



Appendix

Building for Healthy Life Assessment



Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
The proposed Development.....	4
Integrated neighbourhoods.....	6
Distinctive places	8
Streets for All	14

INTRODUCTION

The Document

The purpose of this document is to provide an assessment against the criteria set out in the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) (July 2020) design guide for the Land at West of Ifield, Horsham.

Planning background

The Site and planning application is being brought forward by Homes England in their role as land owner and as the government's housing accelerator.

The Hybrid Planning Application (HPA) and its supporting documents have been assembled in response to Horsham District Council Planning Framework (HDCPF, 2015), and the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan, which form the current statutory development plan for Horsham.

The Site measures approximately 172 hectares, is entirely within the proposed allocation boundary and within the ownership of Homes England. It therefore represents an opportunity to create an exemplary new neighbourhood, catalysing a long-term sustainable extension to Crawley.

Structure of the document

This document has been prepared as part of the HPA and should be read alongside the submitted Design and Access Statement and Design Code.

It outlines the objectives, development principles, and how the scheme aligns with the Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) framework, addressing its 12 key considerations across three main categories.



FIGURE 272 Proposed Development Illustrative Masterplan

Building for a Healthy Life

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is a Design Code to help improve the design of new and growing neighbourhoods.

BHL has been created to allow a broad range of people to use it easily - from members of a local community, local councillors, developers to local authorities - allowing those involved in a proposed new development to focus their thoughts, discussions and efforts on the things that matter most when creating good places to live.

Organised across three headings, 12 considerations are presented to help those involved in new developments to think about the qualities of successful places and how these can be best applied to the individual characteristics of a site and its wider context. These three headings will provide guidance from macro through to micro scale considerations.

INTERGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

- + NATURAL CONNECTIONS
- + WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- + FACILITIES AND SERVICES
- + HOMES FOR EVERYONE

DISTINCTIVE PLACES

- + MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT'S THERE
- + A MEMORABLE CHARACTER
- + WELL DEFINED STREETS AND PLACES
- + EASY TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND

STREET FOR ALL

- + HEALTHY STREETS
- + CYCLE AND CAR PARKING
- + GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE
- + BACK OF PAVEMENT, FRONT OF HOME

