



# BUILDING A NEW, VIBRANT COMMUNITY AT WELLESLEY

A report by Leo Docherty, Member of Parliament for Aldershot, Farnborough, Blackwater & Hawley, on the proposed Community and Neighbourhood Centre.

# Building a new, vibrant community at Wellesley

## *Introduction*

Wellesley is an exciting new community in the heart of Aldershot, Hampshire, with the development being led by Grainger plc. It is one of the largest brownfield regeneration sites in South East England, made up of about 150 hectares of development land, plus over 100 hectares of green open space. The development, originally approved back in 2013, will create a sustainable new community in a high-quality landscape and contribute to the regeneration of nearby Aldershot Town Centre.

This is a next chapter in our area's rich history, with a large proportion of Aldershot's iconic former military barracks transformed into a collection of homes and public spaces for generations to come. 3,850 properties are due to be built, of which 35% will be affordable - so far approximately 1,100 homes have been completed.

Historic buildings like the Cambridge Military Hospital and Headquarters 4th Division will be preserved and brought back into use as homes and community facilities.

As plans were drawn up for the Wellesley's Neighbourhood Centre, Leo Docherty, Member of Parliament for Aldershot, Farnborough, Blackwater and Hawley, launched a survey to hear the views of local residents and to understand what type of facility they would like to see at the new heart of the Wellesley development.

## *Wellesley's New Neighbourhood Centre*

A letter was sent out to residents on the Wellesley estate on Monday 27 February 2023, with the name and address of the individual having been obtained from the Register of Electors, provided to Mr Docherty as their constituency MP for the purposes of democratic engagement. [Annex 1]

Additional letters were sent to local community groups and organisations, including The Cambridge Primary School and the Wellesley Residents Committee.

Coinciding with the letter being sent, Mr Docherty published social media posts on Facebook, and included articles on his website - *leodocherty.org.uk* - to spread awareness and encourage engagement with local residents.

The survey itself was hosted on Mr Docherty's website, with residents also encouraged to share their ideas by writing to his constituency office in Aldershot.

It was a short '60 second' survey consisting of four questions, two checkbox options and the other two being text-fields for the individual responding to populate with their feedback.

# Survey Results

## 1) Area of the Wellesley development responses came from

### *“Tell us which area of the development you live in” - Question*

The Wellesley survey did not request specific information in relation to the demographics of the individual such as age and gender, however, it did request the area of the Wellesley development in which the individual lived.

The majority of responses, at 30%, came from residents living in Bruneval Gardens, a David Wilson development of mixed housing stock; 20% of responses came from McGrigor, a Bellway development of mixed housing stock; with 40% of respondents coming from other areas of the Wellesley development; and 10% coming from outside the area.

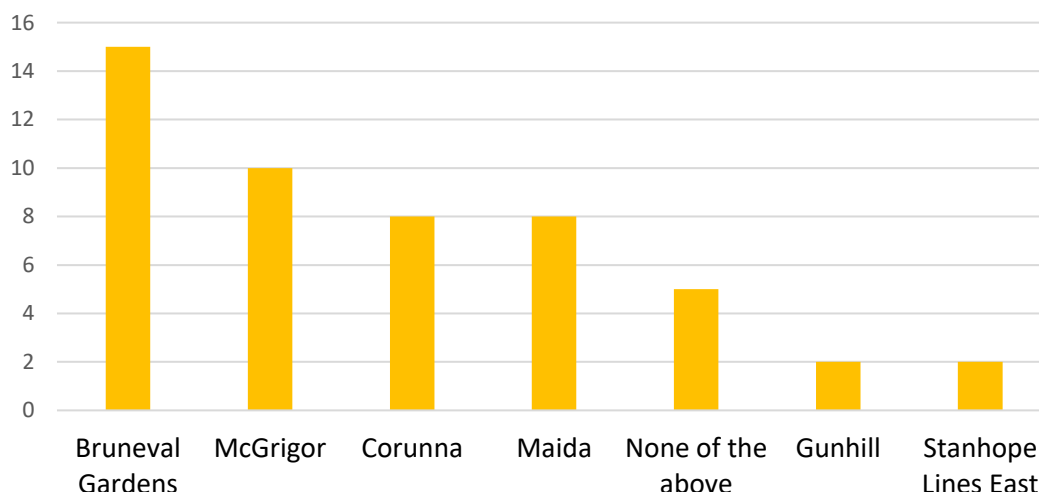


Figure 1. area of the Wellesley development in which respondent lives.

## 2) Satisfaction of living at Wellesley

### *“How satisfied are you living at Wellesley?” - Question*

As part of the report, individuals were asked how satisfied they were living on the Wellesley development.

