

# West of Ifield Second Consultation Summary

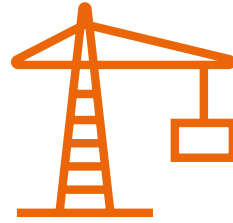
May 2021

# Who are<sup>®</sup> Homes England?

# Why are we proposing a new neighbourhood at West of Ifield?



Homes England's mission is to **ensure more homes are built in areas of greatest need**, to improve **affordability** and ensure more people in England have access to better homes in the right places.



Homes England has the ability to **deliver supporting infrastructure in a timely manner**. This will offset the impacts of development and help **meet the needs of existing communities**.



Homes England is the **main landowner of land West of Ifield**, much of which was originally acquired by the Crawley New Town Corporation to provide new homes.

# How do we deliver new sustainable neighbourhoods

We are committed to creating new neighbourhoods and great places to live, investing early in infrastructure and have a track record of delivery. We have the capacity to invest in the lives of residents over the space of several decades. Our approach and resources have led to the construction of thousands of houses and new communities elsewhere in the country.



[Northern Arc, Burgess Hill – See more about this project here.](#)



[Upton, Northampton – See more about this project here.](#)



[Northstowe, Cambridge – See more about this project here.](#)

# Our Consultation

## How we engaged with you?

We consulted on our draft masterplan for west of Ifield between Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March and Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This was our second series of public engagement events and gave local residents and other members of the community an opportunity to see and discuss the draft masterplan for the site, which is being promoted through the Horsham District Council Local Plan as a new neighbourhood containing up to 3,250 homes, schools, green spaces, and community infrastructure.

The draft masterplan was developed to respond to the feedback received from the community during the first series of public engagement events held in January 2020. At these earlier sessions Homes England consulted on the principles of development.

To provide the greatest opportunity for people to understand and comment on our proposals we:

- Held three online consultation sessions between 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2021 via Zoom.
- Hosted all consultation information online - [www.westofifield.co.uk](http://www.westofifield.co.uk)
- Undertook a targeted social media campaign attracting 1,865 page views online.
- Distributed leaflets to 4,948 local residents inviting them to an engagement event.
- Advertised our consultation across local media channels including the West Sussex County Times and the Crawley Observer.

# What we consulted on during our second series of engagement



A new neighbourhood to provide up to **3,250** new homes (of which **35%** will be affordable).



**Up to 100 hectares** (247 acres) of public open space – including a new country park, community spaces, sports pitches and play areas as well as protecting and enhancing Ifield Brook Meadows.