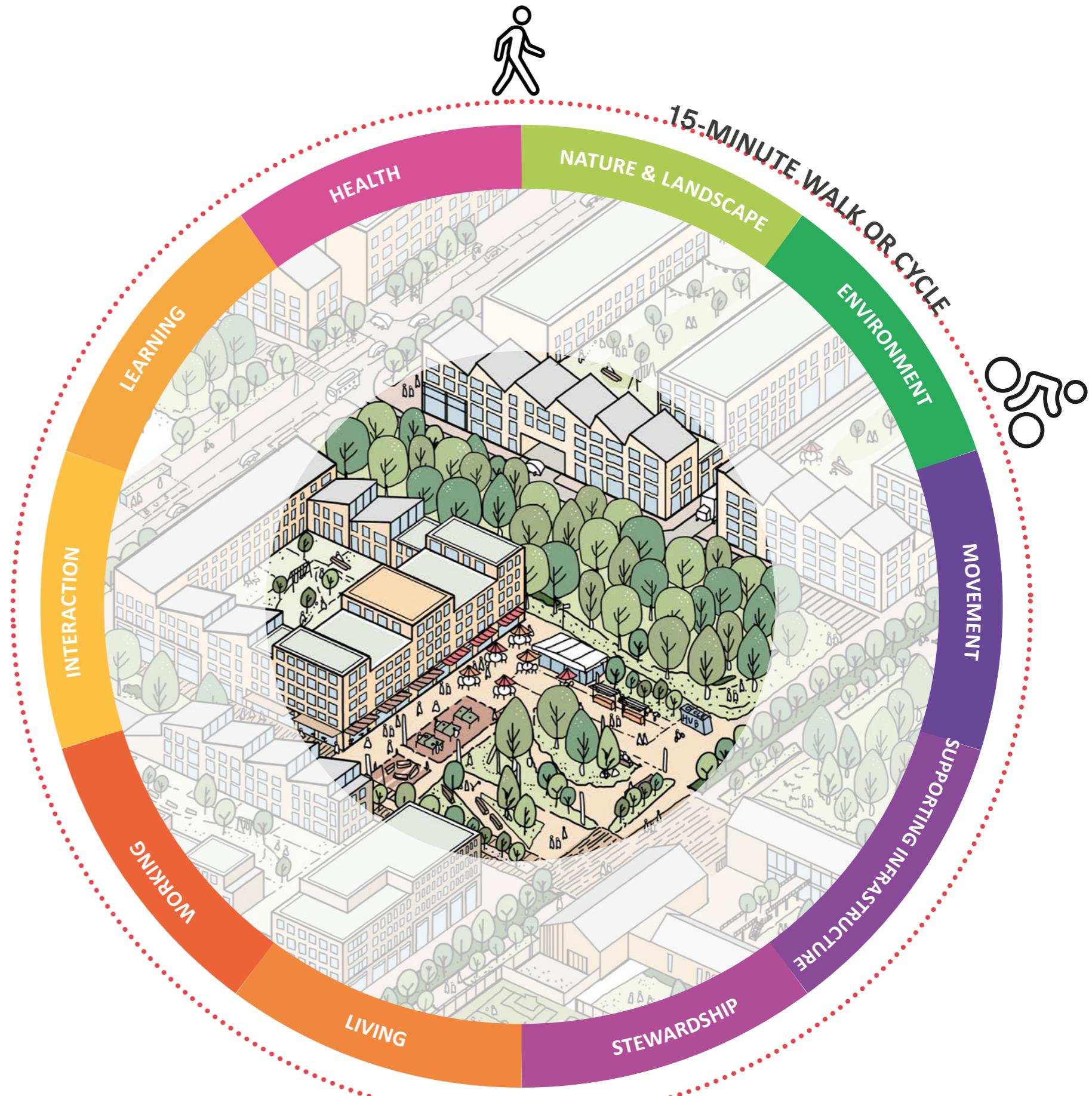
The proposed Development

The Vision for West of Ifield

The Land West of Ifield is strategically positioned to support housing growth and significant economic growth. Crawley is located at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond – an important part of the UK's economy and its emerging Local Industrial Strategies – and is an integral part of the Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Land West of Ifield has the potential to be a new 3,000 home community that is led by the principle of creating a walkable neighbourhood where all local and everyday needs are within a 15-minute walk or cycle ride of your home.

A series of ten themes were identified through the Masterplan process that underpin the vision for West of Ifield. These themes are fully explained opposite but they focus on the creation of a new community formed and defined by the existing landscape, that provides a wide range of housing options, supported by schools, workplaces and a neighbourhood centre for all daily and community needs.



West of Ifield will...



Nature and Landscape

- + Support active healthy lifestyles.
- + Accommodate 50% open space.
- + Support mitigation and adaptation of climate change.
- + Be sensitive to the surrounding rural landscape and communities.
- + Support diverse activities across the development.
- + Connect residents with nature through play & education.



Environment

- + Celebrate, protect, and enhance the value of key ecological and landscape features at the site.
- + Maximise positive and minimise any adverse impacts on the environment.
- + Provide at least 10% net biodiversity net gain.



Movement

- + Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport over car travel.
- + Have streets that allow for a variety of uses, including play.
- + Accommodate new and active forms of transport (e.g. electric scooters and cycles) and anticipate the onset of 'mobility as a service'.
- + Minimise car parking, with the ability to be reduced further over time.
- + Provide routes that allow for easy access to other employment centres and the wider area.



Supporting Infrastructure

- + Have the potential to provide on-site energy generation.
- + Design out unnecessary servicing vehicular movements.
- + Provide high quality digital connectivity for businesses.



Stewardship

- + Consider long-term stewardship and community involvement at every stage.