In previous years, the local authority area of Rushmoor Borough Council has ranked consistently high in the Office of National Statistic’s (ONS) annual

happiness study. In 2020, Rushmoor was ranked as the happiest place in the UK by the ONS, with residents in the Borough ranking at 8.35 out of 10.

Understanding the satisfaction of living at Wellesley, provided an insight into whether residents are feeling their needs are being met locally.

*“I am loving living here, but I do feel that I haven't been able to meet any of my neighbours or the community really and I hope that the neighbourhood centre will become a place for people to come together and make friends.” – Ranya*

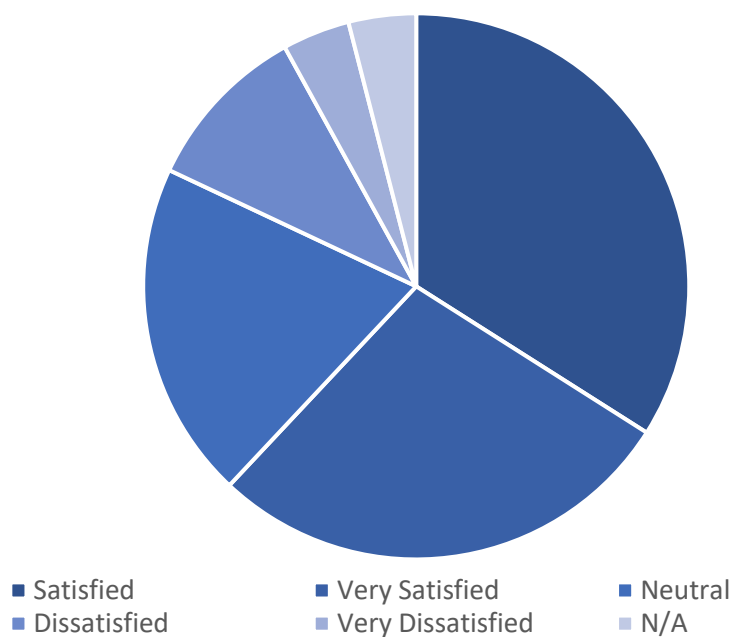
The majority of residents surveyed, at 62%, responded stating they were either very satisfied - 28% - or satisfied - 34% - with where they live.

By area in which respondents live, McGrigor reported the highest level of residents that were very satisfied with where they live, accounting for 28.5% of all respondents that stated they were very satisfied.

20% of respondents stated that they held a neutral view about living in Wellesley, with 10% stating they were dissatisfied with their living arrangements and 4% stating they were very dissatisfied.

*“We have found it very difficult to push our pram around the estate. The park, shop and café we were promised 4 years ago have still not arrived.” - Alexander*

The option of not applicable was included for respondents that do not live on the Wellesley development, accounting for 4% of responses.



*Figure 2. satisfaction rating for residents on the Wellesley development.*

### 3) Responses to the facilities to be included

#### *“What facilities would you like to see included in Wellesley’s new Neighbourhood Centre?” - Question*

Respondents were encouraged to share their views on what facilities and amenities they would like to see included within the Wellesley’s new Neighbourhood Centre.

There were multiple insightful responses, with numerous different suggestions with ideas ranging from a hairdresser to a local farm shop. There were several common ideas that emerged, with 22 unique responses suggesting a pub or bar.

*“There are very few places in the town to go for a quiet drink or to meet friends at a friendly bar. Therefore, I would like to see a bar or pub offering similar to what you find on other new developments.” - Nick*

Comparisons were made to similar development projects on former Military of Defence estates, such as the Mindenhurst development on the former Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut, and Prince Philip Park, Bordon, with respondents highlight the Frog gastro-pub and the Shed.

*“I love living in Wellesley, but it lacks a local shop and a pub or social club where people can socialise and meet new friends” – Terry*

The survey highlighted that residents on the Wellesley development would like to see a small grocery shop, with 34 unique responses requesting a local shop or convenience store.

*“I would like to see a corner shop for everyday shopping and convenience; a corner shop would be very useful.” - Mian*

Another facility that was a common topic amongst respondents was for a café/coffee shop, with 20 unique responses. There was a mixture of feedback from respondents, with some stating preference for a chain and others stating they wanted to see a local independent business.

Linked to this, was the notion of hot-desking, either within the café/coffee shop itself or a dedicated space within the neighbourhood centre, allowing meeting rooms and desks to be rented for the day.

Respondents were keen to see a multi-purpose space that could be designated for community use, with 16 unique responses supporting this idea.

