



Homes
England

Making homes happen

West of Ifield – Responding to your questions

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Planning Process.....	4
New Homes	6
Environment.....	9
Flooding & Water.....	11
Movement & Transport.....	12
Infrastructure.....	14
Consultation	16

Introduction

Since launching the engagement on the plans for West of Ifield in January 2020 Homes England has organised three series of events to inform the community of the plans whilst also progressing the proposals through the Horsham District Council Local Plan process.

These events were hosted in **January 2020, December 2020** and **March 2021**.

This document is a summary of all the questions raised during the events and will be periodically updated with more detail and information as it becomes available.

Homes England is committed to engaging with the community and will continue to consult with local residents and stakeholders prior to the submission of a planning application for the site. Community engagement is a vital part of this process, and we hope that this document has the answers to any questions you have.

If you have any further questions regarding the development or any queries about the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact us:

- **Telephone:** 07735 136371
- **Email:** westofifield@homesengland.gov.uk
- **Website:** www.westofifield.gov.uk

Planning Process

1. Why is Horsham District the planning authority and how will you ensure that Crawley is not disadvantaged?

Most of the site is located within Horsham and they will be the determining authority for the scheme. We recognise that by being located on the border between Horsham and Crawley the potential impacts, both positive and negative, from any development west of Ifield will affect Crawley as well as Horsham residents – especially in relation to highway impacts and access to local services.

That is why we have planned the draft masterplan to be the best it can be, irrespective of administrative boundaries. As an extension to Crawley, we have ensured that many of the successes of Crawley – including the Fastway bus services and neighbourhood principles form part of the structuring principles of the scheme as well as embedding opportunities (such as the early delivery of a new secondary school), improved access to large areas of open space and improvements to the wider walking, cycling and public transport network that will benefit existing communities within Crawley as much as future residents.

To ensure that services can accommodate the additional development, we are providing a new neighbourhood centre which will accommodate the day to day needs of future residents, meaning that their reliance on existing services will be minimal. Through engagement with service providers and from the feedback we have received as part of this consultation, we are continuing to refine the services and facilities that will be provided as part of the new centre.

Our consultations have been advertised to both Crawley and Horsham residents so that we can understand the full range of concerns and opportunities associated with our plans. As part of our pre-application engagement, we are speaking to officers and local Members from both Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council in relation to our emerging proposal, so that we can understand the issues and potential opportunities for both authority areas. It is our intention to continue to engage both authorities, and West Sussex County Council, throughout the planning and delivery stages.

As landowner and promoter, we do not have control over how council tax is collected or spent and this remains the decision of the local authorities. Should the west of Ifield be identified as a preferred allocation within the Horsham Local Plan, we will champion strong governance arrangements that involve both authorities and ensure that opportunities arising from the development and through its legacy are understood.

2. The site does not have planning permission. Why have you bought the site and why are you consulting on your plans?

At this stage we are promoting the site as part of the Horsham Local Plan. Any decision as to whether the site is suitable for development will be taken by the local authority and tested independently at a Public Examination. As part of this process, should the west of Ifield be allocated for development by Horsham District Council, there will be a need to demonstrate that the scheme meets the relevant legal tests and is consistent with national policy. The Local Plan process allows for those who wish to comment on the proposed development and whether it is needed to do so.

Alongside the Local Plan, it is our intention (if supported by the local authority) to submit an outline planning application later in 2021. Our outline application will allow us to provide more detail about the scheme, including what the site will look like, how it will be delivered and provide greater certainty to the local community about what will happen. Horsham Council will hold their own statutory public consultation which will give residents another opportunity to submit comments on our proposals directly. The Council will have to consider all comments before making a recommendation on the plans which will be determined by Horsham District Council Planning Committee.

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This is the same process as any other landowner, promoter or developer.

We believe that Ifield best meets the housing needs locally and can deliver sustainable development and provide significant benefits to both existing and future residents. The purchase of Ifield Golf Club is part of our wider ambition to demonstrate a commitment to long term investment in Horsham and Crawley and ensure that we can deliver much needed housing at the earliest opportunity.

