



Homes
England

Making homes happen

West of Ifield
Consultation Summary and Feedback Report
Consultation Dates 20th October 2022 - 11th November 2022

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Introduction

Who are Homes England?

Homes England is the Government's housing and regeneration agency. Behind each scheme we support, there's someone getting the stability that comes with a safe, secure, and quality home of their own.

Why West of Ifield?

Homes England is promoting West of Ifield in response to the need to address housing challenges in both Horsham and Crawley, create new sustainable places and to build new infrastructure that will benefit existing communities.



Northstowe
> www.northstowe.com



The Avenue



South West Rugby
> www.homesteadview.co.uk



York Central
> www.yorkcentral.info

The 2022 Consultation

Between Thursday 20th October 2022 and Friday 11th November 2022, we undertook the third consultation to help inform the proposals for the Homes England development at West of Ifield.

Feedback and comments from this consultation will be used to inform future stages of the project.

This report:

- Provides an overview of the purpose of this third consultation
- Provides the key dates and information pertaining to the consultation
- Outlines the community and stakeholder engagement that took place
- Provides the key themes from the consultation events

This consultation report does not:

- Detail all individual comments received (all individual comments can be found on our [website](#))
- Provide responses to individual feedback and comments made

A Statement of Community Involvement will be submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application. This will include feedback from all consultation with the community and local stakeholders ahead of a planning submission.

A list of [FAQs](#) and further information can be found on our [website](#).



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How have we engaged with the community?

We consulted on our Illustrative Masterplan between Thursday, 20th October 2022 and Friday, 11th November 2022. This consultation was our third community consultation.

This consultation did not seek responses to the principle of development in this area as this is a matter for the Horsham District Council's Local Plan process.

It gave existing Horsham and Crawley residents, especially those close to the proposed development, and potential future residents of the scheme the chance to explore the updated masterplan, learn about the changes resulting from previous consultation feedback, and ask questions of the Homes England team.

As part of this [consultation](#), we wanted to ensure we engaged with as many people in the local community as possible, as well as those that might otherwise not contribute to consultations, to gather feedback that can help shape the future of West of Ifield for all.



To do this we:

- Held three in-person events as follows. Two were held on weekdays (which included evenings) and one at the weekend during the half term. Each event was also at a different venue that was carefully selected to maximise attendance. Consultation dates were as follows:

- *Thursday 20th October, 1pm – 7pm, Apple Tree Centre*

- *Friday 21st October, 2pm – 7pm, Ifield Barn Theatre*

- *Saturday 22nd October, 10am – 3pm, Rusper Village Hall*

- We held one online webinar consultation during the evening to allow for maximum attendance.

- *Tuesday 1st November, 7pm – 8pm, online webinar*

- We held a webinar for those living on the Rusper Road to explain how the proposed changes to the traffic flow on the Rusper Road had responded to feedback from previous consultations. This event was held during the evening to maximise attendance for all residents as follows:

- *Tuesday 8th November, 7pm & 8pm, online webinar*

- We made all information boards present at the events available on www.westofifield.co.uk throughout the consultation period to ensure consistency, allowing users to view, download and comment on the content.

- We distributed 26,442 leaflets to surrounding postcodes detailing the dates and location of the consultation events.

- We sent a digital flyer to parish councils and seldom heard groups and asked them to share amongst their communities.



- We engaged with local members of West Sussex County Council.

- We met with local groups, including Save West of Ifield.

- We took a targeted approach to engage with the local and regional Gypsy and Traveller community to discuss their needs from any Gypsy and Traveller provision.

- We engaged with local media through press releases and personalised engagement.

- We organised print and online ads with The Crawley Observer and The West Sussex County Times.

- We commissioned targeted and boosted Facebook posts which had a combined reach of 41,104 and received 1,261 link clicks.

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What we shared with you

At the in-person events, online webinars and on our website, we shared the updated Masterplan for the proposed development at West of Ifield. We shared more detail on what the scheme could look like and how infrastructure would be provided alongside the new housing and how it had changed based on earlier consultations and explored the project's phasing plan in more depth.

View the information boards from the consultations on our website www.westofifield.co.uk.



