

# Statement of Community Involvement – April 2026



**The updated National Planning Policy Framework (2024) says:**

Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.



## Statement of Community Involvement Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding April 2026

**Prepared by SMN Planning & Development Support**

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## Proposals for up to 24 New Homes Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding

“The provision of 24 residential dwellings (Class C3) including policy compliant affordable homes provision, with associated access, landscaping, open space and drainage infrastructure at land at Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding.”

By: BlackOnyx Becketts Ltd

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This statement has been prepared by SMN Planning & Development Support, a community consultation agency specialising in local government and planning. It relates to the provision of 24 residential dwellings (Class C3) including policy compliant provision of affordable homes, with associated access, landscaping, open space and drainage infrastructure at land at Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding.

This consultation included:

- a) Communication with Lower Beeding Parish Council
- b) Contact with District Ward Councillors
- c) Digital community engagement that ran for 7 ½ weeks
- d) A comprehensive leaflet drop to all Lower Beeding Residents to make them aware of the digital engagement and to invite feedback
- e) Dedicated email address giving stakeholders and residents the opportunity to contact the project team

## 2.0 Introduction

This statement sets out the details of the community and stakeholder engagement managed by SMN Planning & Development Support on behalf of BlackOnyx Becketts Ltd prior to the submission of a planning application for the proposed development.

This process has been informed by Horsham District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020), the Localism Act (2011) and the relevant guidance issued to local authorities within the Revised National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

## 2.1 About the Proposal

Planning permission is sought for: The provision of 24 residential dwellings (Class C3) including policy compliant provision of affordable homes, with associated access, landscaping, open space and drainage infrastructure at land at Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding.

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## 3.0 Methodology

Horsham District Council has produced a Statement of Community Involvement. It includes suggestions on how planning applicants can engage in adequate public consultation.

The public consultation summarised in this report has been undertaken in accordance with the District Council's SCI, which states that plans should:

*“Be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”*

and;

*“Be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation”..”*

## 3.1 The Localism Act

The applicant's community engagement has also met the consultation principles established within the Localism Act (2011) under Section 122 for consulting the public, as follows.

- *‘The publication of the proposed application widely, to an extent that can be reasonably said to bring the proposed application to the attention of the majority of persons who live at or otherwise occupy premises near the site’.*
- *‘To make clear how interested persons may contact the applicant team should they wish to comment or collaborate in relation to the proposed development’.*
- *‘To give such information about the timetable to ensure that persons wishing to comment on the proposed development may do so in good time’.*
- *‘Have regard to the responses to consultation that have been made following the consultation process’.*

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## 3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) identifies public consultation at the pre-application stage as a key component of the new planning system. Section 4, Paragraph 40 notes that:

*Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.*

The NPPF (2024) identifies the importance of pre-application discussions with the local community in the preparation of development proposals. Although not compulsory, the NPPF strongly encourages parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage.

Paragraph 41 states:

*Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.*

National and local planning policy has influenced the community engagement strategy that the client has undertaken whilst preparing their proposals.

## 3.3 Local Benefits

Lower Beeding is located in Horsham District, West Sussex. The Village lies on the B2110, B2115 and A281 roads, some 3.5 miles south east from Horsham. The village is centred on the Grade II Listed Holy Trinity Church and The Plough public house. Both of these front onto the B2115 (Sandygate Lane) and the subject site is to the west of the village centre, with the northern part of the site containing an existing dwelling on the southern side of Sandgate Lane.

