



## Five Rivers Cohousing Community Engagement Policy and Plan

The Five Rivers Mission Statement confirms that our members: “want to be good neighbours, interacting positively with the local community.” This aspiration has guided our strategy and plans from the outset. A site-specific plan was developed when a site was identified as suitable for our scheme, led by our two existing members who live within the local community.

What has this meant in practice?

- 1 The Spider Park site was chosen partly because some of our core members live within or near the community and are well placed to advise on key community organisations and issues likely to be of concern to neighbouring residents.
- 2 Although currently designated as open space, the site has already been identified by Sheffield City Council as more suitable for housing. A previous planning application has been granted, which drew support from the local Councillors and very little by way of objections or concerns from neighbours. A land swap has been arranged which means that the current play space will be replaced with a much more attractive and well-resourced playground nearby.
- 3 The site is largely used for neighbouring households as a short cut to shops and bus stops, and for local dog walkers. We would not want to be party to removing this valuable community resource, and the proposed design of our scheme enables both current usages to be accommodated.
- 4 Drawing up a community engagement plan to accompany and implement this policy was an early priority of the group and is based on local knowledge. Our plan sets out the steps needed to successfully achieve the following policy aspirations:

Our cohousing scheme will:

- 4.1 **Research** the local community to understand the demographic make-up, concerns and issues.
- 4.2 **Identify** community organisations and people to consult on the proposed scheme and build relationships with.
- 4.3 **Consult** in a meaningful way with:
  - Local Councillors to engage political support and to be able to draw on their detailed knowledge of the community
  - Local key organisations
  - Local residents and neighbours.
- 4.4 **Inform** and engage with local forums on social media; publicise our plans at the appropriate time, via such forums and other ways such as via flyers in local venues, postcards posted through neighbours’ doors, possibly with laminated posters on and around the site.
- 4.5 **Respond** constructively to any views and feedback received from the local community.
- 4.6 **Discuss ways to offer** access to local community groups to share our facilities and amenities as appropriate once the scheme is operational.



**5 THE PLAN**

<b>A</b>	<b>Pre-planning</b>	
1	Enlist support of local Councillors, Council officers, and T.A.R.A. (Tenants & Residents Association)	
2	Develop our website and social media sites with information, updated as the scheme progresses. Publicise these locally as well as via cohousing networks.	
3	Produce a recruitment leaflet for distribution locally, as well as other printed materials to inform local people of the plans and invite interest in joining us.	
4	Disseminate information to local groups we are part of: Friends of Wisewood, Loxley & Wadsley Commoners, Loxley & Wisewood Litter Pickers, Hillsborough Community UK, Love Sheffield Hillsborough as well as to the Sheffield Cohousing Network and other appropriate networks.	
5	Gather signatures, statements of support, or concerns relating to planning from local residents and community groups	
6	Organise an open day event(s) once the planning application has been submitted to show the plans, invite feedback, queries, etc	
7	Prepare a press release in case there is press interest in the planning application, and to assist in our recruitment of new members and supporters.	
<b>B</b>	<b>Build phase</b>	
8	Provide a contact number and named community liaison person to respond to questions and concerns.	
9	Invite a community representative(s) to advise our Management Committee.	
<b>C</b>	<b>Post completion</b>	
10	Organise a 'Welcome to our scheme/Moving In' social event to which local residents are invited.	
11	Set up a sub-group to co-ordinate neighbourly activities – for residents and the wider community.	
12	Actively seek opportunities to support local campaigns and events to contribute positively to the neighbourhood.	
13	Review this plan regularly to check its effectiveness.	

<b>Date of Approval by Management Committee:</b>	<b>29.11.2021</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>March 2022</b>