The main changes responding to concerns or feedback from previous consultations are summarised below:

- An 8% reduction in homes being built, from 3,250 to 3,000 - with a minimum of 35% remaining as affordable housing.
- A revised 'red line boundary' showing the extent of the proposed development area, making clear the protection of St Margaret's Church and Ifield Brook Meadows.
- Four, detailed character areas that highlight top-level design aspirations, supporting infrastructure, housing mix and community uses for each area.
- Detail around provision of new open spaces and publicly accessible areas.
- Habitat and ecological corridors throughout the development and enhanced green buffer zones between new and existing communities.
- A clear phasing plan for the development and the supporting infrastructure that demonstrated our commitment to enable the building of a new secondary school and other supporting infrastructure as the first development on the site and bring forward the early construction of the Crawley Western Link road as the main highway access.
- The creation of new open spaces throughout the proposed development, delivering our commitment for at least 10% gain in biodiversity, connected habitats and improved health and wellbeing for residents.
- Commitment to ensure the new neighbourhood is a genuine 15 minute community by building new everyday community facilities, retail and local services and open spaces early in the build programme.

- Opportunity for the site to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport between the new neighbourhood, Crawley and local employment areas.
- Changes to Rusper Road and how it will alter journeys and respond to concerns about increased congestion and 'rat-running' for those living close to the new neighbourhood.
- Sought views on what should be included in the developing Design Code and how future facilities could be best managed by the future residents as part of a stewardship strategy.



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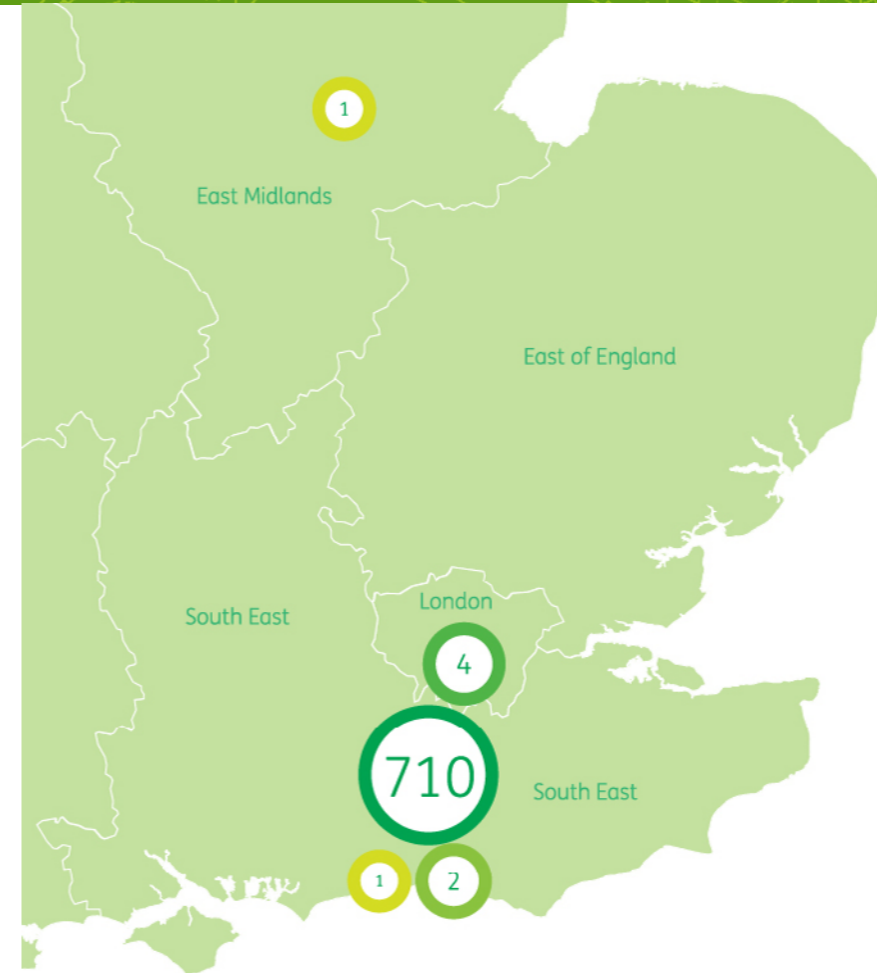
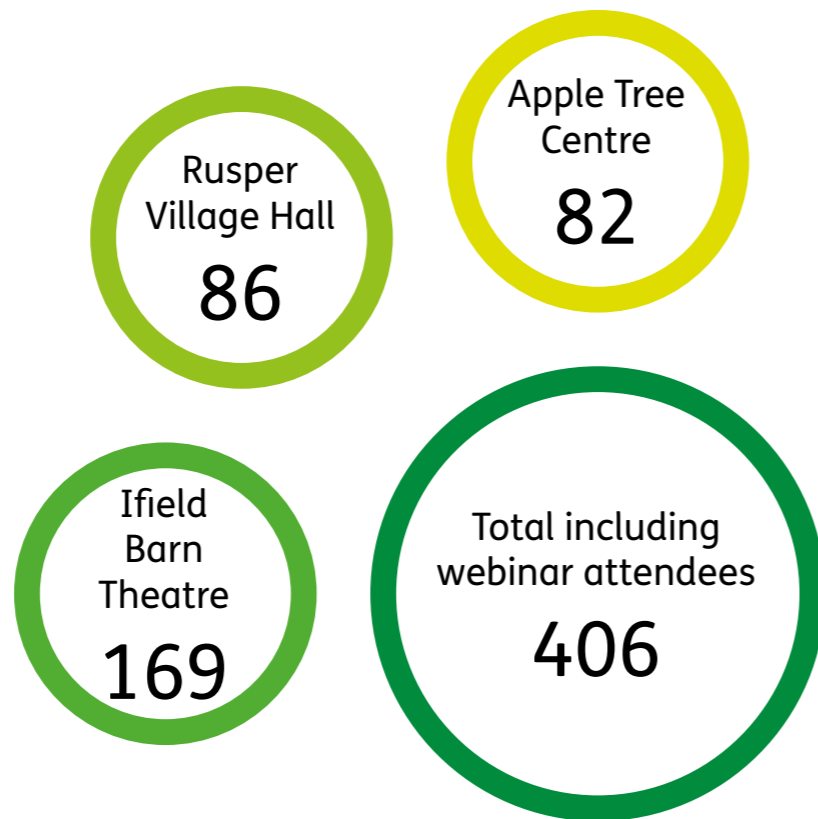
Who Responded?