Living

- + Provide flexible, well-designed homes.
- + Accommodate a range and mix of tenures and typologies.
- + Offer accessible and attractive homes for people who currently live locally as well as further afield.



Working

- + Provide a range of workspaces.
- + Allow for flexible, modern working patterns which support good work-life balance.
- + Promote an economy that complements and supports the growth of Manor Royal, Gatwick, North Horsham and the wider economic area, and is supported by access to mainline rail services.



Interaction

- + Provide opportunities for community interaction, in order to combat social isolation.
- + Accommodate meanwhile uses during development
- + Encourage residents to influence how community spaces develop.
- + Have a strong cultural offering to serve both the community and wider area.
- + Be an inclusive, accessible place that connects with existing communities.



Learning

- + Encourage learning across lifetimes.
- + Establish learning within the community, using schools and other community centres as a place for interaction.



Health

- + Be designed to encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
- + Offer a range of recreational and community facilities to ensure residents are encouraged to stay healthy.

integrated neighbourhoods

NATURAL CONNECTIONS

Create places that are well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.

- + The design ensures a strong relationship between the built and natural environments, blending harmoniously with the rural landscape. Key site features — such as topography, rivers, mature trees, and hedgerows — are preserved and enhanced to shape distinct neighbourhoods that reflect the character of the landscape. These features contribute to a cohesive and context-sensitive development, avoiding the creation of isolated or disconnected spaces.
- + The development incorporates extensive green corridors that extend into the heart of the community, encouraging engagement with nature, strengthening community ties, and supporting biodiversity. Existing landscape features along the southern and eastern boundaries provide natural screening, which will be further enhanced with ecological buffer zones to protect sensitive habitats and minimize visual impact. These measures ensure the Site remains visually and ecologically connected to its surroundings.
- + Retaining and reinforcing existing hedgerows and woodland corridors establishes robust green connections throughout the Site, linking the development to parklands and the wider countryside. Woodland near Hyde Hill will be preserved and enhanced with additional planting, ensuring continuous habitat connectivity and supporting wildlife movement, including for species such as bats.

WALKING, CYCLING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping to improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.

- + The neighbourhood layout places pedestrians and cyclists at the forefront by incorporating multi-use paths that seamlessly link residential areas, parks, and local centres, facilitating sustainable transportation and recreational activities. The alignment of view corridors, green corridors, and movement corridors is carefully planned to create a well-integrated, walkable environment.
- + To maximise pedestrian and cycling opportunities, the development will enhance existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) by integrating them into high-quality open spaces, ensuring safety, accessibility, and community engagement. New pedestrian and cycle paths will be introduced to connect green spaces, residential areas, and key destinations, reinforcing sustainable travel choices. Additionally, a primary pedestrian and cycle route will link the local centre, neighbourhood parks, schools, sports hub, employment areas, and Ifield Station, creating a cohesive and accessible movement network that supports active and sustainable transportation.
- + To foster a 15-minute neighbourhood, the design ensures that all essential services — including schools, workplaces, parks, healthcare facilities, shops, and public transport — are within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from residents' homes. This approach reduces reliance on cars, supports active lifestyles, and improves air quality by encouraging local travel via walking and cycling.
- + At the heart of the transport strategy are three primary mobility hubs (bus stops), strategically positioned along Crawley Western Multi-Modal Corridor (CWMMC) and the Primary Street to provide seamless access to high-quality, frequent bus services. These hubs will be integrated within a well-designed public realm and will feature cycle parking, cycle maintenance stations, and car club vehicles, promoting sustainable and multimodal travel options. In addition, further mobility hubs will be strategically distributed throughout the community. These hubs will enhance flexible, sustainable transport choices, reducing car dependency and improving overall connectivity for residents.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their homes.