3. The Government has stated that development must be on brownfield sites and not greenfield sites. Why is this therefore going ahead then, and why aren't funds being invested in the many areas in and around Crawley that would benefit from improving run down brownfield sites?

All local authorities are required to identify how housing needs can be met as part of the preparation of a Local Plan. The final decision on which sites to allocate and are suitable for housing will be taken in line with national planning policy. This does not preclude the use of non-brownfield sites if it can be demonstrated that this is necessary.

There is an identified need for more housing across Horsham and Crawley – which cannot necessarily be met wholly within brownfield sites. We consider that while not a brownfield site, development west of Ifield provides an unrivalled opportunity to meet housing needs in a sustainable location in a way that can ensure that at least 50% of the site can be retained as open space and delivers a biodiversity net gain.

4. Will the housing go towards Horsham or Crawley housing targets?

It is for local authorities to decide how they meet housing needs across the wider housing market area as part of their Duty to co-operate. As the Local Planning Authority, Horsham will determine what needs will be met through the scheme, however the site is well located to meet the needs of both Horsham and Crawley. We are working with both local authorities to understand how the benefits of the scheme can be shared.

5. Trenches were dug in the field at the back of Ifield. What were they for?

The trial trenching programme establishes whether there are archaeological features underground which we would need to consider in our plans - either as sites to record, design around or preserve. These works will help us get to know the area and its history in more detail and will help with development of the draft masterplan for the site – ensuring that we do not impact on heritage assets.

If there are any significant finds during the trenching exercise, we will be sure to update the community and record them in accordance with Historic England and local authority requirements.

6. Will the homes delivered in the first phase need to use Rusper Road?

The emphasis of the draft masterplan is to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on private vehicles. However, we also recognise that road access will remain important to allow for wider connectivity and for those visiting or servicing the site.

To manage additional cars and construction vehicles on the local road network, we are committed to delivering the first phase of the Crawley Western Link as early as possible and expect this to be built alongside the first homes and first part of the neighbourhood centre. Before this is completed there may be a need for some traffic to access the site via the existing road network, however this will be kept to a minimum and be tested as part of a detailed Transport Assessment to ensure potential impacts are fully understood.

7. How set in stone are the boundaries of the site?

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The boundary for the west of Ifield has been largely set and reflect Homes England's land ownership. There are likely to be some minor changes as we develop further technical information.

8. Is Homes England the old commission for new towns?

Homes England was formed as the Government's housing accelerator, to help unlock sites which had been stalled. In Crawley we inherited land originally owned by the Crawley Development Corporation, set up to build Crawley in 1947.

9. What will Homes England do if the site is not included in the Horsham Local Plan?

Homes England will consider how best to take forward the scheme based on the outcome of the Horsham Local Plan.

10. Has Homes England ever had any proposals rejected?

Homes England has a track record of delivering high quality homes and sustainable places across the country. Planning permission has been granted for 3,000 new homes north of Burgess Hill by Mid Sussex District Council – Northern Arc. Work has started and will include extra care housing, sports and healthcare facilities, a business park, two primary schools and a secondary school alongside 82 hectares of green space.

Homes England has also seen success in bringing forward new homes for the community in construction of the first phase of the Northstowe development in Cambridgeshire. The first 350 homes have been built and the first school has now opened. So far, we have been successful in gaining planning consent on many of our major projects.

Working in partnership with local authorities, delivery partners and engaging the local community early, we are proactive in developing our plans so that they meet the necessary tests and are supported.

11. Will Horsham Council have control of the area, the schools, the green space etc?

Our draft masterplan will provide a number of important new community facilities and spaces which will benefit existing and future residents, including parks, open spaces and community facilities like halls and squares.

To ensure these facilities are managed sustainably, meet the needs of the community and continue to provide for future generations, it is important that the correct stewardship and management arrangements are put in place from the outset.

Working with local stakeholders and following feedback from our last consultation we are now considering a range of stewardship and management options which range from community trusts managed by residents, adoption by the local council, to management companies and partnerships with existing organisations or local groups. Final decisions on stewardship arrangements will need to meet the needs of residents and will depend on the final facilities incorporated as part of the development.