A total of **406** people attended the events in person or through our online webinars.

During the consultation period (20th Oct - 11th Nov) we had **2,951** visitors to www.westofifield.co.uk to view the plans and consultation boards.

Engagement from key stakeholders including:

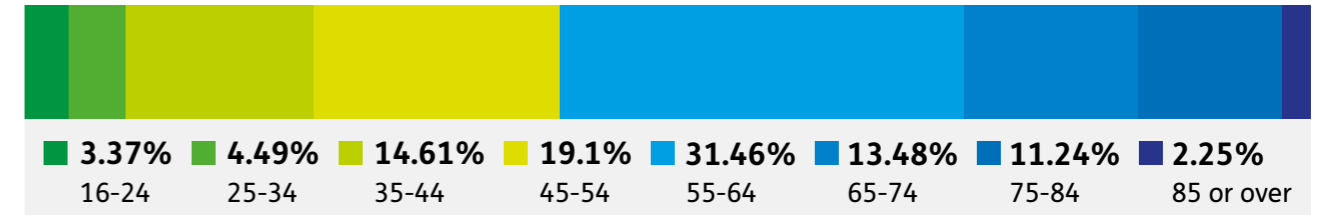
- Gatwick Airport
- Save West of Ifield, a local opposition group.
- The Woodland Trust
- Local walking groups
- Local cycling groups
- Councillors
- Local Business owners



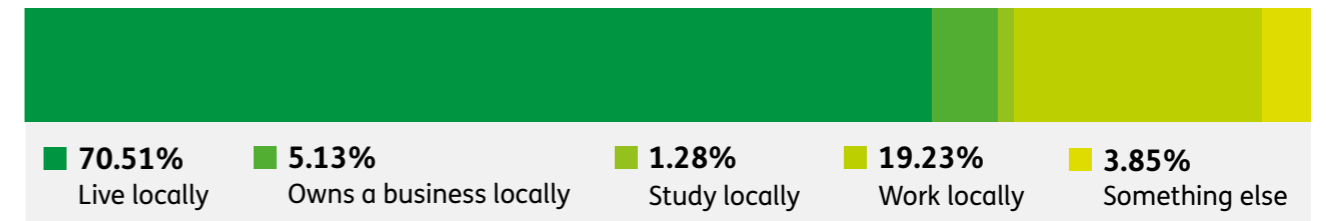
National Reach

East Midlands 1
London 4
South East 713
 Immediate Surrounding Area 710
 Brighton and Hove 2
 Littlehampton 1

