself.

In terms of rail travel, the area has its own designated railway station at the racecourse. Given that the catchment for the station will increase, it is anticipated that more trains will be scheduled to stop and we are working with Network Rail and the train operating company to encourage this. Improvements at the station such as cycle parking, new ticket machines and waiting areas, will be incorporated into the outline planning application.

Pedestrian footways and cycleways will be provided throughout the site linking to the surrounding networks and providing easy access to the town centre. These routes will be safe, predominantly overlooked by development to ensure surveillance, and well-lit, to encourage their use.

Residential travel plan

In addition to the physical improvement works proposed as part of the transport assessment, the development will also incorporate a residential travel plan. The travel plan is being prepared by Mayer Brown, who have extensive experience and have produced model plans that are being used by the Department for Transport.

The travel plan will incorporate new bus services to serve the site, improvements to the railway station, incentives for residents to use public transport (subsidised season tickets) as well as measures to promote walking and cycling and the provision of a car club. In addition, the travel plan will also incorporate the provision of travel information through a community web site, printed material and timetables.

Sustainable construction methods

There is a commitment to sustainable development principles throughout the process. David Wilson Homes, who will be developing the residential elements of the proposals, is committed to resource conservation and the protection of the environment, with a common-sense and pro-active approach when handling environmental issues on site. The company's focus is on waste minimisation, facilitating recycling and reducing environmental impact of development.

Sustainable drainage

The proposals include a comprehensive sustainable drainage strategy which utilises porous materials, rainwater harvesting, wetland ponds, detention basins, infiltration systems and swales to minimise surface water run off and encourage the percolation of water into the ground. The surface water run off arising from the proposed development will be at a rate no higher than that which currently exists for any given rainfall event. There will be no increased flood risk down stream as a result of the proposals. The wetland ponds, detention basins and swales also generate amenity, visual and biodiversity benefits.