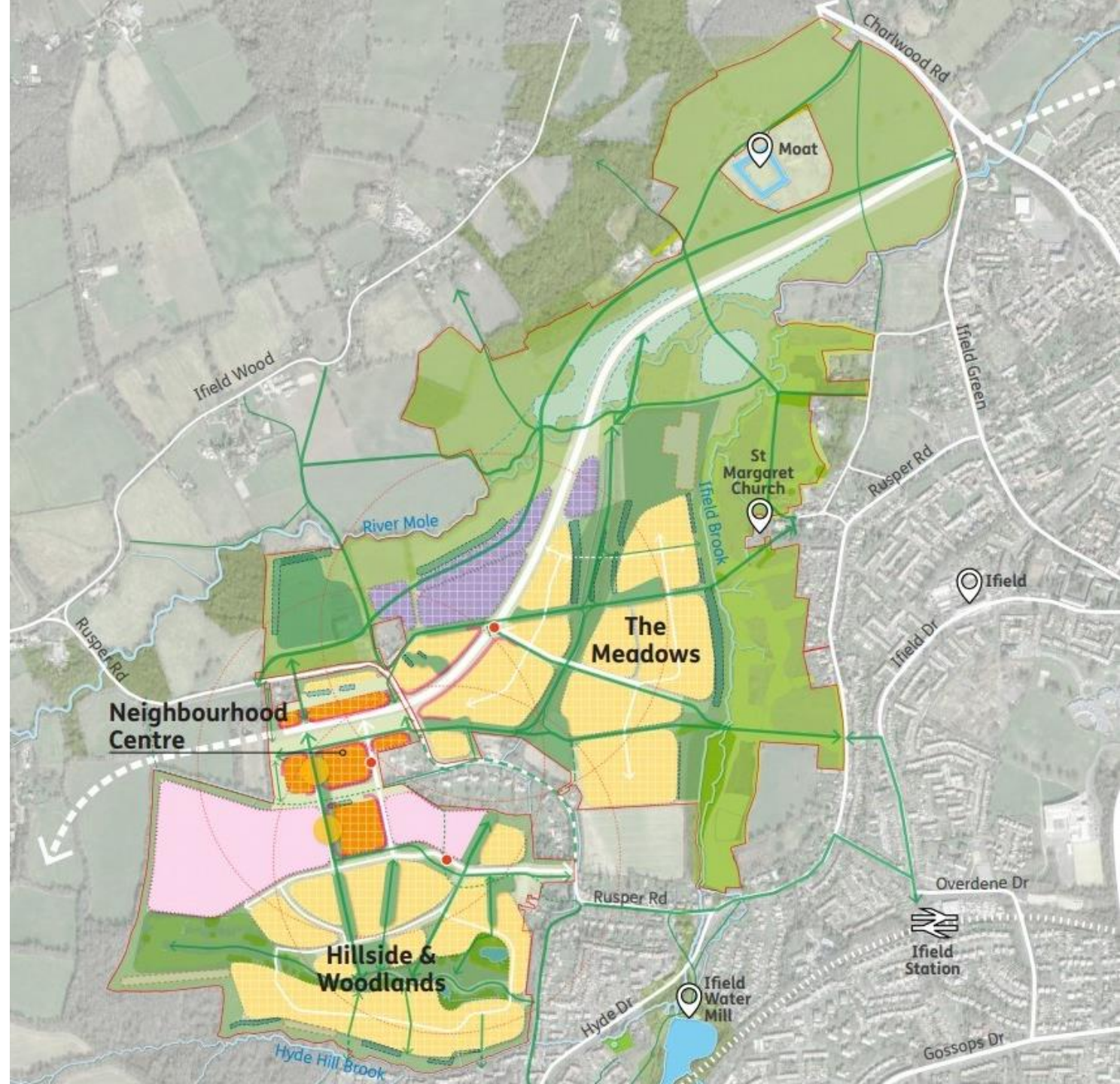
A **new neighbourhood centre** with a range of shops, leisure, and community services/facilities.



Supporting infrastructure including **new schools** and the **first phase of the Crawley Western link**.