New Homes

1. How will you ensure the new homes are affordable, and what do you mean by affordable?

As the Government's Housing Agency, we are here to deliver opportunities for people not only to own their own home but also to start on the housing ladder in an affordable home.

Affordable housing are homes that are available to buy or rent below market values. There is no set price for affordable homes and there are a number of different affordable home products that will help many people access housing who might otherwise not be able to do so.

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Affordable housing needs are identified in the North West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019) which covers Horsham, Crawley and Mid Sussex. The exact requirements will be confirmed by Horsham District Council through the preparation of their Local Plan Review and reviewed at each stage of the development.

Different affordable housing types include social rented housing, shared ownership, affordable rent and new products such as the recently announced First Homes. We will work with a range of providers to ensure the widest range of different affordable housing types are provided within the site to ensure as many local people as possible have access to the new homes.

2. How much social housing will be available, and will Crawley be able to use that housing for people on their homeless list?

West of Ifield is an opportunity to deliver up to 3,250 new homes for the residents of Horsham and Crawley. The proposals include 35% affordable homes in compliance with Horsham's planning policy – which could include social rented homes.

There are examples locally of where Horsham and Crawley have worked together to ensure a proportion of affordable housing within Horsham is made available to Crawley residents and there will be opportunities for a similar approach to be taken at west of Ifield. Any final decision will sit with the local authorities rather than Homes England.

3. We have seen many developments throughout the South East where homes are clearly aimed at large-portfolio landlords. What assurances can you give that developers will build suitable homes for local demographics and what proportion of homes will be aimed at the buy-to-let market?

We will be delivering a policy compliant scheme that responds to the most up to date evidence on local housing need and meet the local authorities' ambitions in terms of the projected growth for the area and the types of houses that are required.

We are working closely with both Horsham and Crawley Council to identify the housing requirements for the area and ensure that it is suitable and available for local people.

4. Is there allowance or compensation for neighbours bordering the development disrupted during the construction of the development?

We will not provide compensation to neighbours bordering the development during construction. We are considering detailed construction phasing to ensure that impacts are kept to a minimum and are committed to preparing a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) which will set out the standards and procedures to which a developer or contractor must adhere in order to manage the potential environmental impacts of construction works.

As part of the planning application, construction impacts will be fully considered and if necessary, mitigation will be implemented to ensure that any potential impacts on nearby properties are minimised.

5. National Planning Policy requires existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless it can be demonstrated it is surplus and provision can be made elsewhere. Are Homes England saying that Ifield Golf Club is surplus to requirements? If so, what provisions are being made to replace with equivalent or better facilities?

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In demonstrating that the land to the west of Ifield is suitable for development, it will be necessary for us to show that relevant national policy requirements can be met. Although we recognise that Ifield Golf Course has been used by members for many years, we do consider that the necessary policy tests can be met and we will publish further evidence through the planning process.

We are continuing to review the availability of alternative facilities in the area, in consultation with the relevant governing bodies, and believe that there is a sufficient supply of courses to meet demand. We will submit this evidence as part of any future application based on the situation at that time.

It is not possible to retain Ifield Golf Course, but as part of our proposals for 3,250 homes as part of a new neighbourhood to the west of Ifield, we will be able to provide a wide range of community facilities and an increase in new sports facilities available for the whole community.

6. It is apparent that this government's plans for changing the national planning system and building more houses in the South East are now discredited and in urgent need of revision. Are Homes England prepared to review / revise their plans for building c10,000 new homes on land west of Ifield in the light of this? And why does Homes England continue to concentrate on building in the most expensive areas of the UK?

Horsham District Council and Crawley Borough Council must meet the housing targets identified through their Local Plans. With the population of West Sussex forecast to grow by 20.4% over the next 20 years, current evidence demonstrates the need for Crawley to deliver 15,040 new homes by 2039 and Horsham to deliver 19,300 homes by the same year. These figures are listed as projections in the North West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (November 2019) and can be found [here](#).

This means that this area is subject to acute housing need – something which is reflected in rapidly increasing house prices which can leave local families unable to stay in the area. According to the North West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment median house prices in Crawley in 2018 stood at £295,000 with Horsham prices at £380,000, these prices represent 9.1 times and 13.9 times the level of earnings in Crawley and Horsham respectively.

