



The Housing and Regeneration Agency

Homes
England

West of Ifield, Crawley

Statement of Community Involvement

Code
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Statement of Community Involvement

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Pillory Barn on behalf of Homes England, ('the applicant'), who is the government's housing agency for England, in support of a hybrid planning application for a phased mixed-use development, West of Ifield.

The hybrid planning application is for a site that falls within Horsham District Council as planning authority.

There are several planning policies and guides at both local and national level which stress the need for applicants to engage with local communities, local stakeholders, and the local authority when bringing forward a planning application. In undertaking the extensive pre-application consultation reference was made to policies, legislation and guidance, including those set out below.



Horsham District Council SCI

The West of Ifield consultation strategy has been informed by guidance set out in Horsham District Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Their guidance is intended to be a 'positive, proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals in a local area to achieve the local planning vision and objectives.'

*Statement of Community Involvement 2020

In the Horsham District Council SCI, developers undertaking pre-application consultation with local communities and stakeholders are asked to address the following:

Ask

Response

Set clear objectives and agree the consultation approach with the Development Management Team, including who will be consulted.

The Applicant has worked with the relevant teams at Horsham District Council and local stakeholders throughout the pre-application process and invited them to attend the engagement events and shared material where required.

Let people know what the scheme is proposing and be clear about what they can influence when making comments.

The engagement events have set out the details of the scheme, its benefits to the local community and sought feedback on the emerging proposals throughout.

Use different engagement approaches to maximise opportunities for people to influence the proposals. In particular steps should be taken to involve any seldom-heard groups that could be affected by a proposal.

A range of promotional methods have been used for the events to encourage attendance and feedback from across the wider community.

Details are outlined below to demonstrate how the applicant has used a range of methods to engage with the community both in-person and digitally.

The Localism Act

The Localism Act 2011 also emphasises the importance of pre-application engagement and encourages both local authorities and applicants to take these principles into account. Section 122 of the Localism Act (2011) sets out the requirement to undertake pre-application consultation as well as the need to take account of responses to consultation.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which originally came into force in March 2012, and was updated in December 2024, provides a vision for the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

The NPPF states: "Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

Source: As set out in the NPPF 2024, Section 4, paragraph 40.



This planning application seeks hybrid planning permission (part outline and part full planning permission) for a phased, residential-led mixed-use development at land West of Ifield.

The full element comprises Phase 1 of the Proposed Development which will include the infrastructure required for the delivery of the secondary school, including the first phase of the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Corridor (a new road with a dedicated bus lane and regular traffic lane in each direction), to form a connection from Charlwood Road to the east and the primary access route to the Proposed Development.

The outline element of the Proposed Development comprises mixed-use development of up to 3,000 homes, a Neighbourhood Centre and associated community facilities, a primary school and a secondary school, employment uses, public open space and multi-functional green space, and allowance for key infrastructure and utilities.

Further details on the Proposed Development, the Description of Development and the proposed land uses are set out within the Development Specification, Parameter Plan Framework (WOI-HPA-DOC-DSPPF-01) and the Design and Access Statement (WOI-HPA-DOC-DAS-01).

This Statement of Community Involvement sets out the comprehensive, long-term pre-application consultation and engagement that has taken place in the preparation of the hybrid planning application. It outlines the feedback received and how amendments have been made to the proposed plans and technical studies to reflect the feedback provided by the community through extensive, inclusive consultation and engagement activity.

This report is structured as follows:

■ Section 1

sets out the background and context.

■ Section 2

sets out the engagement timeline.

■ Section 3

details pre-application engagement activity, feedback, analysis of the key themes that have emerged throughout the consultation process and sets out how the Applicant has responded to the feedback.

■ Section 4

provides a summary.

Materials used in relation to the consultation process are provided in the appendices.



Section 1

Background and context

West of Ifield is a proposed new mixed-use development within the Horsham District that provides the opportunity to meet identified development needs and integrate existing communities alongside the delivery of new homes, jobs and infrastructure.

Led by Homes England, the scheme will create homes and a vibrant and thriving community for the future, some of the key benefits West of Ifield will provide include:



3,000 homes **35%** of which will be affordable



The first phase of the Crawley Western Multi-Modal Corridor **providing new connections to Crawley and the wider area**



Investment in active and sustainable travel including **15km of new footpaths and cycleways**, investment in **local transport scheme**, Ifield station improvements and **high frequency bus services**



3FE Primary school
+ **6-8FE** Secondary school



Skills and Innovation Centre



Healthcare facilities



A new **country park** and a network of **green spaces**



New **playing fields** and **sports facilities**



circa **2,800** direct jobs

The Applicant has a clear remit through the Homes England Strategic Plan to drive housing delivery to create high-quality homes where they are most needed and the creation of places people are proud to call home.

The Applicant makes this happen by using their powers, expertise, land, capital and influence to:

- Form partnerships to bridge the gap between public and private sector in order to deliver homes.
- Champion the creation of sustainable homes, communities and places that are brilliantly designed.
- Support the creation of more resilient, diverse and innovative housing sector by helping new market entrants and SMEs grow, encouraging greater use of modern methods of construction and promoting the utmost attention to building safety.