**At least 2 hectares** (4.94 acres) of employment area.



## Who responded?



**70** people took part in the live online events and were involved in the workshop sessions.



**2,101 unique visitors** online.



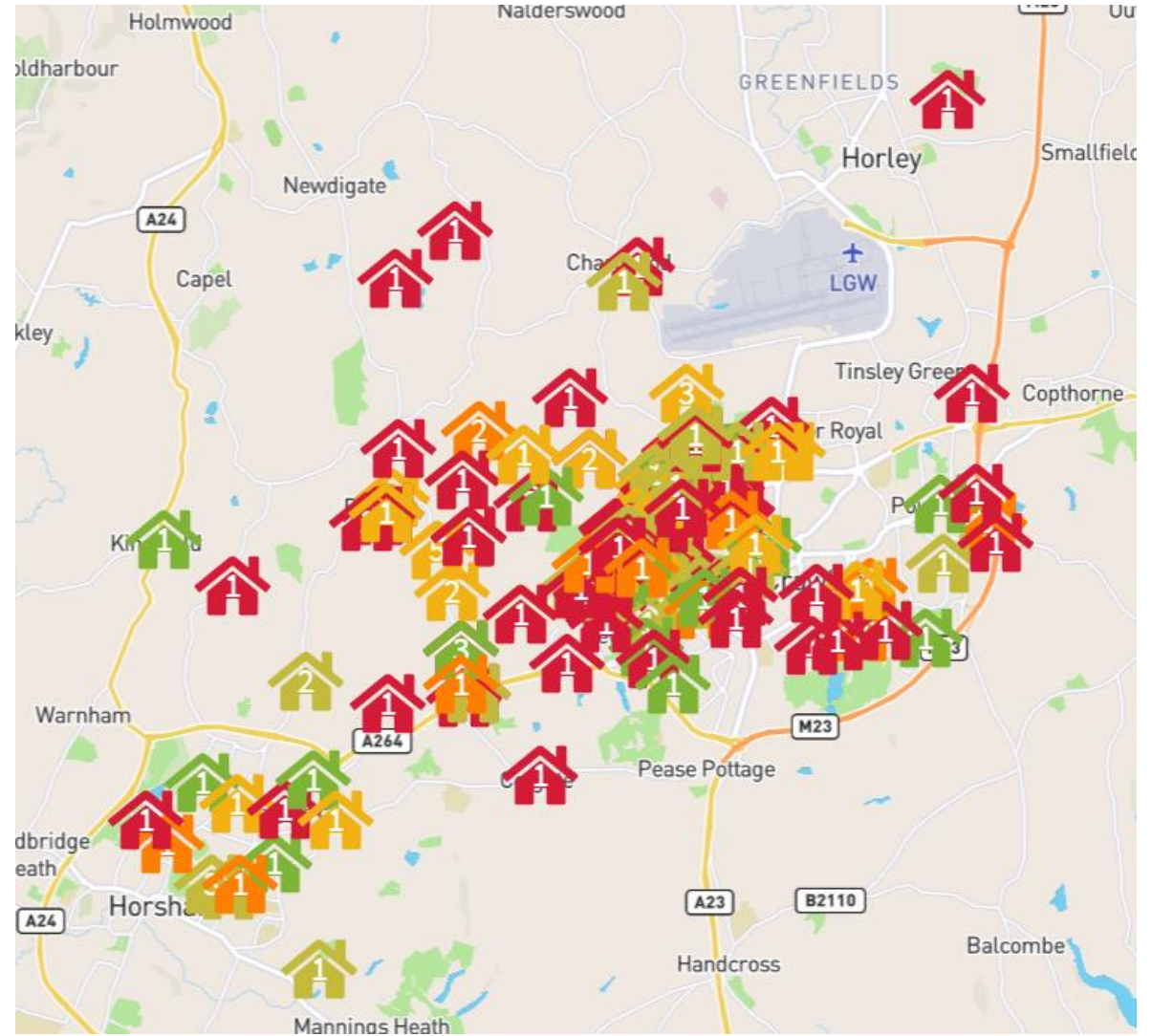
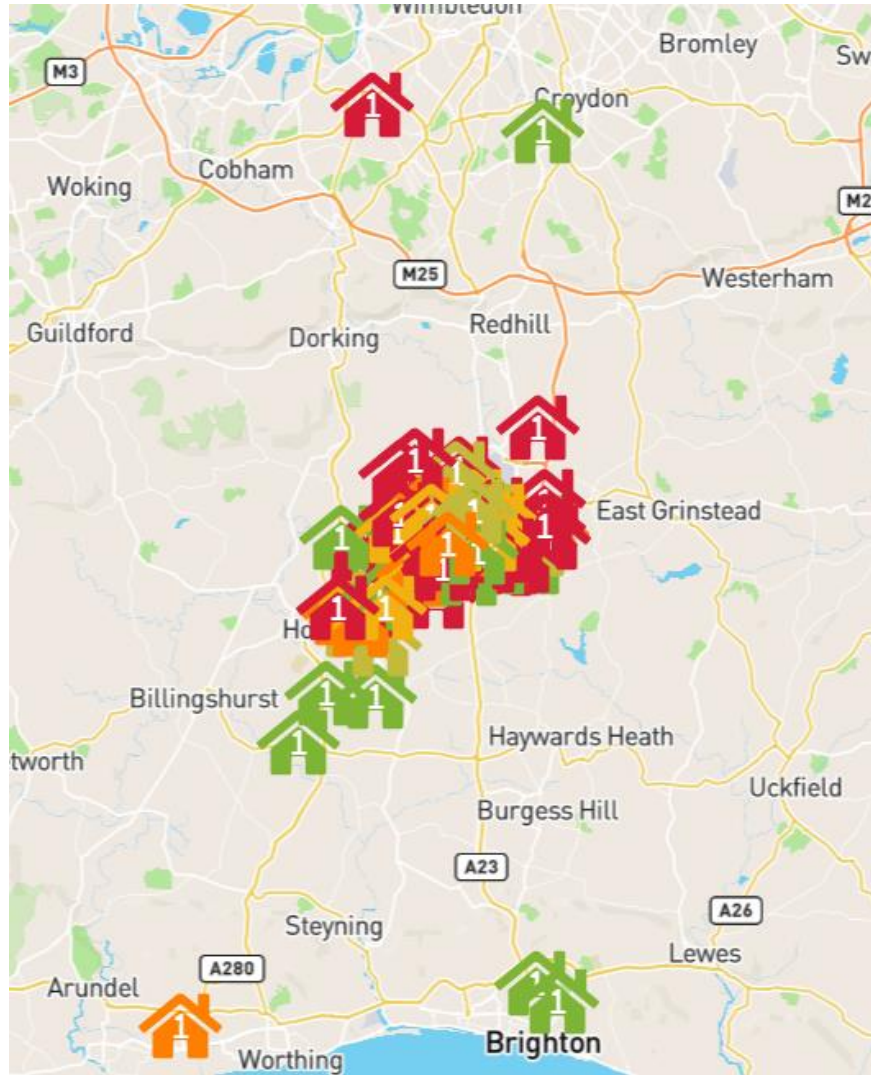
We received **689 comments** online.



