

# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## **KEEPING THE GORSE RIDE COMMUNITY UP-TO-DATE**

With site clearance and preparatory works underway on Wokingham Borough Council's Gorse Ride regeneration, local residents had the chance to come along and meet the project team to find out how the scheme is progressing at an exhibition of the detailed designs.

The exhibition was also shared with the wider community at Finchampstead Parish Council's Annual Gathering. The team gave a presentation about some of the green features of the regeneration, which includes elements such as air source heat pumps, high levels of insulation and glazing, and plentiful electric vehicle charging points with the infrastructure to add more as demand increases in future years.

Some of the detailed design elements on display, which will be subject to planning approval once submitted this summer, included proposed changes to some of the roofs to make it easier to maintain, a further move away from mains gas in support of the council's climate emergency ambitions, and changes to the proposed brick type to address concerns over supply of materials whilst keeping the feel of the original design.

The updated designs also include proposed changes to a handful of properties, which have been allocated to individuals and families with specific needs and have been adapted to provide individualised solutions to help give them the highest quality of life.

Cllr Stephen Conway, the newly appointed deputy leader of the council and executive member for housing, said: "Events like this are a great opportunity to get to know local people and feedback from residents has been excellent. We even had one local resident, Kerry Soper-Dyer, who's family have lived in Gorse Ride for years and have been an integral part of bringing the regeneration forward, make a fantastic cake for the Annual Gathering in the shape of one of the new houses which people loved on the night.

"It's incredibly important to us that we can keep the local Gorse Ride community involved in the project. This is a major project happening which impacts on their homes so we want to work closely with them to make sure they know what is happening and can keep up-to-date.

"We will continue to run a range of community events and activities throughout the regeneration, including our regular housing surgeries as well as community projects and exhibitions. Residents can also make use of the new Gorse Ride community hub at 20 Gorse Ride South, which opened in March, and offers people the opportunity to pop in and meet the council's community engagement team and officers for a chat or to view the detailed plans."

Feedback from those attending the exhibitions has been very positive with comments including:

“It's good to have an update on the regeneration project. The information provided at the event cleared so many doubts in my mind and now I have a much better idea of how our new house will look like. Also hope that we will have similar more events in future for our information.” Atif Javaid – Gorse Ride resident

“We were impressed with the way you handled our questions, taking time to explain certain things to us. We both came away feeling more positive about our impending move, albeit in about four years' time. Thank you” Angie and Reg Woods – Gorse Ride residents

“I was pleased to see the revised designs of the houses and the locations in the next proposed phase of the regeneration of Gorse Ride. [WBC staff] were very informative about the revised outside of the houses and the inside plans of the new homes. Looking forward to seeing the progress in the future.” Pauline Massey – Gorse Ride resident

In the coming months the detailed designs will be submitted for approval by planning, with residents invited to submit their comments as part of the process. Alongside this, work will continue to clear and prepare the site, including pre-construction works such as archaeological surveys, ready for groundworks and foundation laying later this year.

Cllr Clive Jones, the new leader of the council, said: “I'm very pleased to see the scheme taking shape on site. Recent years have seen a large increase in demand for affordable homes so this is a landmark project for the council, helping create 249 high quality new homes, 74% of which are affordable, as well as showcasing how we can use great design to improve lives in our communities.

“Not only are these greener low energy homes, meaning residents will need to spend far less on heating and running their homes, but they are also designed to be flexible and adapt to changing lifestyles over the years, with a wide range of property types allowing residents to remain an active part of their community much longer than before.”

**-ENDS-**

**Notes to editors:**

- 1. For more information contact Cllr Stephen Conway, deputy leader of the council and executive member for housing, on [Stephen.Conway@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.Conway@wokingham.gov.uk)**