

EXAMPLE FROM ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

The invitation letter should be clear and concise on what the workshop hopes to achieve so participants know what is expected of them, as well as either providing or accompanying information for the site in question.

Dear Colleague,

Invitation to Site Visit and Workshop 26-28 March 2001 "Enquiry by Design" for Park Farm South and East, Ashford

I am very pleased to invite you to take part in this workshop and delighted that you have indicated that you are able to attend.

Ashford Borough Council has received a planning application, including a Development Brief, from Pelham Homes Ltd for development at Park Farm South and East. This is an important local plan site, both in itself and in the precedent it will set for further development proposals around Ashford. The Council and Pelham Homes, with a number of partners, including the Kent Architecture Centre, the CPRE, Kent Design and the Environment Agency, intend to work through the important issues associated with the site and its future in a comprehensive and participatory manner.

The partners have asked The Prince's Foundation to help with this process by providing independent facilitation, and using the development principles that have been promoted for many years by the Urban Villages Forum, which is part of The Foundation. By using the 'urban village' principles of sustainability in 'making places', we hope to contribute to an attractive, high quality development that will create a real sense of place. In order to achieve this it is important that all stakeholders who have an interest in the future development participate in the process.

This workshop will use an innovative approach known as 'Enquiry by Design', over a period of two and a half days. This approach has been pioneered by The Prince's Foundation and I am delighted that representatives of The Foundation will be leading the discussions and fulfilling the role of independent facilitators. They will be able to provide expert advice and input into the individual workshops. Participants will be allocated to the initial individual workgroups according to their particular area of expertise/interest. The need for integration and continued dialogue over these inter-related topics, will be dealt with primarily through feedback and debate during the plenary sessions.

I attach additional information regarding the work of The Prince's Foundation, along with the Enquiry by Design and Urban Village approaches, as well as the individuals involved.

A programme is attached - but, as stated above, this will be very flexible to respond as the process evolves. First, on Monday afternoon, there will be a visit to the sites and the adjacent area, followed by tea and an informal discussion. We will meet at 12.30pm at Park Farm Community Centre and after a light lunch and preliminary discussion, proceed

from there by minibus. We will end the afternoon with a discussion back at the Community Centre. I attach a location plan for your convenience, along with a list of invitees.

On Tuesday and Wednesday we will be based at the Post House Hotel, Canterbury Road and will work through the two days identifying and discussing the issues that will result in a high quality and sustainable future development at Park Farm. The Pelham Homes team will use the agreements we reach at the workshop to redraft the Development Brief for the sites. The Borough Council's Planning Sub-Committee will have the benefit of this when it decides on the planning application.

This is an innovative and exciting project. The project partners look forward to working with you on 26- 28 March. If you have any queries please contact....

Yours sincerely

Planning Policy Manager