We are continuing to have **ongoing conversations** with organisations and stakeholders in the area.



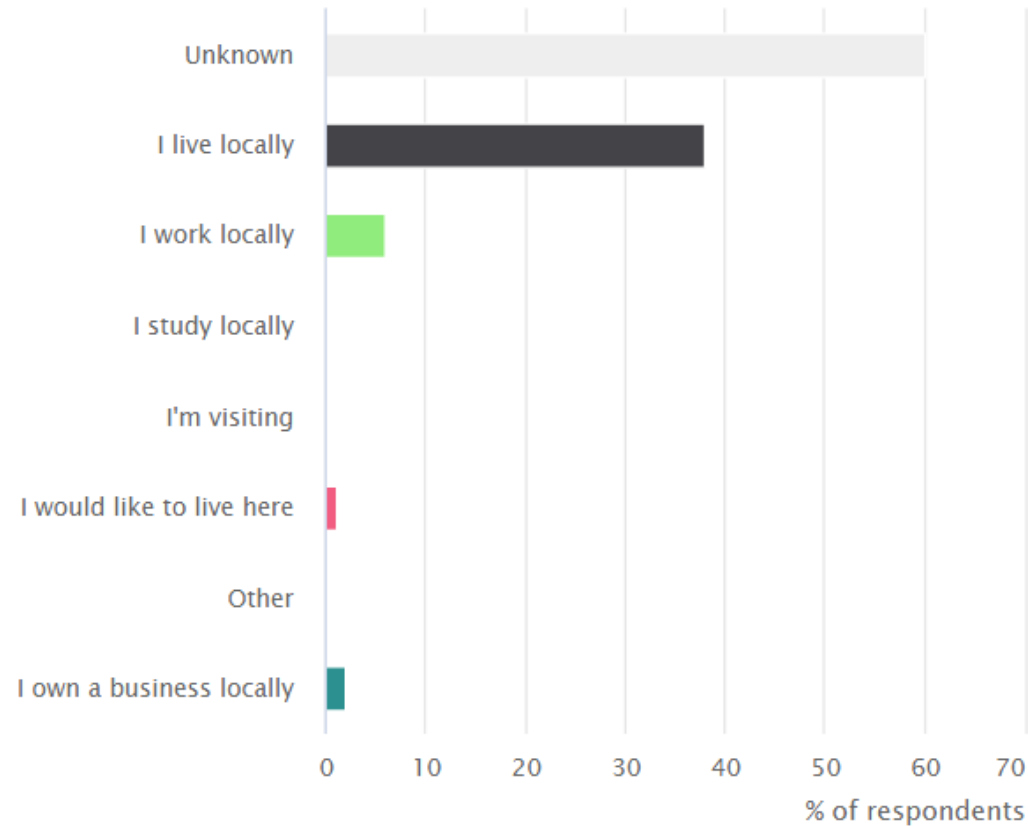
# Who responded?



\*Houses shown on the figure indicates respondents on Commonplace by postcode area and whether comments received were more positive (green), negative (red) or neutral (yellow).