Homes England's plans for up to 3,250 homes at west of Ifield is one of the potential sites which could help the local authorities meet their local housing requirements and reduce the housing pressure in the South East.

In finalising their Local Plans, the local authorities will need to take account of wider influences on housing need – including the impact of COVID and any change in market signals. The overall need for housing is a central part of the Local Plan and will be subject to independent examination.

7. What will the site be called?

We have not yet come to the point where we will be choosing a name for the site. It is likely that this will form a key part of our final consultation where we will open this up to the community for suggestions on a name for the new community.

8. What environmental standards are you intending to hold the builders to?

There are a wide range of environmental standards that need to be met through the development. These are continuously evolving and as a minimum we will ensure that our delivery partners meet the nationally prescribed standards. In bringing forward the scheme we will continue to explore opportunities for exceeding these targets and will ensure that our plans are flexible enough to support new and innovative approaches.

9. Will there be any buffering between the current homes and the construction of new homes?

The draft masterplan has been developed in consultation with members of the local community and areas of concern have been noted. We are reviewing the comments from the most recent consultation and will ensure the layout of the masterplan can avoid significant impacts on existing properties. Further detail on the exact location and siting of the new homes within the masterplan will be informed by supporting design guidance and subject to further detailed design and consultation at a later date.

10. Does the current plan for 3,250 new homes represent a scaling back of the original proposal to build 10,000 homes, or does the lower figure represent an initial phase of a longer-term project?

The land west of Ifield is being promoted for up to 3,250 homes as part of the Horsham Local Plan to deliver housing need for the next 15 years. Alongside this, the site has been identified as having the potential to form part of a wider growth opportunity area to the West of Crawley that could be delivered over a longer time frame.

We are accelerating our plans for the 3,250 homes west of Ifield to provide certainty to residents about what the site will be, how it will benefit local communities as part of this Local Plan and to bring forward a planning application as early as possible in our role as the government's housing accelerator.

Environment

1. Why is "urban sprawl", which damages the environment (loss of green space, impact to local flora & fauna, flood risk) being considered rather than town centre regeneration?

Homes England supports a wide range of initiatives to get homes built where they are most needed which includes investment that unlocks and brings forward new homes across England. This included supporting brownfield schemes as well as more strategic opportunities on land like the west of Ifield.

All local authorities are required to identify how housing needs can be met as part of the preparation of a Local Plan. There is an identified need for more housing across Horsham and Crawley – which cannot necessarily be met wholly within brownfield sites.

We consider that while not a brownfield site, development west of Ifield provides an unrivalled opportunity to meet housing needs in a sustainable location in a way that can ensure that at least 50% of the site can be retained as open space and delivers a biodiversity net gain.

Indirectly, the strategic location of west of Ifield can help support further town centre regeneration by bringing additional investment and connectivity and therefore is complementary to the existing town centre strategies – for example, the Crawley Town Centre Regeneration Programme as well as provide opportunities to support the objectives of local COVID recovery plans.

Crawley Town Centre Regeneration Programme [here](#)

South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) [here](#)

2. What is meant by, and how you will achieve "10% biodiversity net gain" by replacing hedgerows, trees etc with concrete? How will you increase biodiversity by 50%?

A biodiversity net gain means ensuring there is more nature on site after development than before. This requires an assessment of the current biodiversity value of a site in its existing pre-development condition, then the value post-development. A 10% biodiversity net gain requires a 10% improvement in biodiversity value over the existing

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situation following the development. This is determined by an independent Natural England biodiversity calculation tool.

We appreciate that the idea of developing a site may appear counter intuitive to improving biodiversity value. However, a site such as west of Ifield comprises a wide mix of greater and lesser areas of biodiversity value. The areas of lesser value such as simple, species-poor grassland can be enhanced and improved by habitat management to develop into a species-rich grassland with far greater biodiversity benefits. Further enhancement measures could include creating new ponds, woodland, wetland areas or a whole variety of different habitats. This is the method used to 'balance' the biodiversity loss from proposed buildings and roads on-site.