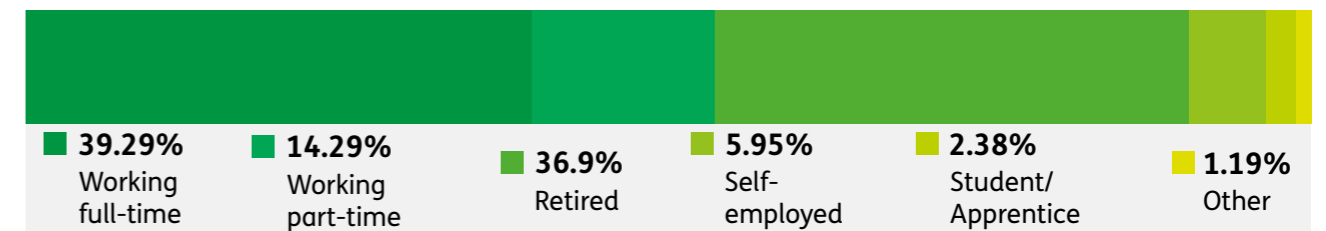
Age Group

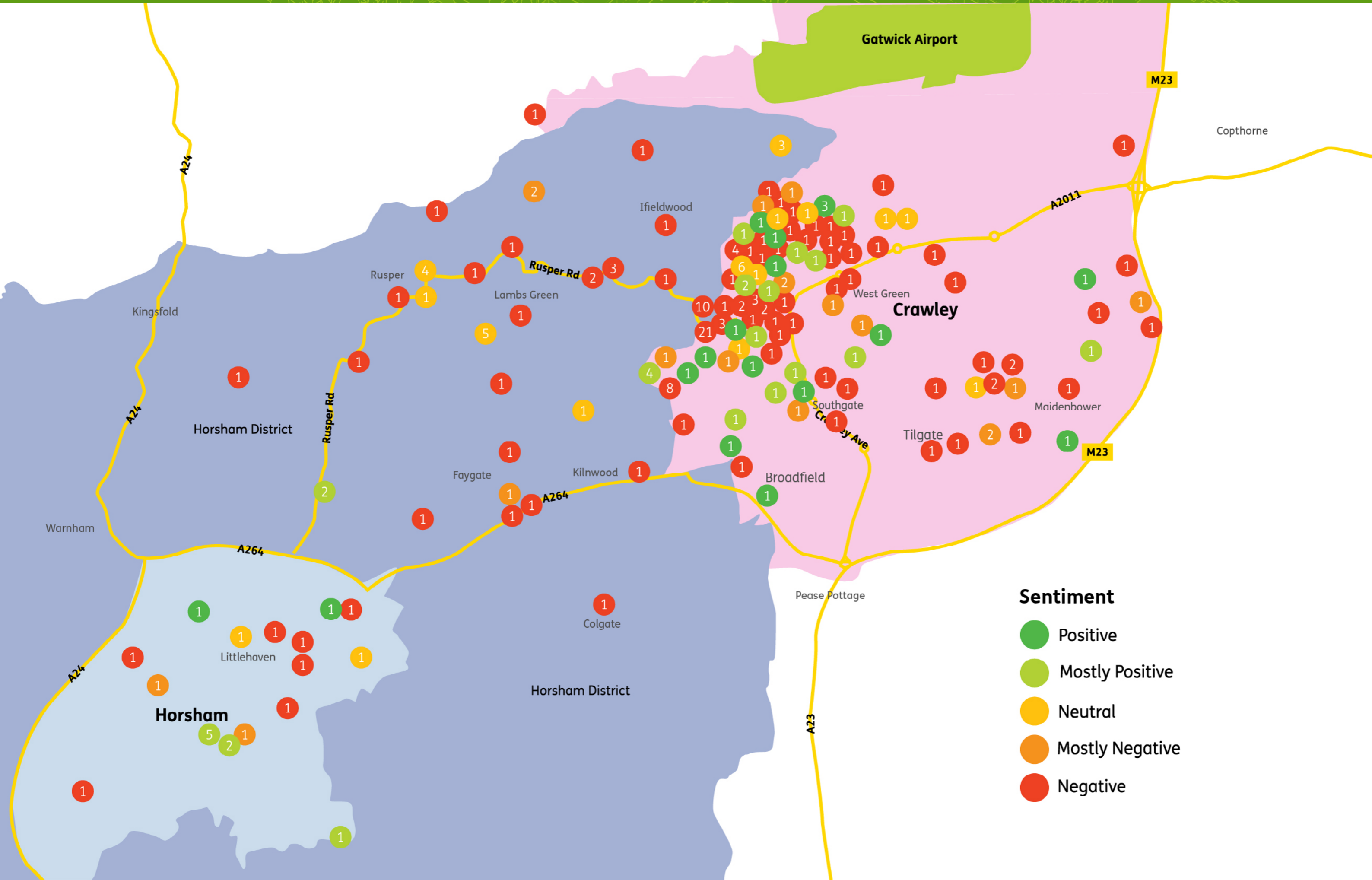


Connection to the area



Employment Status





A number of respondents put forward their views on what design they like and what the design vision should be for the West of Ifield. Many expressed a strong desire for high quality design with several comments expressing a need for specific parameters to be included relating to matters such as building height, character areas, open space, the need to respect the local character.

Many were supportive of a healthy environment with particular reference and support given for green spaces, facilities within walking distance and priority given to pedestrians and cyclists.

- “IMO each neighbourhood should have its own unique character. You could do this with the types of trees that are planted and the colours of the road signs. Maybe small design elements in the housing?”
- “The local character needs to be protected. This means 2 story dwellings. Not more ugly housing such as Kilnwood Vale, North of Horsham etc. Look to the Newdigate Brickworks for an example of a beautiful new community, in harmony with its surroundings.”
- “Building design should include variation, proportions of buildings above 2 stories.”
- “Lots of trees and parks, and community spaces. Public squares and roads where people can sit outside cafés, pubs and restaurants and watch the world go by. Narrow mews are hugely under appreciated, as are squares surrounding parks. Small shops and supermarkets that can be walked to, as opposed to anything with a car park. Good access to public transportation.”
- “All that ensures a healthy environment - sport, areas for walking, care of the pond, etc.”
- “Make sure to learn from the design approach already used in Crawley.”
- “Traditional tile hung properties.”
- “No cladding other than Sussex tile type. Houses should be characterful and varied in design.”

However, some doubt was expressed regarding the enforceability of the design code.

- “How will design be enforced? How will you resist ‘builders’ demands for less social housing? How will you enforce building codes/regulations?”
- “Will design code be legally enforceable on developers?”
- “Doesn’t matter what suggestions are made, they will be laughed at and treated with contempt by the build team. I have first hand experience of this on several occasions. Are you going to be on site throughout the entire build process to police this? The duration of this project means the responsibility will pass through many different people. The only interest they will have to complete to cost and schedule. Quality is always forsaken to achieve the other two.”