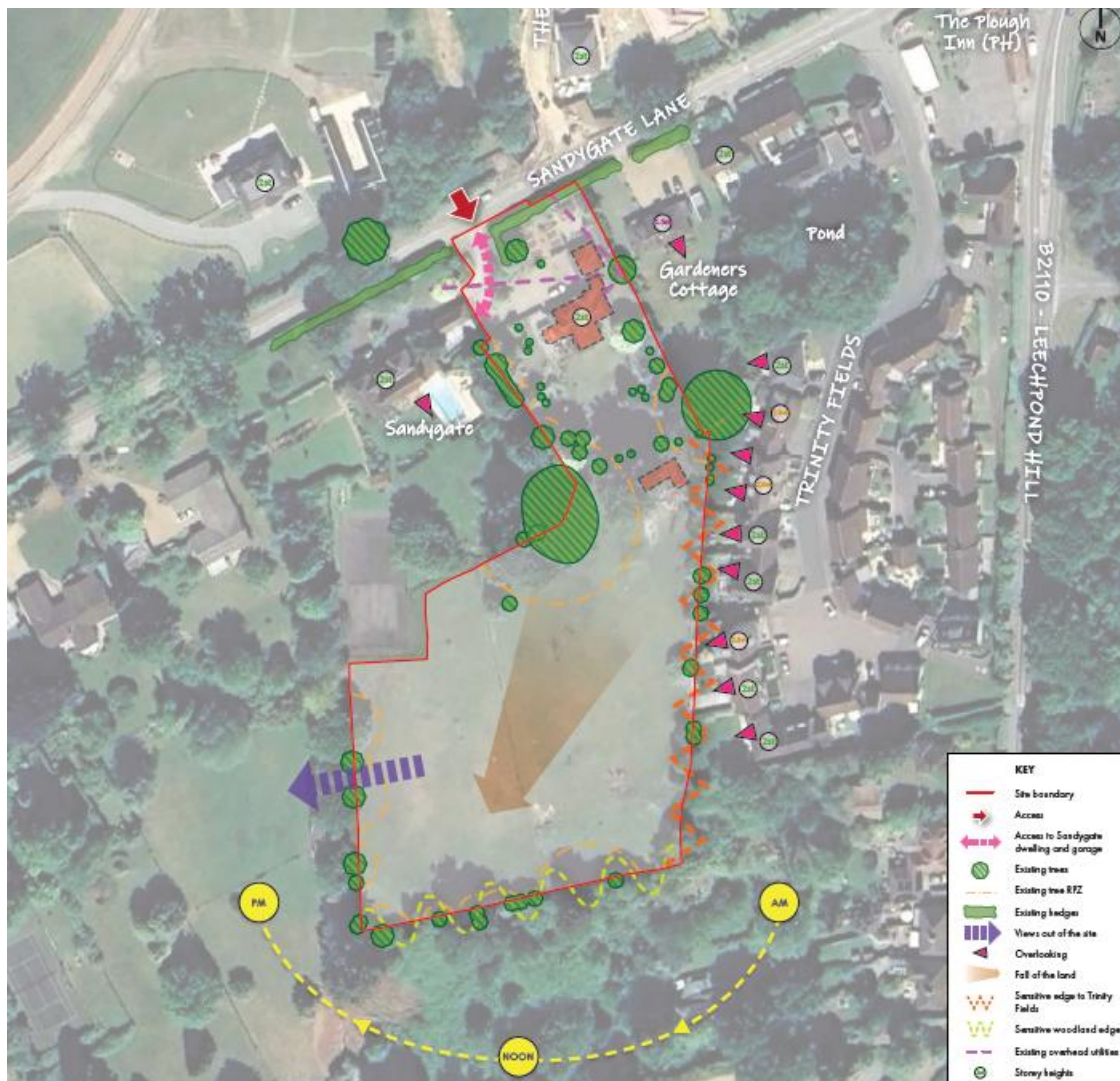
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The 0.95ha site lies on the western edge of Lower Beeding. Adjacent to the eastern boundary is the recent residential development of Trinity Fields, with access to the rear of The Plough, sweeping southwards past a landscaped pond area, extending the village in a southerly and westerly expansion. The village is centrally located within the wider Lower Beeding Parish as the principal settlement. Existing rights of way surround the site providing convenient shortcuts into the village and offer direct access to the wider countryside, ideal for recreation and dog walking.