- + The local centre is strategically positioned to be easily accessible by all modes of transportation, ensuring equitable access for all residents. Designed as a dynamic neighbourhood hub, it will feature a diverse range of uses, including primary and secondary schools, catering to the educational needs of the community while fostering social interaction and engagement.
- + An employment area will be developed to complement surrounding land use, serving as a key focal point for job opportunities and local economic growth. Conveniently located near the CWMMC and adjacent to the River Valley, it is designed to minimise disruption to residential areas while ensuring seamless connectivity for workers and businesses.
- + A network of green and recreational spaces will provide accessible leisure opportunities within walking and cycling distance. In addition to Ridgeway Park and Meadows Park, which offer walking trails, sports fields, allotments, and playgrounds, the plan includes small pocket parks for relaxation and mid-sized green spaces for social gatherings and picnics, ensuring a variety of outdoor environments for all residents.
- + Several new areas of sports pitches will be delivered as part of the masterplan, to complement the existing provision in the local area. Provision requirements for residents will be met through a mix of artificial / all-weather and grass pitches, alongside MUGAs & tennis courts. This blend of types will allow greater flexibility to suit different sports and conditions.

HOMES FOR EVERYONE

A range of homes that meet local community needs.

- + The Neighbourhood Centre features perimeter blocks of apartments and maisonettes, integrating podium car parking with shared courtyard amenities above and community uses at ground level, fostering an active and engaging streetscape. Near the woodlands, homes are larger in size and arranged more informally, with lower densities that create a stronger connection to nature and a more tranquil living environment. In the Meadows Area, a formal grid layout defines the neighbourhood, with terraced and semi-detached houses contributing to a well-structured and cohesive residential setting. This diverse mix of housing typologies ensures a range of homes that cater to different needs within the local community.
- + The development also ensures a welcoming, inclusive, and sustainable living environment for all residents, including the Gypsy and Traveller community. The Proposed Development will provide a safe, supportive, and culturally respectful space, fostering a strong sense of belonging within the broader neighbourhood.

Distinctive places

Making the Most of What's There

Understand and respond.

- + The built environment is designed to complement its natural and urban context, shaping the visual character of buildings, streets, and public spaces. Four primary character areas have been identified: River Valley, The Meadows, Hillside and Woodland, and the Neighbourhood Centre. Each area incorporates distinct design elements that harmonise with its specific landscape and functional setting, creating a cohesive yet varied built environment.
- + The local centre will feature the highest density, with up to 6-storey apartments and maisonette buildings, alongside mid-rise apartments and townhouses, fostering a lively, mixed-use urban hub that supports local businesses and enhances the public realm.
- + Neighbourhoods around Ridgeway Park and Meadows Park will transition to a lower-density environment, characterised by detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses, as well as low-rise apartments. This layout promotes spacious living, larger gardens, and a family-friendly atmosphere, while maintaining strong connectivity to schools, parks, and the local centre to encourage walking and cycling.
- + Hillside and Woodland areas will adopt a more loosely arranged urban form. This zone prioritises low-rise typologies that integrate with existing woodland, creating a gentle transition from urban to rural settings while preserving natural features and biodiversity.

A Memorable Character

Create places that are memorable.

- + The development protects and frames sightlines toward key landmarks, such as St. Margaret's Church, preserving cultural and visual value. Long view corridors from the ridgeline are designed to capture outstanding vistas of the surrounding landscape, reinforcing a strong sense of place. The alignment of view corridors, green corridors, and movement networks ensures a coherent, well-integrated design that enhances both functionality and aesthetics.

Well Defined Streets and Spaces

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.

- + In the Neighbourhood Centre, public spaces and streets are best framed by continuous building lines, establishing a strong sense of enclosure and cohesion. The ground floor plays a vital role in activating the public realm by integrating active frontages that engage with and overlook the street, fostering vibrancy and interaction. To enhance the character and functionality of the space, commercial and community uses are best positioned along key links and public spaces, maximising accessibility and contributing to a dynamic streetscape. Meanwhile, ground-floor residential uses add to street animation through frequent, generously sized openings from active living areas, encouraging natural surveillance and a connection to the public realm.
- + Perimeter blocks create a strong sense of unity and play a key role in defining the character of the neighbourhood. In the Woodlands Block, communal parking courts help reduce the dominance of cars along frontages, promoting a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Along green corridors, buildings with pronounced gables face the open space, enriching the street scene and adding visual interest through distinctive architectural features.