Open space & stewardship, environment, energy and zero carbon

The consultation boards helped visualise the significant amount of green space that is proposed as part of the development.

Whilst some were complimentary of the retention of green space, protection of ancient woodland and the creation of better managed land, comments show that others remain concerned about the loss of existing amenity, wildlife habitats and were sceptical of achieving the 10% biodiversity net gain.

- “The Woodland Trust is pleased to see reference to identifying and protecting ancient woodland and veteran trees, which is a basic requirement for any development.”
- “Leaving the land undeveloped is the best for the environment of Crawley.”
- “It does not look like 50% open space. At the moment it is 100% open space, and we would like it to stay that way.”
- “How is the increase in biodiversity going to be monitored? What is the baseline. How are the increased levels of pollution going to be monitored? What remedial measures will be put in place if biodiversity starts to fall? What measure will be used to limit light and noise pollution?”
- “Deer, foxes. Crested Newt, badger, owls, grass snakes and many other wildlife live on the golf course. Biodiversity means more than planting trees. You are destroying their habitat.”

Whilst many respondents were supportive of the green space proposed as part of the development, many expressed a need for further information regarding stewardship of the areas and their long-term maintenance.

- “The management of wildlife areas, river walks, playing fields etc, cannot be left to volunteers. They require investment of time, money and expertise that may well not sit within the local community. Management of them requires well informed long term strategies.”
- “It is very hard to get people interested in the 'community' these days and it seems unlikely that this will happen. It is also unclear what role the Local Authority would play in these areas and how that involvement will be funded given that LA's have seen 12 years of continuous cuts in their budgets.”
- “If this development goes ahead then having resident involvement will help but neither really works as you don't state any partners that you have conversed with or that you have groups who can start steering till people are in place.”
- “The answers to questions related to the stewardship of the meadows, parks and sports facilities were vague... perhaps voluntary groups would take this on, ... or local authorities or ... owners of the sports clubs? Stewardship requires several levels and types of expertise and cannot be left to voluntary groups...”



