

Appendix I

Comments on the Statement of Community Engagement

It is our view that a genuine consultation has never taken place with residents about the applications to develop the Campion House site. Workshops were organised and an exhibition was held for the first, now withdrawn application, but few residents, if any, thought that their views had been genuinely sought. No such events were organised for the second application, apart from the exhibition, in May 2007, on elevational changes. This was *after* the SDC meeting at which the application was considered.

Points from the GIC workshop/exhibition report

Sent to Try Homes 31st May 2006

Page 3

Exhibition was attended by 165 residents “and other interested people”. “This shows a very high level of interest”.

This followed a “high turnout” of “approximately 85” people at the two residents' workshops.

“As of 14th December 2005, we have received 76 feedback forms This represents 46% of the attendees which is very high for a consultation event of this nature”.

Page 5: General comments.

53% “generally positive”, 3% “generally negative”. (*generally negative is not recorded anywhere else.*)

Page 6

“Six people (8%) suggested that the proposed density was too high ...”.

Page 8: Design.

53% generally positive. The desire of residents, clearly expressed at the second workshop (and possibly the first) that the buildings should be no higher than the ones they replace is mentioned nowhere.

Page 10: Residential mix.

43% generally positive. Only 4 people (5%) said the

density was too high. (*Were these 4 the same or different to the 6 with the same view mentioned on page 6?*)

Page 12: Open Space.

39% generally positive.

Page 14: Retention of Campion House.

84% generally positive.

Page 16: Conclusion.

52% “overwhelmingly positive”. 31% positive with some conditions. 17% generally negative. “This is an excellent response and very useful for the forthcoming application”.

“People are clearly happy with the proposals to retain the existing Campion House building”.

“We can see that, whilst there are some concerns or need for clarification on certain issues, **a huge number of people are delighted with the proposals put forward by Try Homes**”. (Emphasis added.)

Page 17: Next Steps.

“A copy of this report will be posted on the website (www.greenissues.com/campionhouse)...” (*Never done.*)

We would like Try Homes comments on the underlined passages

If all the sections on the form (general comments, design, residential mix, open spaces, retention of CH) are given equally weighting then we get for “generally positive” $(53+53+43+39+84)/5 = 54.4\%$. So where does the 83% figure come from?

If we leave out the spurious question on the retention of Campion House (the retention is a requirement of the local authority and not a proposal from Try Homes) then we get

$(53+53+43+39)/4 = 47\%$. Thus even on their own figures less than 50% are generally positive”.

47% of 76 = **36 people**. On the other hand, **473 residents** signed a petition showing clearly that they were “generally negative” about the proposals. Which figure is the better guide to residential opinion? This will not be difficult for most people to answer.

Whether we take the 54.4% or the 47% we get around 40 people “generally positive about the development proposals. Try Homes appear to think that this is a “huge number”. Few are likely to agree. (Even if we accepted the 83% figure that would still only give 64 people.)

David Pavett, 31st May 2006

Reply to our points from Green Issues Communications

Dear Mr Pavett,

Thank you for your letter outlining concerns that you have with regard to our exhibition and workshop reports. I am happy to take this opportunity to provide you with some clarification on a number of points.

Please bear in mind that, as it is explained, the report mirrors the feedback forms in that it is divided into specific sections which help to encourage varied comments from participants and aid data analysis. Comments are listed under the section that they were made.

With this in mind, you note that those who mention 'generally negative' comments in the General Comments section are not mentioned elsewhere. People who mention such comments do not always make similar comments in other fields, or may be more specific in the concerns, and therefore would not be noted unless they said the same again under another heading.

With regard to your query about the number of people concerned about density, you are correct in your assertion, as we make it clear, that six people mentioned this in the 'General Comments' section whilst only four people noted it in the 'Residential mix' section. There may be some overlap and one would assume that somebody who raised this issue in one section would be more likely to mention it again in another, although we cannot say this for certain.

You claim that the desire for the “buildings be no higher than those that they are replacing” is not mentioned. You will note however that on page four of the workshop report, under the 'Design' section, it is clearly stated that six of the workshop boards featured the desire for “buildings to be no higher than present”. In the exhibition report four people (5%) expressed concern over the height of the buildings under the Design section on the page 8.

With regard to your claim that we state that 83% of people were positive about the scheme, this is actually an allegation made based on a misrepresentation of our report. If I may quote the relevant passage, it reads:

“We can estimate that approximately 52% of feedback reports are overwhelmingly positive, with 31% being positive with conditions or some concerns.”

This figure is reached by a general review of the feedback forms and a consideration of whether all of their comments in their entirety make their form generally positive or negative – or indeed whether they have conditions (such as increasing parking provision) which would make them support the scheme. In this way, somebody who makes ten very positive comments across every section of the form would be counted as one positive person rather than two (ten divided by five) as they would in your own equation.

With regard to the accessibility of the reports, we would like to take this opportunity to apologise for not having placed them on the website previously, however they are now online for anyone to view and/or download. In addition to this, everybody who left their contact details and all relevant councillors were sent copies of the reports by post.

I hope this helps to clarify some of your concerns.