Easy to Find Your Way Around

Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.

- + The existing PRoW leading to Ifield Parish Church will be enhanced as a green corridor, creating a more inviting and accessible route. Along the path, the corridor gradually widens, offering unobstructed views of Ifield Parish Church, reinforcing its presence as a key landmark.
- + To enhance wayfinding and visual connectivity, key views from Ridgeway Park toward the Mole Valley will be preserved and enriched through sensitive landscape design, ensuring clear sightlines and a strong connection to the surrounding natural and built environment. These design strategies contribute to a more legible and intuitive public realm, making it easier for people to navigate and orient themselves within the landscape.

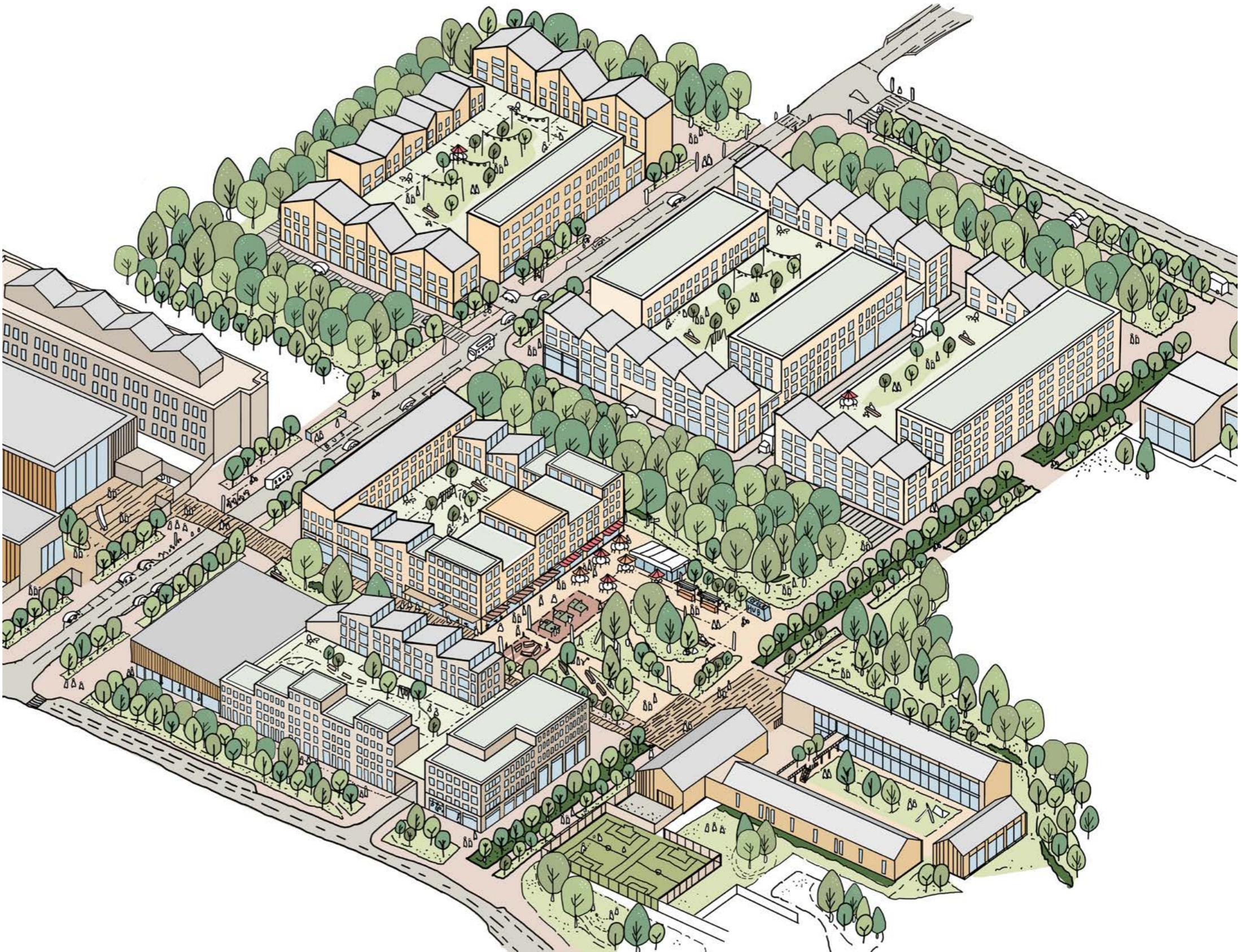
Neighbourhood Centre

The Neighbourhood Centre Character Area represents the heart of the development, serving as the core area that brings together various community facilities, urban living spaces, primary and secondary schools, and the Grove Sports Hub.

This central hub not only provides essential amenities and services for residents but also fosters a sense of community and connection. With its diverse range of offerings, the Neighbourhood Centre creates a vibrant and inclusive environment where people can live, learn, and engage in recreational activities, enhancing the overall quality of life within the development.

The key characteristics of the Neighbourhood Centre are:

- A mix of uses;
- A higher intensity of built form and activity and 'urban' feel, especially around the local centre;
- Active frontages that animate and overlook the public realm;
- Active ground floor frontages and multi-use public spaces, all framed by buildings of 2-5 storeys.
- Residential perimeter blocks of apartments and maisonettes, integrating podium car parking with courtyard amenities above the deck and community uses on the ground floor;
- Aligned buildings to create positively defined streets and spaces within the structured layout
- Nestled within the existing mature trees;
- Tree-lined transport corridors.



Hillside and Woodlands

The Hillside and Woodland Character Area comprises two distinct development zones surrounding Ridgeway Park.

The Proposed Development within these zones are thoughtfully arranged to respect and complement the distinct characteristics of the hillside and woodlands individually. In contrast to the Neighbourhood Centre Character Area, this area offers a secluded living environment that is intimately connected to nature.