The approach to biodiversity 10% net gain will be agreed with relevant ecological groups and supported by a long-term habitat management plan. You can read more about our biodiversity approach [here](#).

3. How will you protect existing wildlife on site?

The existing habitats that support a range of local wildlife will be protected and enhanced as part of our plans. We have undertaken a significant number of detailed ecological surveys, protected species surveys and habitat surveys to understand what wildlife uses the sites and the important habitats that need to be protected or provided for within our plans.

From these surveys we know that there are areas of low biodiversity value on site including cropped areas and agricultural areas. Our aim is to ensure that these areas of low value are predominantly where the new homes will be built subject to planning permission and that any existing habitats and connectivity between habitat (e.g., hedgerows) are retained.

We will also be carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the planning process to look at the impacts of the development on site, predict what would happen if the site was to be developed and how mitigation can be put in place to reduce the impact of development where possible. Further details on how we will assess and approach environmental considerations is set out in our EIA Scoping Report.

More detail on any mitigation will be made available as part of the planning application once the surveys have been completed, the full impacts assessed and following further discussion and agreement with the relevant bodies.

4. Are you considering the pollution from Gatwick airport when building near the airport?

We understand the concerns that people have with regards to the site's proximity to Gatwick Airport. We are working with Gatwick Airport, local authorities and other statutory bodies to ensure that the necessary environmental impacts are fully understood and addressed through the design of the scheme. This includes safeguarding against any future potential expansion of the airport, including a new southern runway, at a later point in time.

We are confident that our proposals will ensure that the new neighbourhood at west of Ifield is safe and helps to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Our final proposals will be supported by the necessary environmental surveys and Health Impact Assessments to demonstrate this will be the case. These will be submitted in support of a future planning application.

Potential impacts on air quality at both the construction and occupation stage will be assessed as part of our Environmental Impact Assessment. The assessment will take account of existing conditions as well as impacts from the proposed development. Further information is available in our EIA Scoping Report.

5. What will happen to the public rights of way crossing the land?

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All existing rights of way will be maintained during construction as far as possible. While it may be necessary to temporarily close, limit or divert some of the existing rights of way, we will seek to minimise this and provide alternative provision wherever possible.

As part of our commitment to ensure that at least 50% of the proposed scheme is accessible open space, there will be opportunities for the community to have greater access to the site than is currently possible. It is too early at this stage to determine what type of access arrangements will be in place (for example whether it is rights of way or other permitted access arrangements) as this will depend on the final delivery and management strategy.

Further detail on the long-term management of the open space and publicly accessible areas will be made available as part of the planning process.

6. Why are you building in an area of 'high radon' risk with certain parts of that area within the 3-5% range? Already people looking to buy property in this area are being told in their surveys of the risks involved in buying certain properties, and subsequently putting new buyers off. Where is the benefit to deliberately building further houses in this 'at risk' area?

Radon levels within the proposed development are no greater than the surrounding area. All environmental risks will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and if necessary appropriate mitigation will be implemented.

7. The parks you are planning. Are they going to be parks with car parking spaces or reserved for people nearby to walk to?

The new parks proposed at west of Ifield will be available to all members of the community to enjoy. They will include a range of spaces from more natural country parks to more managed areas and sports pitches.

In line with the overall objectives of the scheme we will ensure that all open spaces are accessible by sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport. As part of our consultation, we have sought views on what a country park should look like and this will inform our thinking on how best to make them accessible to the wider community.

Flooding & Water

1. The area is a known area of flood risk. Is this informing your plans?

Flood risk is an important issue. Part of the site is within flood risk areas, but these areas will not be built on and we are discussing with the Environment Agency about the appropriate modelling to ensure we have an up to date understanding of the potential flood risks – including the potential effects from climate change.

As part of the planning process, we will need to pass a number of very strict tests to demonstrate that the allowance we make for flood risk areas considers considerable flood events and do not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The proposals will include a number of flood alleviation and water retention zones in the areas adjacent to the River Mole. These zones will help to reduce existing flood risks by providing overflow space during flood events helping to reduce the existing flood risk and preventing impacts elsewhere – they are designed to drain quickly in line with the requirements of Gatwick Airport.