Wordcloud of responses to the environment

Many respondents felt strongly that the project should be environmentally responsible and had questions regarding what measures would be put in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of the development and initiatives to meet local sustainability and 'zero carbon' targets.

- “More details on net zero are required, solar panels, wind turbines, reed bed sewage systems and others all need to be used.”
- “There will need to be measures in place to ensure that water neutrality policies are met and features such as solar panels, wind turbines and other initiatives to meet net zero targets.”
- “Full consideration of long-term sustainability must be made and elements that will be adhered to (solar panels/heat pumps etc).”
- “Environmental standards should include impacts, energy, efficiency, sustainability, and off-set of negative impacts.”



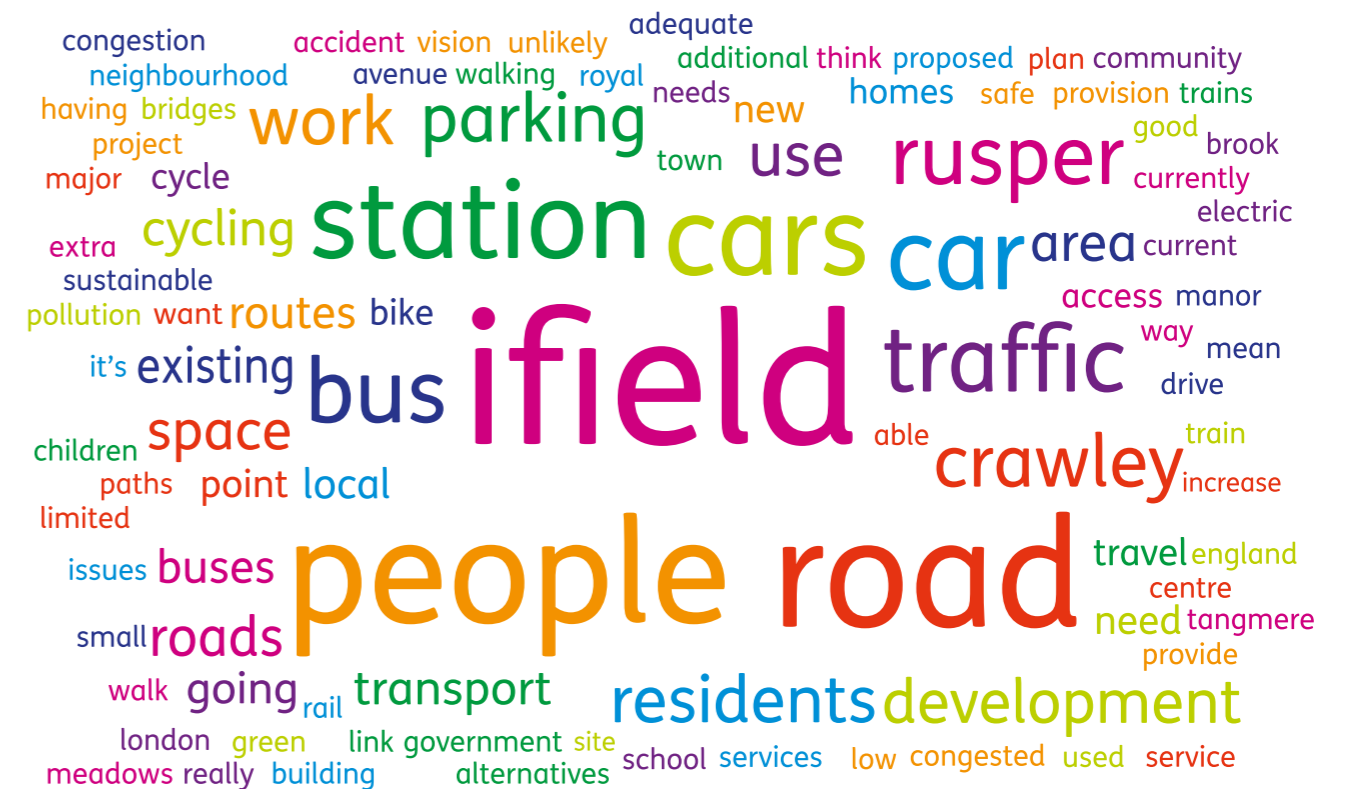
Sustainable transport, road infrastructure and parking provision

Previous consultations highlighted concerns about the impact of increased traffic on the residents of Rusper Road.

