

PRESS RELEASE - 30 July 2009

## **NEW COMMUNITY AT PINCENTS HILL - OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED**

Blue Living, the company behind proposals to bring forward a mixed-use development at Pincents Hill, has submitted an outline planning application to West Berkshire Council. The development is proposed for the site of the former golf course at Pincents Hill on the edge of Tilehurst.

**Announcing the submission, Jonathan Smales, Chief Executive of Blue Living said:** “We are committed to delivering an integrated new community which respects and complements the local area. This is not a stand-alone soulless housing development. The site is well located to bring forward a high quality, mixed-use development that helps West Berkshire Council deliver its new housing requirement. Our proposal also provides new services that will benefit existing residents of the area.

Our Masterplan has evolved to allow links and integration with the existing community of Tilehurst rather than be a mere extension of it. The proposed layout of the development mirrors traditional street patterns. The planning application seeks to deliver a real community with the range of services you would expect to see serving local people.”

A great deal of public consultation has been undertaken in advance of submission and many of the features contained within the application are in direct response to issues raised in consultation.

Pincents Hill is an urban extension of West Berkshire attached to, and integrated with, Greater Reading. It delivers a traditional pattern of residential development in a way that meets modern challenges.

The planning application proposes the delivery of:

- 750 homes with a focus on family housing ranging from 1-5 bedrooms and comprising terraced, semi and detached houses, mews and apartments.
  - 35% (262) Affordable Homes available on a West Berkshire local

letting policy. DTZ's Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by West Berkshire has highlighted the need for an annual affordable housing build of circa 670.

- All housing would be delivered to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 or above (dealing with matters such as energy efficiency, insulation and water use).

- Community facilities:
  - a Library and Childrens' Library;
  - A nursery / crèche;
  - GP / dentist surgery following discussion with the PCT;
  - Financial contribution to local secondary education. Support for primary education via either a financial contribution or building a new primary school within the development;
  - Close to home working will be encouraged by the provision of an office building for use by small businesses incorporating work and meeting space.
- 6 new local shops, 2 cafes / restaurants, 1 pub, 4 offices and a 40 bed hotel with gym/spa
- The creation and improvement of pedestrian and cycle facilities; a significant financial contribution to enhance bus services to Reading with all new homes within a 3 minute walk of a bus stop. 800 car parking spaces for residential, visitor and shopper / worker use; and a 50 space Car Club provided.
- Two vehicle accesses will be provided from Pincents Lane at the south west corner and at the north of the site. Concerns relating to capacity on the local road network are addressed by: promoting non-car travel; the realignment of the Park Lane / City Road mini roundabout and increasing capacity on the A4 Bath Road / Pincents Lane Roundabout. Blueliving is confident this will make a difference to local roads and accommodate the development.
- Over one fifth of the development site will be public open and outdoor amenity space creating quality living environment. 4.4 hectares will

deliver: 8 play areas are provided throughout the development designed to meet the play / recreation requirements of specific age groups; a new public park; two public squares providing a sense of public realm and civic focus; ecological and wildlife corridors; improved access to the AONB through the delivery of a community farm, allotments, woodland walks / fitness trails / dog walks, a community orchard and meadow. The one existing Public Right of Way will be retained albeit on a diverted route.

The site is also being promoted by Blue Living for inclusion within the Local Development Framework. The company have taken the decision to submit an outline planning application to: demonstrate the site's deliverability; underscore Blue Living's commitment to it; and to provide the raft of evidence needed by Officers and the Inspector to support its inclusion in the LDF

**Jonathan Smales added:** "We are delighted to have submitted this application. We want the redevelopment of Pincents Hill to be something that the people and Council of West Berkshire can be proud and which stands as a practical example of how to deliver traditional housing in a sustainable way. It will deliver much needed private and affordable housing as well as major enhancements to local public open space. Many in the local community have long wanted to see a new library for the area and we are thrilled to be incorporating one within the development.

To tackle the challenges of climate change we need to promote sensible, deliverable solutions which help people to live enjoyable and sustainable lifestyles. Blue Living is leading the way.

The development site is well located to bring forward a high quality mixed use development that helps deliver on the Council's new homes requirements. West Berkshire is growing and, with or without Government targets, sites for new homes need to be identified. We are committed to delivering a development that creates an integrated new community which respects and complements the local area. New homes, shops, offices and community facilities delivered in a sustainable way. I hope our proposal is supported."

-ENDS-

**Notes to editors:**

Blue Living was formed in 2007 by Directors and staff of leading strategic sustainability consultancy Beyond Green, with a desire to create elegant, resilient places, economies and communities that inspire and enable healthy, pleasurable and sustainable living.

Blue Living has a Joint Venture agreement with Development Securities PLC, a leading property development and investment company whose activities are focused solely within the UK. The purpose of the Joint Venture is to pursue opportunities for authentically sustainable, residential-led, mixed-use development projects in the UK.

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