Any future planning application will be scrutinised independently by the Environmental Agency and West Sussex Council as Lead Local Flood Authority.

2. How are you taking account of water supply issues?

We are actively working with utility providers – including Southern Water, to ensure the necessary infrastructure can be provided.

To help ensure there is sufficient water supply we will include a number of sustainability measures within our plans to reduce the water consumption and maximise its reuse wherever possible. Potential measures currently being considered include:

- Water efficiency measures combined with household education to improve water use. Water efficiency measures could include water efficient fittings such as taps, dual flush toilets, low flow shower heads and efficient washing machines.
- Using rainwater harvesting systems to provide water for domestic use. Rainwater can be used for non-drinking needs such as toilet flushing and gardening.
- Using 'grey water' recycling systems for water. This is water generated from domestic processes such as washing dishes, laundry and bathing.

Further detail on the preferred solution will be set out in the planning application as part of our wider sustainability commitments.

3. You talk about an urban drainage system. What is that?

Within the built area, there will be a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (called SUDS). These will include a network of green spaces and naturalised drainage channels, known as swales, that will become a defining feature of the area. These will be designed to reduce the rate of surface water runoff to that expected from the non-developed areas and will be designed with sufficient capacity to allow for any impacts of climate change.

Movement & Transport

1. Please inform us of the transport infrastructure proposals and your plans regarding the Western Link?

Our overall transport strategy is based on reducing the overall reliance on the car and promoting the use of sustainable transport modes. Our approach will seek to reduce the need to travel by providing not just homes but the infrastructure necessary to live including new schools and shops.

Our intention as a Government Housing Agency is to ensure that enabling infrastructure is delivered as early as possible in the development process to make sure that the impact of new development is appropriately mitigated.

Where people do need to travel, we want to ensure that they have a choice to use sustainable transport modes including walking, cycling, the use of public transport or newer methods of travel such as e-bikes or e-hire scooters.

Where this is not possible, we will accommodate for the use of cars. Through the design of the scheme, we will be enabling a section of the Western Link to be delivered as shown on our draft masterplan. Our current proposals are to deliver the first phase of the Crawley Western Link, designed so that it can be extended over time.

The local authorities have undertaken strategic modelling looking at the need for a full link road in this area, while our transport assessment, informed by technical modelling, will look at the impact of the site and the wider area and will inform the extent of the Western Link, when it will be built and whether a wider suite of offsite highway measures is required to address the impact of the development.

2. What will the role of Ifield station be? How will you ensure that it is fit for purpose?

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By delivering a new sustainable neighbourhood, we are not trying to encourage a significant level of commuting out of the development and want to ensure that people can access day to day services within the development as much as possible – for example by providing the necessary facilities to live and work on site.

We understand that there will be people who will travel to Ifield Station. To ensure that this has a minimal impact on the existing road network we will encourage those who need to travel to use sustainable methods such as walking, cycling and public transport. We are in discussions with the local authorities and transport providers to identify potential improvements where these are necessary.

3. Existing roads already suffer with congestion, the impact of new development will be significant and the impact of construction traffic will be immediate.

By delivering a new sustainable neighbourhood, we are not trying to encourage a significant level of car use from the development and want to ensure that people can access day to day services within the development as much as possible – for example by providing the necessary facilities to live and work on site together with high quality provision for sustainable transport modes. This will include segregated and integrated cycle provision as well as allowing for new emerging technologies. We will also ensure that the design of the new neighbourhoods encourages a reduction in car use – such as designing residential areas that reduces the importance of the car and makes it easier to access facilities by alternative travel modes.

Access to the site is being developed as part of the emerging masterplan and informed by detailed transport modelling. To understand potential highway impacts and ensure that these are addressed, we will test the potential impact of the development on the highway network as part of our detailed transport modelling and transport assessment. This will be for both the construction and operation stage and we will use the delivery of new infrastructure – such as part of the Western Link – to provide alternative construction access. Where necessary we will also support offsite improvements.