Delivering the right infrastructure to support new homes is also a key part of the Applicant's role. As a government body, it has access to funds to allow it to deliver infrastructure in the early stages of development.

West of Ifield's location

West of Ifield ('the place') falls entirely within the administrative area of Horsham District Council although it immediately abuts the Crawley Borough Council boundary. It is located south of Charlwood Road, beyond which lies Gatwick Airport. The place lies to the north of the Arun Valley railway line and adjoins the existing neighborhoods of Ifield and Langley Green in Crawley.

To the east, the place is bounded by trees and Ifield Village. Ifield West and ancient woodland are to the south and ancient woodland to the west. The River Mole passes through the northern part.



Section 2

Engagement strategy and timeline

The Applicant's consultation strategy has been informed by guidance set out in Horsham District Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the most recent of which is [Horsham District Council's Statement of Community Involvement](#) (Sept 2020). This includes:

Section 3.7 from Horsham District Council Statement of Community Involvement

3.7 Developers undertaking pre-application consultation with local communities and stakeholders are asked to address the following:

- Set clear objectives and agree the consultation approach with the Development Management Team, including who will be consulted.
- Let people know what the scheme is proposing and be clear about what they can influence when making comments.
- Use different engagement approaches to maximise opportunities for people to influence the proposals. In particular steps should be taken to involve any seldom-heard groups that could be affected by a proposal.
- Submit a statement alongside the final planning application outlining the community involvement work that has been undertaken. This should include a summary of any responses received at consultation and should explain how feedback has influenced the proposals.
- When developers are proposing to amend a scheme which already has permission they are still encouraged to undertake pre-application consultation with the Council, local communities and stakeholder. They are also requested to submit a statement as part of a final application clearly setting out what the proposed changes are.

The Applicant recognises that creating a new community of this scale has potential positive and negative impacts on existing communities and local stakeholders which require full consideration. It is committed to involving communities in shaping development.

The Applicant has undertaken an extensive, far-reaching strategic communications and engagement programme on plans for development at West of Ifield, commencing in 2020.

This comprehensive, inclusive programme of engagement activity has played a vital role in shaping this scheme and informing the preparation of its hybrid planning application, reflecting the significant effort invested throughout the process.

The Applicant is committed to ensuring its community and public engagement work is consistently accessible and champions equality at every opportunity. As a public body, Homes England is committed to compliance with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018 and the Equality Act 2010. Throughout the process, the Applicant has made every effort to be open and transparent about its proposals for the site and has sought to engage with diverse community audiences including key stakeholders, local residents, hard to reach groups, local politicians and campaign groups and to provide accessible information and consultation methods.

This section sets out each engagement stage, including details of the specific engagement, how it was promoted, the feedback received and responses to feedback.

A leading digital engagement platform, Commonplace was selected to support engagement with more community members, providing an interactive portal that serves as an information source but also encourages feedback and dialogue with a diverse community. Users of the website can view comments others have submitted, aiding transparency and integration.

The West of Ifield website on Commonplace, that has been used to capture feedback to date since 2020, has had 29,394 visitors as well as 7,198 individual contributions with 857 people signing up to receive news updates about the development.

Public and stakeholder consultation and feedback gathering on the emerging hybrid planning application plans has taken place through the following methods:

- Council and technical consultee engagement
- Parish Council engagement
- Member and planning committee engagement for local areas
- Horsham District Council member engagement
- Local organisation engagement
- Local business engagement
- Public engagement

A community engagement timeline is set out below. In addition, regular news updates have been posted on the Commonplace website and a dedicated email address has been available throughout.

Engagement

Jan to Mar 2020	Early engagement and consultation
First round of engagement with the local community and key stakeholders to introduce vision for West of Ifield, obtain feedback, understand the site, establish key principles and publish FAQ documents to inform the masterplan development.	
Dec 2020	Project update
Despite the impact of the restrictions necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 there was an online update on consultation feedback, key themes and emerging commitments as part of early masterplan development. This was published online along with FAQ documents outlining the updates.	
Mar to Jun 2021	Emerging Masterplan - consultation
Second consultation showing how the main principles and key issues have informed the early masterplanning outputs, identifying how constraints and feedback have been addressed. Details outlining opportunities to deliver new homes, employment and infrastructure as part of a new mixed-use development.	
Oct to Nov 2022	Detailed Masterplan Engagement
Consultation on the updated illustrative masterplan taking into account feedback from previous consultation and engagement to amend the red-line boundary, include the proposed building phases and changes to the transport plans. These were accompanied by an FAQ to explain the updated plans.	
April 2025	Community update exhibition
Exhibition event demonstrating how consultation feedback has contributed to the submission.	

Stakeholder engagement

Parallel Local Plan Engagement

In addition to the formal pre-application process, the Applicant has engaged with Horsham District Council's recent Local Plan process, details of which are outlined in the Planning Statement.

Whilst not part of the community engagement for West of Ifield, the engagement with the Local Plan process has allowed the Applicant to review comments and consider feedback to inform the updated plans.

Engagement with other stakeholders, including statutory consultees, has been undertaken and is detailed in the relevant expert report.