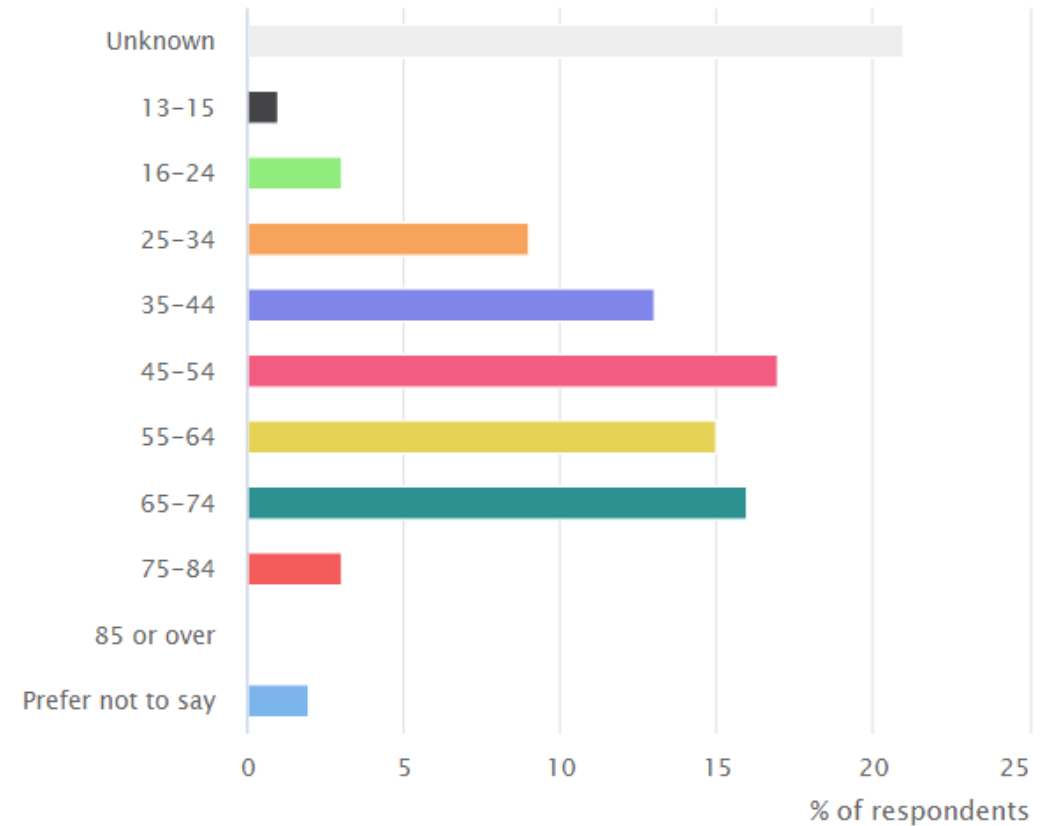
# Who responded?

What is your connection to the area?



- **38%** of respondents identified that they live locally.