Further information will be made available as we continue to develop our proposals through 2021.

4. It looks like you are making part of Rusper Road a pedestrian/cycle route only. What sort of cycle lanes are you considering?

The draft masterplan provides an integrated and connected network of pedestrian and cycle links that provide safe access to key destinations within the surrounding area.

At the heart of the network is a green spine route running north to south and an east to west pedestrian and cycle route connecting directly into Ifield station via Rusper Road which will have restrictions on through traffic. We are also looking to include a bus gate which would restrict Rusper Road being used as a rat run. We are currently in the process of working out the details of these proposals.

Our cycle lanes will be designed in accordance with national design standards and we are considering a range of different options for cycle lanes which include entirely segregated lanes, informally segregated lanes using road markings and quiet streets. Different options will be deployed according to the type of road and route and will be detailed in the Transport Assessment.

5. Will existing access be maintained or will there be changes to the current road network?

The delivery of a new link road and focus on sustainable transport modes, presents an opportunity to ensure traffic is routed in a way which has the least impact on the existing road network. A number of options are being considered

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to ensure that all future traffic uses the Crawley Western Link to access the site alongside opportunities to address current issues on the network.

Further detail on the proposed highways access will be presented as part of a future planning application.

6. What does an integrated public transport hub mean?

An integrated transport hub combines bus stops with real time information boards, secure bike / scooter parking, bike servicing facilities and pedestrian routes. These will be used to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Examples can be found [here](#).

Infrastructure

Working

1. What jobs will be created?

Any development of this size will be designed to provide opportunities for new jobs on site. This will include not only the construction jobs creating the development of the site but will also see the creation of new areas of employment on site that can be enjoyed by both new and existing residents.

The site is strategically located at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond, with strong links to existing employment centres such as Manor Royal, Gatwick Airport, Horsham and Crawley Town Centre and the proposed neighbourhoods are well placed to help support the future growth of these areas. We will work with the Coast to Capital LEP, major employers and local economic development teams to ensure the opportunities are realised.

Within the new neighbourhood, there will be opportunities to accommodate a range of jobs close to the new homes, including those in schools, shops and community facilities as well as dedicated employment areas. There will be a wide range of jobs created for flexible working to support modern lifestyles, including opportunities for start-ups, smaller businesses and social enterprises.

In terms of the floorspace provided for employment, we are not creating fixed types as we would like the scheme to be flexible to respond to change in economic conditions. We will provide the floor-space but not fix its use so that by the time the scheme is delivered, the right type of employment space can support the need for jobs at that time.

It is therefore not possible at this stage to set out exactly what jobs will be provided, but we will prepare an economic strategy that will ensure that the neighbourhood centre and any dedicated employment areas are sufficiently flexible so that they can respond to future demands.

By building at scale, the development will create many construction jobs over a long-time frame. In line with Homes England's wider objectives to diversify the housing market and promote modern methods of construction, there is also an opportunity to improve skill set of the local construction sector.

2. How will these respond to the impacts of COVID-19?

We are aware of the current economic uncertainty that has arisen because of COVID -19. The impact of COVID-19 and the potential response is a matter for the Local Authorities to consider and we would expect this to be tested in more detail through the preparation of their Local Plans.

However, the strategic importance of the west of Ifield, located at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond, with strong links to existing employment centres such as Manor Royal, Gatwick Airport, Horsham and Crawley Town Centre and

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the proposed neighbourhoods are well placed to help support the future growth of these areas as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

As set out in local COVID recovery plans, the recovery is not just about job creation, but by providing opportunities for new industries to thrive, providing new education and skills opportunities, providing housing and ensuring that well connected employment areas are well placed to grow. By connecting new homes to major employment areas and providing opportunities to improve the knowledge and skills of existing residents, we can help provide confidence to new employers moving into those areas that they have homes for their staff nearby and can confidently invest in the wider Crawley and Horsham areas.

We will continue to work with the Coast to Capital LEP, local economic development and business improvement teams to ensure that the scheme contributes to the wider objectives to allow the area to diversify and provide a number of new opportunities for local and national businesses. Homes England will be undertaking further engagement with local authorities, communities, employers and other interested parties throughout the design and planning process to ensure that the potential to support the COVID recovery is maximised.