The revised masterplan incorporated changes as a result of this early feedback. Whilst some Rusper Road residents appreciated the changes, others were concerned about increased journey times and the overall workability of the proposed layout.

- “How about residents needing to drive North of Rusper Road - this will impact them massively.”
- “The proposed plan means people will naturally park on Rusper Road to walk their kids to school. This is going to cause major congestion and pollution in the area plus disruption to the current residents.”
- “Hopeful, but is denying us access to our home, on our normal route. This could be modified.”
- I thought the original plan was to have the link road built first from the A264? Now we have half a road taking all the traffic onto Ifield Avenue which will then lead to traffic chaos on Bonnets lane, Charlwood and into Crawley. The traffic will back up from the Ifield Drive traffic lights creating high usage of side roads as rat runs which already happens. As for closing the rusper road, this will mean residents of this road unable to get to Crawley rail stations and schools and having to make longer journeys. Crawley residents will be unable to use the rusper road to commute to work. You cannot fix the road issues this proposed development brings as there is no way to design a network that addresses all issues. The reps at the meetings seem to think they will all have bikes and walk to Ifield station! This development cannot work.

- “We think it is unacceptable to stop residents of Pound Cottages area from accessing their homes from Rusper Road.”
- The plan to terminate the western link at Rusper road is a major problem. Whilst I understand the reason for shutting Rusper road at the junction with the Crawley Western link, this will have a major detrimental impact on residents of Rusper & Lambs Green who wish to use Ifield station (which is very common).
- “The western link road MUST be extended to join the A264 as part of phase 1.
- “If Rusper road is to be closed at the junction with CWL, how will residents of Rusper an Lamb’s Green access Ifield station?”
- It will encourage more rat-running through Rusper village and the surrounding narrow twisting rural lanes. It will cut Rusper off from Ifield station and shops adding extra time and fuel to resident’s journeys. It is a road from one narrow rural lane onto another rural lane, where traffic will spill over onto small roads that were not designed to take such an amount of traffic.



Wordcloud of responses to sustainable transport

Whilst several respondents expressed support regarding the proposals move towards more sustainable modes of transport many expressed concerns regarding provision and practicality.

- “I commend the effort to move away from car ownership however I fear what the development of cycle paths through Ifield Meadows may mean the destruction of a very naturally beautiful area.”
- “I hadn’t even thought of secure cycle storage, but it’s good that you have. I’m told by those who own them that ebikes are a game changer, and we should all be looking at more environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of transport rather than cars.”
- “Whilst we can all agree that sustainable transport is really important, it is not practical unless there is a high level of provision.”
- “Linking Ifield station is not enough, the service and capacity needs improvement.”

Respondents also asked for more information regarding the proposed bus, walking and cycling routes, rail links and the pricing of travel.

- “Ifield Station cannot cope with the additional customer pressure that will arise from the West of Ifield development.”
- “If the development goes ahead this aim is good. The buses should be as green as possible and also provide a better service to the existing community. Additional train services would also be useful.”
- “Bus services are currently inadequate to attract people away from driving; they get stuck in traffic and don’t offer a round the clock service.”

Parking was also mentioned by several respondents with questions regarding provision.

- “Car parking spaces per house - there is not enough being supplied - nice homes that will eventually be filled with teenagers all wanting to drive and nowhere to put their cars. Where will they go?”
- “Love the concept of a 20 minute neighbourhood but the reality is quite different. It’s already been demonstrated on similar developments that traffic increased and the lack of parking caused real problems for residents.”
- “The proposal is not giving enough consideration to access, the idea that everyone would be using public transport or cycling is simply not realistic, the parking facilities suggested are minimal not suitable.”
- “There is little information here in relation to domestic parking provision, but it seems likely that it will be insufficient in the residential areas given the tight packing of houses. Lack of adequate parking space is already the number one concern raised with councillors across the town.”



Flooding and water neutrality

Our plans demonstrated that housing development is located outside areas of flood risk, as is required by national policy, and overseen by the Environment Agency. This takes account of future flood risk, taking account of potential climate change impacts in line with national guidance.

In addition, the delivery of the Western Link will be designed to mitigate against flood risk in accordance with national best practice. Despite these reassurances during the face-to-face consultation events, flood risk remained a concern.