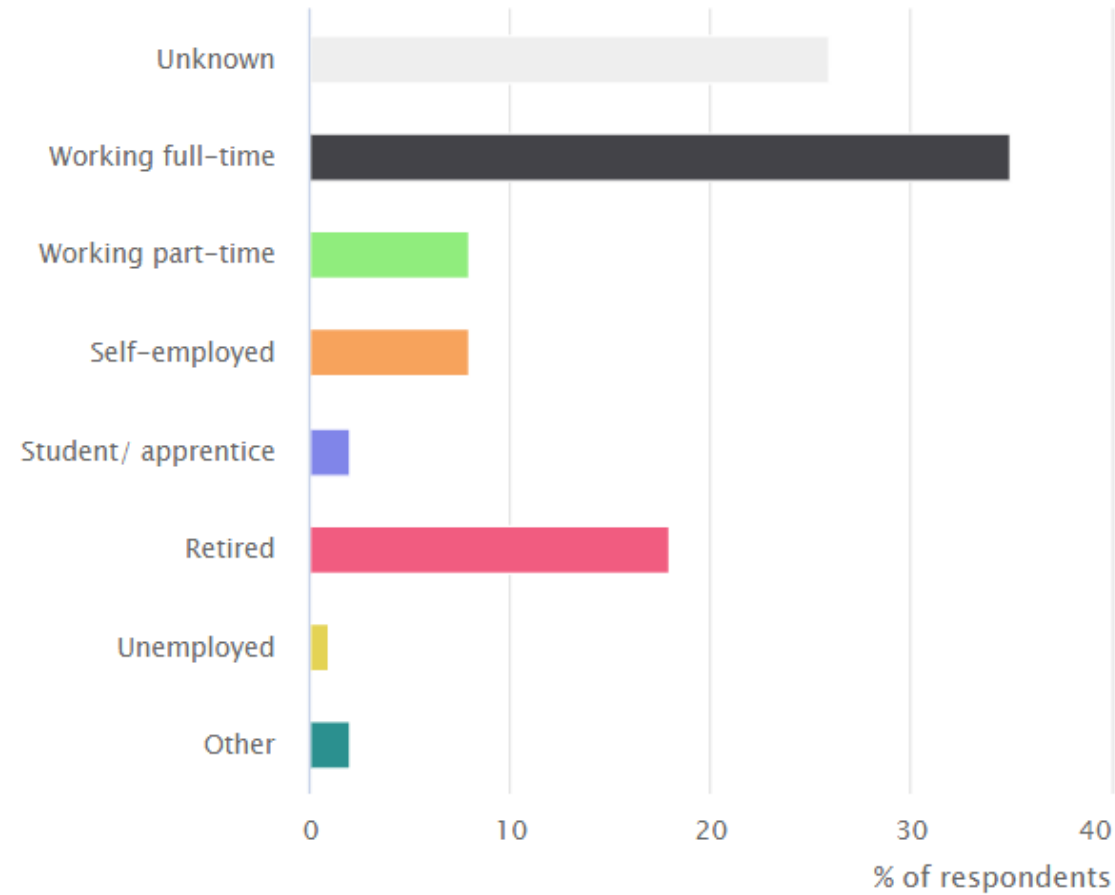
What is your age group?



- The largest age group of respondents was those between the age of **45 and 54**.

# Who responded?

What is your employment status?



- **35%** of respondents identified that they are in full time employment.

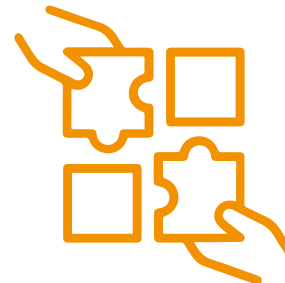
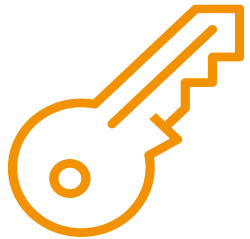
# Your Views

## Your views

The following highlights the key issues raised by you, summarise your feedback and give a selection of comments gathered from the public consultation events and on our website.

We will use this feedback to refine the masterplan ahead of future engagement events with the community.

All feedback and a detailed Q&A document is available on [www.westofifield.co.uk](http://www.westofifield.co.uk)



## Key issues raised: Principle of development

There were many who felt that there was not a need to provide these homes here. Homes England is currently progressing plans for the site through the Horsham District Council Local Plan process which sets out the housing needs for Horsham over the plan period. Once decided this will determine the need for new homes at west of Ifield.

- “I do not feel there is any need for further building in this area as there already have been, and still are, a considerable number of new housing projects being undertaken.”
- The community asked questions about the affordability of the housing. “The other new build estates are overpriced and out of reach of many people. How will these be truly affordable to those on low incomes?”
- “Completely inappropriate in terms of scale, location and demand - expanding into Rusper and Horsham. It should not be viewed as Ifield.”



## Key issues raised: Need for new infrastructure in the community

Respondents were concerned about the impact on nearby community and leisure facilities – especially health and education facilities. Respondents were supportive of new infrastructure being delivered onsite but wanted more certainty on what would be delivered and when.

- “Community facilities are key, cafes, post office, community centres, adventure playground, youth centres, sports clubs and community space.”
- “Where will the water come from? Already Southern Water struggles and often fails to service the existing housing stock.”
- “On the face of it this looks to be a well designed and potentially attractive place to live. However, it is not an island and takes no account of the impact on neighbouring areas.”
- “Home working facilities to support the use of remote working but in community spaces – working spaces adjacent to café facilities.”



## Key issues raised: Loss of open space and habitats

Some respondents felt that the potential loss of open green space from the development of new homes would result in a loss of natural habitats used by the existing wildlife. Respondents identified opportunities to improve and enhance the existing open spaces both to support wildlife and improve recreational activities.