*“A multi-purpose space for meeting/conference as well as commerce/micro businesses that can accommodate meetings/parties is vital and huge missing*



*ingredient. As a resident reverent - the role of faith in Aldershot is still vibrant and so this would develop community development and cohesion.” – Dean*

Respondents stated the neighbourhood centre should:

- Be accessible
- Be disability friendly
- Include a multi-purpose space
- Be suitable for mothers with infants and babies
- Be a sociable area, with outdoor space and seating areas
- Have no cost of entry, with amenities that can be accessed for free
- Have facilities for families with younger children, e.g. a playground

Linking to this were 8 unique responses stating the centre should be open during weekday evenings and weekends, so that residents could access the centre at convenient times.

*“An area of outdoor seating, on the south side of the building, looking out onto Parade Park, would be great for the summer evenings and it would have to be dog-friendly (inside and out) to accommodate the wealth of dog owners on Wellesley.” – Ryan*

## 4) Additional comments and suggestions

***“Share any further ideas or concerns you have about Wellesley or the wider local area” - Question***

The survey asked respondents if they had any further ideas for the wider Wellesley development, or any concerns about the local area.

The state of the roads, traffic and road safety was the main topic raised by respondents, with 30 unique responses.

*“I have noted that there are lots of cars driving around the hospital very fast and aggressively... slow down and take better care. They are in OUR community, have some respect.” - Ryan*

Respondents were concerned that ongoing construction work was having a detrimental impact on the local area, and with the current road layout awaiting additional access roads onto Wellesley, a single road closure in Aldershot could severely impact the development, causing heavy traffic. Pennefather’s Road was highlighted as a main cause of concern for residents.

*“Parking on roads is getting worse - yellow lines could help.” – Lorna*

Residents of the development brought up car parking in 16 unique responses, with concerns raised over the number of individuals parking their vehicles in residential areas in order to access the Aldershot Centre for Health.

Crime and anti-social behaviour was brought up by 10 unique responses, with individuals stating concerns over vandalism and alleged drug-dealing. Respondents stated that having additional streetlighting and CCTV systems in place could help alleviate these issues.

Preserving the heritage and cultural assets was suggested by 3 unique responses, ensuring that the new neighbourhood centre preserved elements of the Headquarters 4th Division building.

Dedicated green space for a dog park was suggested by 5 unique responses, with several more suggesting additional dog and general waste bins across the development in order to help tackle problems of littering.

*“I would love to see a secure dog park. There are more dogs here than anywhere else I have lived, it would be great to have somewhere safe to let them run off lead.” –  
Claire*

School provision was mentioned by 9 unique responses. Much of the Wellesley development falls within the catchment area of Alderwood School, Aldershot. A number of respondents stated that they wished for the catchment areas to be revised by Hampshire County Council to allow for greater choice by parents, with some hoping to have the option of sending their children to The Wavell School, Farnborough.

## *Conclusion*

The new Neighbourhood Centre on the Wellesley development presents an opportunity to create a new, vibrant community space, with local facilities and amenities on the doorstep of residents.

The survey highlighted that residents would like to see a café/coffee shop, a mixed-use community space, a family friendly environment, additional outdoor areas with green space, a local convenience store, all with a high degree of accessibility that provides a focus point for the new community at Wellesley.



## Annex 1 - Wellesley's new Neighbourhood Centre survey letter

**LEO DOCHERTY MP**  
Member of Parliament for Aldershot



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

27 February 2023

### **Wellesley's new Neighbourhood Centre – share your ideas**

As plans are drawn up for the Wellesley's Neighbourhood Centre, I want to hear what types of facility you would like to see at the new heart of your community.

The group of buildings around the former 4<sup>th</sup> Division Headquarters – the historic centre of the former Aldershot Military Town – at the crossroads of Queens Avenue and Alison's Road, and directly opposite The Cambridge Primary School, is the Centre's approved location.

Grainger plc – the Estate's Development Manager – envisage a convenience store for everyday essentials, a coffee shop, nursery, and outdoor space. They are keen to see facilities that will complement the nearby new playground and 'Parade Park' currently under development, but that do not detract from the significant investment currently taking place across Aldershot Town Centre. This will, of course, all be subject to finding suitable operators.

**Whilst we await Grainger plc's initial plans, I want to hear your views. Share with me what you would like to see included in Wellesley's new Neighbourhood Centre.**

This feedback will then be passed on to Grainger plc so they can ensure their plans for the Centre meet your and your family's needs in the years to come. You can share your ideas by writing to me at **6 Union Street, Aldershot, GU11 1EG**, or online at:

**[www.leodocherty.org.uk/Wellesley](http://www.leodocherty.org.uk/Wellesley)**

I look forward to hearing your suggestions!

With very best wishes

**Leo Docherty MP**

Your name and address were obtained from the Register of Electors, provided to me as Member of Parliament for the Aldershot Constituency, for the purposes of democratic engagement.

If you do not wish to receive future messages, please let me know using the contact details enclosed.

**[www.leodocherty.org.uk](http://www.leodocherty.org.uk)  
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