- “The above plan states the West of Ifield development will ‘Improve access to open spaces’, the closest green space being a floodplain (which will likely be in a permanent state of flooding should this development go ahead) or St. Margaret’s Church - which is a graveyard and not a place to simply walk dogs!”
- “Flooding will be an issue if this goes ahead. Ifield Brook had a flood warning on 7th Nov 2022 this brook can no longer take any more run off water into it.”
- The site is on a floodplain, the development stands to destroyed thousands of trees”
- “As I understand it, there are a number of issues with this plan. The first is that the proposal appears to be to build on an area prone to flooding.”

A number of responses noted water neutrality and the need to integrate water conservation within the development.

- “Is Homes England going to fund a new reservoir? There have been no new ones since 1990s and this can be the only way to guarantee water neutrality.”
- “What assessments have been made on the local impact of Sewerage, power, water and other utilities.”
- “Water supply and management is already a problem for the area.”
- “I am unclear how this development can be compliant with the stated water neutrality policy of Horsham council, Crawley council and West Sussex Council in order to comply with the views of natural England to avoid further damaging the environment in a water stressed area. What infrastructure developments will be put in place to avoid further water stress in the area?”



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Next Steps

All feedback is being analysed and used to inform our next steps. Some examples of steps we are continuing to take as a result of the feedback are set out below.

You can also find a list of [FAQs](#) and further information on our website.

The need for local housing

- We are continuing to work with local stakeholders to identify and understand local housing needs in line with the emerging local plan and the needs of residents of both Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council.
- We continue to review the proposed neighbourhood areas in response to feedback to create sustainable communities and provide the facilities and homes people need.
- Feedback is being used to inform our Design Code to ensure the homes delivered for local residents are of the highest quality.
- We continue to seek to engage with the gypsy and traveller community to identify their needs from a local site to enable us to consider alternative locations within the masterplan area.

The local benefit, creating a community, infrastructure and the development timeline

- We are engaging with local health commissioning groups to secure the provision of localised health services.
- Continue to progress proposals that prioritise the need for delivering new school places.
- Review the delivery timeline and phasing of key road and transport infrastructure.
- Work with stakeholders to ensure delivery of a wide range of local services and community facilities.

High quality design and the design code

- Our design code will be developed using feedback from this consultation – including the look and feel of neighbourhoods as well as the roads, signage and houses themselves.
- We will also make sure that the structure and application of the Design Code will allow local communities to inform all stages across the lifetime of the development.

Open space & stewardship, environment, energy and zero carbon

- Continue to update ecological surveys to further understand the ecological value of the site, ensure it is maintained and identify opportunities to improve natural value and support habitat recovery.
- Ensuring ancient woodland and veteran trees remain protected.
- Engage local community groups and stewardship bodies to identify opportunities and develop a long-term management plan for the retained open spaces.
- Prepare a zero carbon strategy to demonstrate how this can be achieved on site.

Sustainable transport, road infrastructure and parking provision

We continue to liaise with Network Rail and train operators as part of their review into future-proofing the services provided from Ifield Station

- Work with local bus providers to ensure high level of bus provision is secured from the outset.
- Feedback from this latest consultation continues to inform the revised developing traffic and transport plan for West of Ifield.

- Looking at other opportunities to maximise benefits from the proposed changes at Rusper Road.
- We continue to develop a construction traffic plan to seek to minimise the impact on local residents during early construction.

Flooding and water neutrality

- Horsham District Council have now published their Water Neutrality Strategy and we will respond to this as part of a site specific strategy.
- Whilst no homes will be built in areas of flood-risk, we will continue to engage the Environment Agency to detail our flood mitigation plans for the area surrounding the Crawley Western Link.

As part of our emerging proposals, we are preparing an Employment and Economic Development Strategy (EEDS). This will be aligned with local economic development priorities to deliver job generating activities across the site.

Creating opportunity

The EEDS will establish a framework that will:

- Outline our approach to marketing employment opportunities and securing opportunities for local employers.
- Commit to a local employment strategy to support the construction phase.
- Identify opportunities for Local labour, supply chain and procurement.
- Enable engagement with schools and other education providers.
- Identify opportunities to support young people and apprenticeships.
- Establish objectives to achieve inclusive growth.

If you would like to be kept informed of project updates, sign up to news updates on our website, or read the latest news [here](#)

To read our latest FAQs, click [here](#)