Living

1. How will you create vibrant communities and meet the changing needs of society?

By creating a new sustainable community, we will provide a range of community facilities and local services alongside new housing that will help meet the needs of both existing and future residents of all ages. This will either be provided directly within the scheme or secured through Section 106 contributions following discussions with the Local Authorities and other service providers.

At this stage, as with our approach to employment we are ensuring that our plans are flexible enough to accommodate a range of uses that best meet the needs of future and existing residents at the time at which they are built and that enables the neighbourhood centre to evolve over time. While we know what is likely to be required in terms of schools, libraries and other essential community facilities, there is less certainty about leisure and retail facilities and that is why we will make provision for a range of uses that can best meet needs at a future point in time. This is a similar approach to that we are taking in our new community currently being developed at Northstowe, with more information available [here](#).

However, as a new neighbourhood with significant investment in new infrastructure close to established town centres, we believe that long term commitment to creating a new community west of Ifield will provide a certainty to local retailers and businesses that will give them the confidence to invest and help support existing regeneration and investment strategies such as the Crawley Town Centre Regeneration Programme.

Health

1. Are you building new health facilities?

We are aware of the concerns locally around the provision of health facilities and we have committed to make opportunities available to the NHS Commissioning Groups where they are needed. We do not have direct control over the delivery of these facilities so instead we need to work in partnership with the NHS providers to make sure that the space is there for the development of new health care facilities should they feel that these are necessary.

2. You have mentioned that a sports facility is included in the vision. What sports would that support and what scale would it be?

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We are continuing to work with the local authorities and Sports England to understand what the sports needs are in the local area and will identify opportunities for these to be incorporated within the new neighbourhood or by improving existing provision.

Schools

1. What schools will be provided on the site?

Both primary and secondary schools are being provided within the development. There is an existing need for a new secondary school in this part of West Sussex and work on the new school will start in the first phase of development. This will open as soon as possible with a primary school being built shortly afterwards as more homes are completed and occupied.

Consultation

1. What are the next steps around consultation?

Ongoing community engagement is a vital part of shaping our plans. We want to create an environment where everyone can have their say and genuinely inform our future development proposals. We held a series of public engagement events in January 2020 and received feedback from over 500 residents. We have compiled all the responses into a report which highlights what is important to local residents as well as the key concerns and the opportunities to deliver wider benefits through the proposed scheme.

We have recently hosted a second series of engagement events on the plans for west of Ifield which took place in March 2021, as well as hosting an update session in December. We would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation. We are currently collating all the feedback that we have received and will look to update the community on the results of the feedback later this year.

Once a planning application has been submitted, further technical information – including the transport assessment will be available for people who are interested to review and comment on.

If you have further thoughts on how we should engage and involve you and the wider community in our plans for west of Ifield, please get in touch.

If you would like to contact the team for further information, please do not hesitate to email westofifield@homesengland.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can visit our website www.westofifield.co.uk to review all the information that we have published about the scheme.

2. Are the slides from the engagement sessions available to view?

The presentation that we hosted to the community in March 2021 is now available to view on our website. It can be found [here](#).

3. I would like to know how you determined the circulation of your webinar letter and why the letter was not sent to most residential houses in Rusper?

The letter was distributed to immediate neighbours of the site. In addition, the events were advertised and promoted extensively in print and on social media, and we asked Parish Councils to promote the events through their various newsletters to residents.

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4. Has Homes England considered starting the consultation again from scratch looking at the factors of post-Covid-19, Brexit and global warming?

Homes England has undertaken community engagement events both prior and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Homes England will continue to engage with the community in the lead up to the submission of an outline planning application to Horsham District Council.

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If you have any further questions regarding the development or any queries about the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact us:

- **Telephone:** 07735 136371
- **Email:** westofifield@homesengland.gov.uk
- **Website:** www.westofifield.gov.uk

We are still in the early stages of the proposal and as more information and details become available, we will share this with you. As previously stated, community engagement is a vital part of this process and we hope that this document has the answers to any questions you have.

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