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Key components of the proposed development include:

- 24 new dwellings of two storey scale and in keeping with the surrounding area.
- An accommodation mix including 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings.
- An appropriate low density ratio of 27 dwellings per hectare.
- New vehicular and pedestrian access from Sandygate Lane.
- Retention and enhancement of the existing trees and vegetation along the boundaries.
- Dwellings overlooking areas of open space for natural surveillance.
- Informal open spaces within the development together with enhanced landscaping.
- SuDS features integrated into the layout.
- Properties set back from boundaries with well-proportioned gardens, similar to those found in the close proximity, which will also create buffers to existing dwellings.
- Views maintained to the west.
- Sustainable homes that meet NDSS

## 4.0 Engagement with Officers

Alongside engagement with the community, pre-application advice was requested from Officers at Horsham District Council between September 2025 and November 2025. In summary, the Officers' views were that:

- The Council is presently unable to demonstrate a 5-year land housing supply, with the latest Authority Monitoring Report acknowledging a housing supply of 1.1 years.
- The site is located immediately adjacent to the defined Built-up Area Boundary of Lower Beeding and is considered to represent an appropriate level of expansion.
- The delivery of housing, especially affordable housing, would contribute to the fulfilment of local housing need and may assist with the longer-term retention of community facilities and services present within Lower Beeding and nearby settlements. It is, therefore, considered that current policy and guidance weigh positively in favour of the indicative proposals.
- Some detailed feedback was provided on the site layout, to maximise green infrastructure, provide a more characteristic arrangement, use of building materials in keeping with the local vernacular, and reduce areas of hardstanding. This feedback has been incorporated into the proposals.

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## 5.0 Community Consultation

### 5.1 Community Consultation Approach

The applicants instructed SMN Planning & Development Support, a specialist in political and community engagement, to manage a public consultation and community engagement strategy, with the aim to ensure that residents and key stakeholders were given adequate opportunity to be made aware and informed of the proposals, provide their feedback, and to comment on the proposals before a planning application is submitted.

The pre-application and public consultation took place based on proposals for up to 24 new homes.

### 5.2 Digital Engagement - dedicated website

To support the project, a dedicated website was designed and built (see Appendix A), giving residents the opportunity to look at the proposals in their own time, the website was launched on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and was live until 10<sup>th</sup> April 2026 giving residents plenty of time to provide their feedback, a dedicated feedback form was provided on the website.

A total of 112 people accessed the website and 30 feedback forms were received. Results of the feedback received can be found in Appendix C.

In total there were over 3,000 interactions with the site with users spending an average of nearly 7 minutes on the site.

### 5.3 Encouraging traffic to the website

An A4 flyer providing details of the website with a QR code providing easy access was hand delivered to all Lower Beeding residents on or around the 16<sup>th</sup> February with the first feedback forms being received on that day. (see Appendix B).

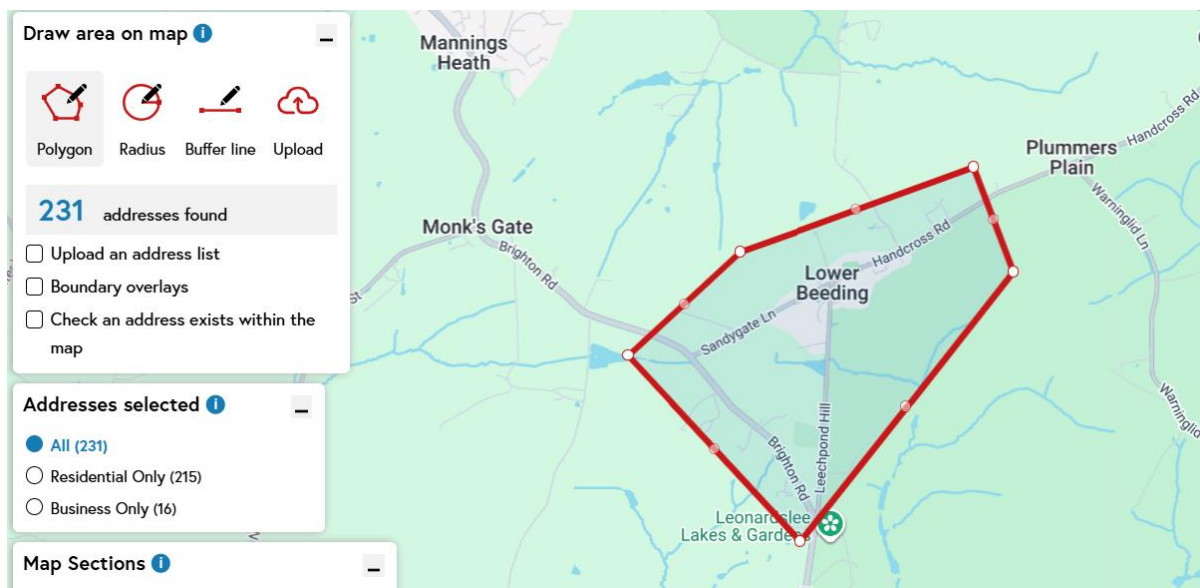
The map shows the distribution area that these were delivered to. A total of 231 households received an A4 flyer.