Best wishes

Richard Royal, Account Manager

Note (added 21st July): This letter was undated but it was enclosed with a letter dated 8th June from Tom Nicholson of Try Homes.

Our Reply to Green Issues Communications

(Excerpts)

dated: 20th June 2006

Dear Mr Royal,

Thank you for your note (undated) which was attached to Mr Nicholason's letter to me of 8th June.

To my comment that the desire of residents, clearly expressed at the workshops, that the new buildings should be no higher than the ones they replace is not mentioned in the report. You reply that it was mentioned on page four of the Workshop Report. I perhaps could have been clearer but I would have thought that it was evident that my detailed comments were based on the Exhibition report. No matter. What this shows is how poor the feedback form was at eliciting residents' concerns since it remains a fact that at the second workshop, which I attended, general approval was shown whenever someone made this point.

Ultimately, however, these points are relatively trivial since, even neglecting the serious shortcomings of the workshop/exhibition process and that of the feedback form, it still remains clear that concluding remarks in the Exhibition Report are not supported by the data in the report itself.

You point out that I have totalled the opinions expressed in different sections of the report, rather than people filling in the reports, giving a maximum total of 76 x 5 rather than of 76. You are right about that. There is a basic issue here which I am sure that, as a firm involved with issues of local democracy, you are aware of. The issue is analogous to the problems of the first past the post electoral method as opposed to proportional representation.

It is more informative to sum over individual sections of the report rather than over reports taken as a whole. The reason is clear as is illustrated by the following:

Illustrative example. Summing over 5 sections (FF = number of feedback forms, P = number of sections with positive response, N = number of sections with negative response). Totals in bold.

<i>FF</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
39	3	2
37	0	5
76	117	263

Here we see that if we sum over individual forms taken as a whole (your method) we get a majority who are generally positive (39 as against 37). If we sum over individual sections (my method) then we get a majority of sections responding negatively (263 as against 117). All this is well known to everyone concerned with measuring opinion. Of course summing questions suggests that questions should be weighted but even summing individual forms as a whole doesn't avoid this since questions if there is no explicit weighting then all questions implicitly have equal weighting.

Despite these problems, however, and even if we use *your* method of totalling, your figures *still* do not make sense.

You describe my point that your report claims 83% support for the Try Homes proposals as an "allegation" (bizarre) and as a "misrepresentation". You follow this with a quote from the report:

"We can estimate that approximately 52% of feedback reports are overwhelmingly positive, with 31% being positive with conditions or some concerns."

These two categories are distinct since those with conditions and some concerns cannot be those who are "overwhelmingly positive". I therefore added the two categories to get those who felt positive about the proposals (either "overwhelmingly" or with conditions). This gives 52 + 31 = 83%. Your objection to this simple calculation is a mystery to me. I should be grateful if you would

explain what you believe my mistake is.

If we follow your method and sum over individual individuals rather than over issues then your report does not provide the information required to check your results, as I am sure you understand. Even so with the information available we can say what the most positive outcome of this method could be.

There were 76 forms returned. Of these the ones which were said to be generally positive on each of the five sections gave the following numbers: 40, 40, 33, 30, 64. The maximum possible number of forms returning an overall favourable result in the majority of sections is therefore 40. This gives us a percentage of individuals showing an overall positive response of 53%. So, to repeat, where does the figure of 83% of forms being generally positive come from?

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It would have been perfectly easy to provide residents with all the background information they needed. This would not have required overloading anyone but simply making all the relevant information available to those who wanted it. This could have been done in the form of documents made available at the meetings (or even better before them). Such documentation could have been provided on your website. Thus residents could have been advised about the Council's Draft Planning Position Statement. They could have been told about the local listing of Campion House and what this meant. They could have been advised about the relevant planning guidelines and the constraints these imposed. None of this was even attempted and the reasons are not far to seek. Doing that would have been to give the residents the ability to make up their own minds on the basis of access to all the relevant information and not on the flimsy information actually provided fleetingly on notice boards with no back-up papers to take away for careful consideration. Empowering residents in this way is presumably not what the developer pays you for and that is hardly surprising.

.....

Finally I would like to repeat two points in my original note that you have chosen to ignore.

First even your own report, despite all its limitations only shows about 40 people to be generally favourable to the project. Even if we accepted your 83% figure this would still only amount to 64 people in favour. Campion Concerns organised a petition, which we were careful to give to residents before we asked them to sign it. 473 residents signed it representing nearly 100% of the people we were able to approach. There is therefore no good evidence for general support for the project, on the contrary there is considerable evidence to the contrary.

Second, you have not responded to the point that the retention of Campion House was not something that Try Homes agreed to in response to residents' views. It was a requirement from the local authority and it was disingenuous to present its retention otherwise. For the same reason the inclusion of a question about the retention of the House in the feedback form (the one that got by far the largest positive response) was entirely spurious. It is difficult to see its role there as anything other than an attempt to skew the statistics in favour of the Try Homes proposals.

I look forward to reading your response to the point made above.

Yours sincerely

David Pavett

Note (added 21st July): No reply or acknowledgement was ever received from either Try Homes or Green Issues Communications.