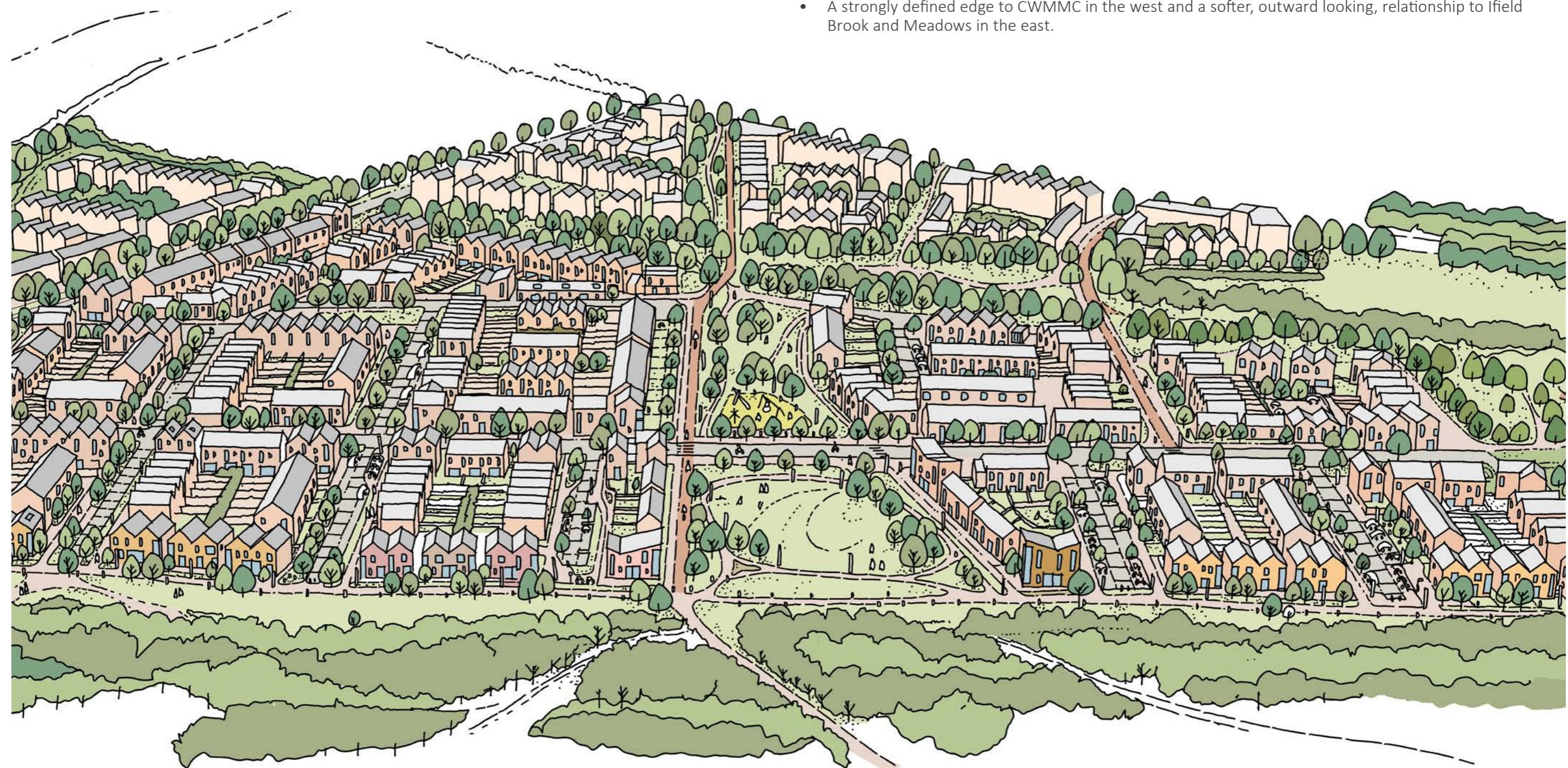
The key characteristics of the Hillside and Woodlands are:

- Topography and lush landscape of mature trees and woodland;
- A transition of urban frontage – parkland edge to woodland edge;
- Informal arrangement of buildings nearer to the woodlands, with lower densities and a closer relationship to nature for the housing;
- Outward views of buildings, allowing residents to enjoy expansive vistas across the wider landscape;
- Three distinct green corridors, which play a crucial role in promoting ecological connectivity, fostering a visually appealing living environment, and facilitating pedestrians and cycle movement.



The Meadows

The Meadows Character Area represents a remarkably connected neighbourhood within the development. Acting as the central organizing spine for the community, Meadows Park serves as a focal point. The structured layout of the neighbourhood draws attention to it. In comparison, a series of landscape spaces form green corridors connecting directly to the landscapes of the Ifield Brook.



The key characteristics of The Meadows are:

- Formal grid arrangements;
- Perimeter Blocks that maximise density and positively define streets and space;
- A strongly defined edge to CWMMC in the west and a softer, outward looking, relationship to Ifield Brook and Meadows in the east.

River Valley

The River Valley Character Area represents a harmonious blend of diverse land uses that contribute to the establishment of a sustainable and vibrant environment. The primary emphasis in this area is on creating an integrated and attractive employment spaces.

The key characteristics of the River Valley are:

- A mix of employment and residential uses;
- A strongly defined edge to CWMMC in the east, and a softer relationship to the adjacent River Valley Park;
- The larger footprint employment buildings that follow a recognisable street structure to the housing in neighbouring areas;
- Co-located and adjacent residential influence the nature of the employment buildings to be more intimate and amenable.



Healthy Streets

Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.