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## 5.4 Matters raised

30 people provided feedback on the proposals using the feedback form provided and a total of 112 users accessed the website.

The most common matters raised were concerned with the development of the site itself, increased traffic generation, a lack of infrastructure and the impact on the Village Hall. The table below sets out the matters raised by stakeholders:

| Matters raised                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Frequency of matter raised |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Traffic &amp; Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access and increased traffic on an already busy road</li> </ul>                                                                                                              | 7                          |
| <b>Impact on neighbours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about proximity to existing properties, loss of privacy and the possibility of being overlooked</li> <li>Too much development in a small village already</li> </ul> | 5<br>2                     |
| <b>Design &amp; Appearance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the layout so that new houses do not impact the privacy of existing dwellings</li> </ul>                                                                           | 3                          |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider reducing the size of the development</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 2           |
| <b>Trees, landscaping &amp; green spaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the amount of houses and provide more green space</li> <li>More trees or shrubs on boundaries</li> <li>It would be great to see some form of park or play area for the kids</li> </ul>                                                                                                         | 1<br>1<br>1 |
| <b>Housing mix &amp; affordability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New developments in the Horsham area don't seem to provide truly affordable housing for local people</li> <li>The affordable houses should be put forward for a local connection scheme with Saxon Weald so that families with a strong tie to Lower Beeding can continue to live in the Village</li> </ul> | 2<br>1      |
| <b>Sustainability &amp; drainage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The village infrastructure is not strong enough for this proposal – the sewage plant has had many additional houses added to its original upgrade</li> <li>Impact on wildlife</li> </ul>                                                                                                                      | 1<br>2      |

All feedback responses have been taken into consideration and have been addressed in further detail in the Planning Statement and relevant technical reports, and this Statement of Community Involvement should be read alongside those documents. The project team is seeking to continue its dialogue with residents and other stakeholders as the scheme moves forwards.

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## 5.5 Communication with Lower Beeding Parish Council

Contact was made with the Chair of Lower Beeding Parish Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. The Chair responded by saying that he would prefer to provide feedback as a resident rather than as a Parish Councillor, he suggested that other Councillors might be in contact to discuss the proposals.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March contact with the Chair was made again to see if he, or any other Councillors, would like to provide feedback. No response was received.

At the time of writing of this Statement of Community Involvement no other parish councillors had been in contact.

## 5.6 Communication with District Councillor

Contact was attempted with the Ward Councillor, Dennis Livingstone, on the 13<sup>th</sup> February and followed up on the 17<sup>th</sup> February seeking a time to meet to discuss the proposals. The second attempt was met with an automated response advising that the Cllr was away between 16<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

A further attempt was made on 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

At the time of writing this Statement of Community Involvement no response from the Ward Cllr had been received.

## 6.0 Post application engagement

### 6.1 Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

SMN Planning & Development Support will work with the applicants to ensure that information will continually flow through existing channels to all interested parties, including local residents.

### 6.2 Updating Materials

It is the applicant's intention to respond to feedback received during the digital engagement as well as any feedback received from the Parish Council and/or Ward Councillors and to contact attendees to the event to detail any amendments made to the scheme.

- Upon submission, details of the proposals will be available online.
- During the process, additional information will be posted.
- Once a decision has been made.