- “Expand the Ifield Brook West area to be a walking recreational area.”
- “Green buffer on western side of Ifield Brook is insufficient to protect the special character of Ifield Meadows. Housing should be much further west.”
- “The Meadows Park should be wider, not just the narrow strip between hedgerows. You should significantly increase the landscape buffer to the west of Ifield Brook to protect character and SNCI status of Ifield Meadows.”
- “The whole area which you have identified for housing between Ifield Brook Meadows and the River Mole could be rewilded. This area has already been identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area and as it is really unsuitable for housing due to flooding in the winter. It would make an ideal wetland habitat.”





## Key issues raised: Transport infrastructure

Respondents believed that the existing public transport infrastructure is not extensive enough to cope with a large influx of new residents, especially the local bus services and Ifield Station. Therefore, new residents will have no choice but to drive on local roads that cannot cope.

- “What developments do you plan for Ifield Station so they can meet the needs of the new community?”
- “Dedicated cycle paths and footpaths within the area and linking into key destinations in Crawley. Same for public transport. Support provision of new railway station in or just west of Kilnwood Vale.”
- “I have great concerns that the ‘Western Link’ road will become a very convenient Northern - Western Crawley bypass and will attract large traffic volumes from the outset.”



## Key issues raised: Wider benefit

Respondents raised concerns that, while the development would be within Horsham land, the residents would use Crawley services. They were worried about what benefits the Crawley community would get as a result of the scheme.

- “Nice to see three different areas. It’s interesting to see more variety.”
- “Provide affordable/social homes for Crawley residents, as this neighbourhood is going to become part of Crawley.”
- “The housing is Horsham’s but in the Crawley area meaning the impact will be miles from other areas of Horsham.”
- “The impact on roads, a small station, routes in and out of the area will be significant as well as the fact Crawley/Horsham does not have a local hospital! Puts pressure on Crawley resources when it's a Horsham development.”



## Key issues raised: Impact of Covid-19

Many felt that, because the original intentions for the plans were partly as a result of the growing economy in the Gatwick Diamond, the plans were no longer needed as Gatwick Airport has taken a hit during the coronavirus pandemic. Respondents felt that it was important for local jobs to support local people and reflect the skills in the area.

- “It’s hard to see the 'need' for new housing in the midst of a pandemic where unemployment is high....”
- “Manor Royal is struggling post pandemic and you’re suggesting building more industrial/business areas. The world has changed, people are working from home. This would be better if just left to open green space.”
- “I think the housing needs of the Crawley area should be reassessed in the light of the downturn at Gatwick and the longer-term effect of reduced air travel required in order to meet climate change obligations.”



## Key issues raised: Flood risk

Respondents identified that the area floods regularly and that certain roads around the site can become waterlogged in the winter months. Respondents were supportive of sustainable drainage and measures that reduce pressure on water supply.

- “Urbanisation here will only serve to increase flooding, and simply push the problem downstream.”
- “In the winter months the fields adjacent to the river Mole and Ifield Brook and the ditches that run through the fields are often saturated with water for weeks.”
- “I think the SuDs is a good plan.”
- “Have you considered water reuse or recycling systems?”
- “I would try to put in place a minimum water flow which Gatwick have to adhere to. This means that if they fail to provide this level of drainage you/we have something to enforce it with.”



## Key issues raised: Impact on the existing road network

Respondents felt that the existing roads surrounding the site would not be able to cope with the increased number of cars resulting from the development. A number of respondents were concerned about the impact on Rusper Road both during construction and new residents accessing the development.

- “Current public transport is poor and expensive.”
- “What sort of cycle lanes are you considering?”
- “Providing just part of a link road is pointless - the whole route needs to be provided at an early stage or all the traffic will still come into Crawley impacting on local residents.”
- “The proportion of the estate traffic to and from Westerly or Southerly directions is likely to be significant and therefore the volume of traffic to and from these directions will be huge.”



# Next Steps

## Next Steps

- You can view our Frequently Asked Questions document which answers many of the most frequent questions raised during the second series of online engagement events [here](#).
- We will be continuing to engage in the Local Plan process to ensure that the scheme responds to local needs and emerging policies.
- Later this year we will be hosting a third round of engagement covering our final plans for the site.