- + The main vehicle access to West of Ifield will be via the new CWMMC and the Primary Street. To reduce traffic impact on the existing Ifield neighbourhood and improve the walking and cycling environment between West of Ifield and Ifield Station, Rusper Road will no longer serve as a through route for vehicles. This strategy ensures that streets remain accessible and comfortable for all users, not dominated by cars.
- + A hierarchy of streets has been carefully planned to balance accessibility, movement, and placemaking, ensuring that streets support both mobility and community life.
- + Streets are designed as dynamic social spaces, encouraging activity, interaction, and a strong sense of place. The layout promotes safe crossings, active frontages, and seamless integration with open spaces, ensuring streets contribute to a lively, people-focused public realm.

Cycle and Car Parking

Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well-designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.

- + At West of Ifield, secure cycle parking will be incorporated into every property and shared storage designed into residential street. Ample public and visitor parking will be designed into all public spaces and play areas and co-located with public transport hubs.
- + Car club vehicles will be available, giving residents access to a car for trips that cannot be made by other means, without the cost and maintenance of ownership—particularly beneficial given current living expenses.
- + For those who own a car, parking for smaller properties will be located remotely to discourage car dependency and promote sustainable transport, while larger properties will have some on-plot parking. Parking levels will be determined with each application, ensuring they align with technological advancements, home working trends, and sustainable travel goals.
- + To support decarbonisation, electric vehicle charging points will be installed in line with WSCC standards and exceeded where possible. Disabled parking will be provided through formal bays and additional blue badge-accessible spaces where needed.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and the principal facades of buildings face streets and public spaces.

- + Designed as a landscape-led scheme, the Proposed Development integrates existing mature woodlands, hedgerows, and tree belts to define its built form, open spaces, and connecting infrastructure. A series of landscape character areas have been established based on the Site's unique features, shaping the distribution of plots and open spaces to provide a variety of accessible green spaces throughout the masterplan.
- + A strategic network of green corridors links all open spaces, facilitating connections between key green spaces, sports and play areas, and the wider countryside via dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes. This integrated approach encourages healthy, active lifestyles by prioritising walkability and cycling access across the development.
- + Beyond recreation, the design enhances biodiversity and ecological resilience by creating an interconnected network of habitats that support wildlife movement and migration, contributing to a broader Nature Recovery Network. Ecological buffers will strengthen this network by connecting green corridors within the development to the wider Rusper Ridge, Mole Valley, and Ifield Brook biodiversity areas. These buffers will also provide visual mitigation and natural screening where needed.
- + The fields west of Ifield Brook Meadows are popular recreational spaces, especially for dog walkers, with a network of PRoW providing access to the countryside from nearby suburban areas. This valued connection to nature will be maintained and enhanced through the masterplan, with new green spaces and linear gardens along existing PRoW, linking into a larger network of accessible open spaces. New recreational routes will connect to the wider PRoW network, including shorter looped paths for walking and jogging and longer trails linking to open spaces around Ifield and Crawley. All new paths will have durable surfaces to ensure year-round accessibility for all users.
- + A minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain will be delivered as part of the Proposed Development.

Back of Pavement, Front of Home

Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of the pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of a place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.

- + Active frontages: Strategically positioned along key public spaces, particularly at the ground floor of Market Square, where non-residential uses arranged to spill out to activate the market square.
- + Primary Road Frontage: A high degree of overlooking onto the streets fosters connectivity and a strong sense of enclosure, encouraging engagement with the streetscape while maintaining a clear distinction between public and private spaces.
- + Green Corridor Frontage: By maintaining continuity and reinforcing the urban structure, this frontage provides a well-defined enclosure around key amenity spaces. The integration of hedges and landscaped edges enhances biodiversity while clearly delineating public and private domains.
- + Parkland Frontage: A more relaxed layout with predominantly soft landscaped borders creates a green transition zone, softening the built environment and enriching the sense of place. This approach fosters biodiversity and establishes characterful spaces between the pavement and building frontages.
- + Woodland Frontage: A less formal building line supports a natural and organic arrangement that harmonises with the surrounding landscape. This strategy minimises the impact on adjacent nature areas while preserving key sightlines and enhancing ecological integration.



PRIOR
+ PTNRS

GILLESPIES

SQW

RAMBOLL

Maccreanor
Lavington

steer

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