

Hamlets plan for village's housing

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was organised by John Thompson and Partners on the instructions of the developers Hethersett Land Ltd which is part of the Ptarmigan Land Group.

More than 200 people attended to hear the development group's initial ideas.

A section of the audience lobbied against any new development in the village and suggestions that the building "should go somewhere else" met with applause from some people.

John Thompson highlighted some of the new ideas that would accompany the building of more than 1,000 new homes. These included a new medical centre, the re-location of the village junior school, a new village centre in land off Queen's Road, a new football and sports complex at the back of the existing Village Hall, an improved park and ride scheme from Thickthorn, allotments, cycleways and footpaths, a subsidised bus service and a new care home for the elderly.

Mr Thompson said these were all achievable under the present plan and went as far as to mention a more specific figure of 1140 homes.

He explained that the preferred option would be to site these in blocks of up to 100 in small hamlets that would be inter-connected and include open green spaces. A new road around the



village would also be built. Mr Thompson added that the building process could take up to 10 years with 100 homes being built each year.

He pointed out that Hethersett was in the ideal place for sustainable growth and he felt the additional facilities would "strengthen and re-invigorate the village."

"We very much prefer the idea of a series of hamlets rather than a large cluster of housing. The idea is to provide areas that are all within 10 minutes walking distance of people's daily needs," he said, adding that he thought the kind of development would be in keeping with the Norfolk character.

Work on planning the development will continue for up to a year and a special Hethersett Village Forum meeting open to everyone will be held in Hethersett Village Hall at 6.30pm on May 13.

Earlier, details of the Hethersett plans were outlined at a two-day Community Planning event over the weekend.

At this, many villagers voiced their concern at the possibility of an influx that will see the population of the village rise by at least 30pc. Others agreed that the best way forward was to work with developers to ensure improved facilities.

The weekend discussed existing problems in the village which included traffic congestion, the lack of a village centre and parking, long waiting lists for doctors' appointments, a lack of sports facilities and shopping, sewage and drainage problems, inadequate local roads and village schools already up to capacity. Those present voiced concern that development would lead to a loss of open space, too much cheaper social housing and the village being subjected to urban development in a rural setting.

Once the Joint Core Strategy has been agreed it will be sent to the Government for testing and will then be examined by an independent inspector later this year. At that point specific areas for land development will be identified in Hethersett and the surrounding area including Little Melton. It is estimated that building could start within the next two to three years.

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