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## 7.0 Conclusion

The consultation process was appropriate for the following reasons:

The type of consultation was in accordance with Horsham District Council's guidance on Community Involvement, in their Statement of Community Involvement, Community Engagement and Planning Policy (section 1.8) it states:

*"The government produces planning guidance at a national level. This is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The latest NPPF (February 2019) states, in relation to plan-making, that plans should: "Be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees"*

*and;*

*"Be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation"*

The Statement of Community Involvement goes on to state (section 1.16):

Planning affects everyone; the homes we live in, the places we work from, tourism, leisure facilities including open spaces where we relax, and routes we use for travel are all a result of planning decisions. Understanding future needs and aspirations of local communities helps Horsham District Council make better planning decisions. Everyone should have the opportunity to influence the outcome regarding new plan-making documents and planning applications.

The applicants have undertaken a proportionate consultation which met the Council's requirements. This included:

- i. Communication with Lower Beeding Parish Council with the express intention to encourage their involvement in the engagement process and for them to help shape the proposals.
- ii. Communication with the Ward Councillor to ask for his input and to give him early sight of the proposals.
- iii. Leaflets hand delivered to residents in Lower Beeding to provide details of the digital engagement and how to provide feedback.
- iv. Digital engagement giving residents the opportunity to view the proposals over a period of 7 ½ weeks, and to provide feedback online.

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## Appendix A — Digital Engagement

Website designed and build for residents to view the proposals and provide feedback

[www.sandygatelane.co.uk](http://www.sandygatelane.co.uk)

Home Page

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Sandygate Lane Development Consultation website. The header is dark green with the text "Sandygate Lane" on the left, and "Proposal", "FAQ", and a "Contact us" button on the right. The main content area features a large aerial map of the site with a red outline. Overlaid on the map is the text "An attractive sustainable addition to the rural village of Lower Beeding" and a "Our Proposal" button. Below the map, the heading "Welcome to the Sandygate Lane Development Consultation" is followed by two paragraphs of text describing the site's location and context. To the right of the text is a smaller aerial map showing the site's location relative to surrounding properties and roads. At the bottom left, there is a photograph of a family of five riding bicycles through a field. To the right of the photo is the heading "Site features" followed by two paragraphs of text describing the site's location, accessibility, and surrounding features. A "Our Proposal" button is located at the bottom right of the page.

### Welcome to the Sandygate Lane Development Consultation

The site is located on the southern side of Sandygate Lane in the village of Lower Beeding. It currently comprises Cedar Cottage, a detached dwelling with access from Sandygate Lane and its curtilage, together with two paddocks to the rear.

The site is located at the western edge of the village of Lower Beeding between the properties Sandygate and Gardeners Cottage. The Trinity Fields development sits directly adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, and to the north is The Gallops, a housing development for 22 dwellings currently under construction. To the west of the site are further detached residential properties with large rear gardens, and to the south is a small field now covered in natural regeneration scrub, with mature trees to the shared boundary. Beyond that are a small number of detached properties accessed from Leechpond Hill. The site is therefore adjoined by residential land uses on all sides.

### Site features

The site directly adjoins the settlement boundary of Lower Beeding to the east, which is identified as a 'smaller village' with good accessibility to larger settlements in the development plan. The village core contains a church, pub (the Plough Inn), a primary school and children's nursery. The village is served by regular bus services to Horsham, Haywards Heath and beyond.

There is an extensive network of public rights of way within the area which provide good access to the countryside surrounding the site. There are no Public Rights of Way within or adjacent to the site. The site is not located within a Conservation Area nor are there any Listed Buildings in close proximity and lies within Flood Zone 1.

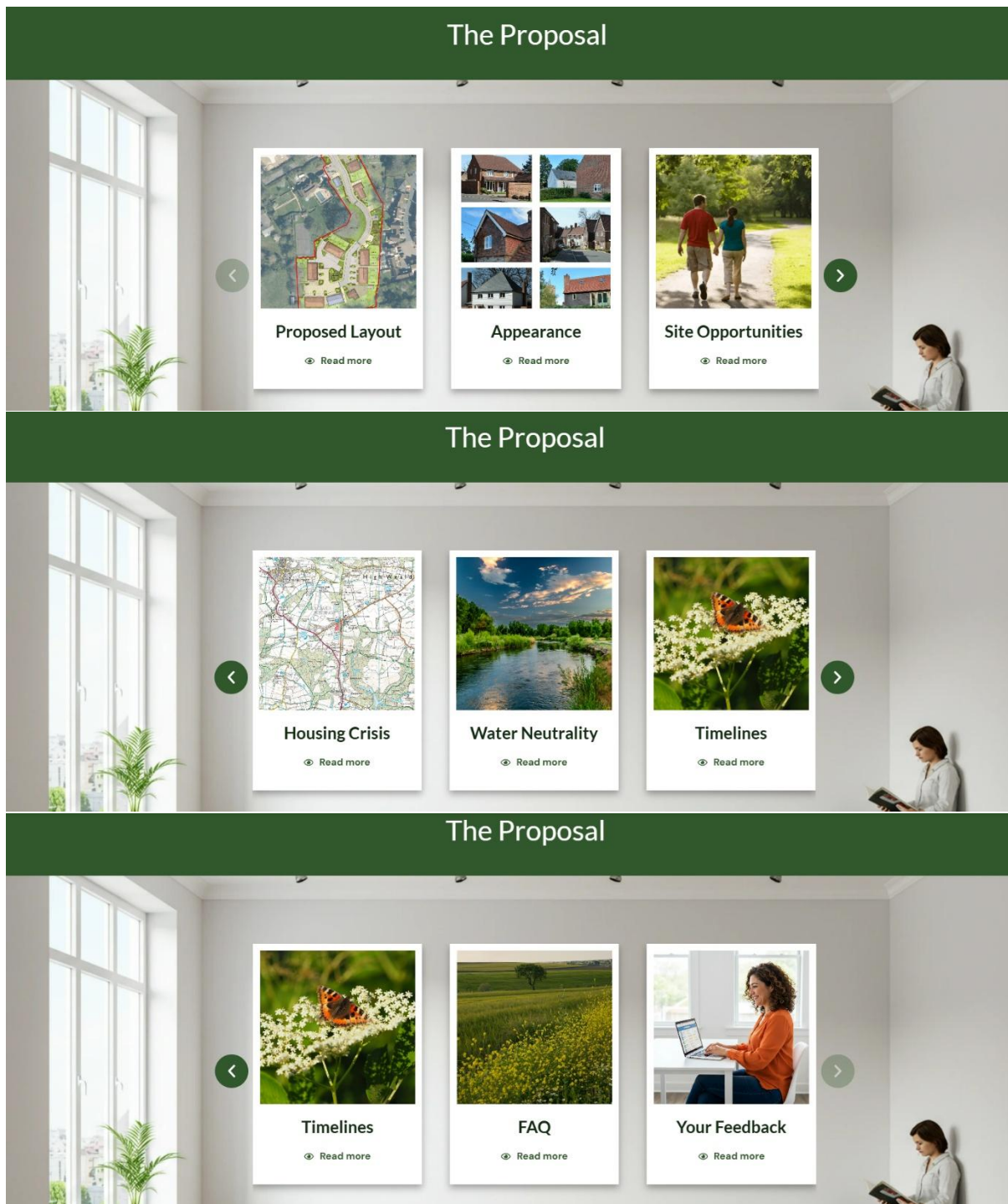
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## The Proposal – Exhibition Boards



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## Appendix B — Leaflet to promote website

A4 Flyer delivered to around 350 residents (as per map in 5.3 above):

Page 1

A screenshot of the Sandygate Lane Development Consultation website. The page has a dark green header with 'Sandygate Lane' on the left, 'Proposal FAQ' in the center, and 'Contact us' on the right. The main content area has a light green background. It starts with a large map of the site area, with 'Sandygate Lane' and 'Trinity Fields' labeled. Overlaid on the map is a text box that says 'We are keen to get the views of Lower Beeding residents on proposals for 24 new homes, please take a look and tell us what you think.' Below the map, there's a section titled 'Welcome to the Sandygate Lane Development Consultation' with two paragraphs of text. To the right of this text is another map showing the site's location within the village. Below the text, there's a photo of a family of five (two adults and three children) riding bicycles through a grassy field. To the right of the photo is a section titled 'Site features' with two paragraphs of text. At the bottom of the page, there are two columns of text: 'We welcome your thoughts and feedback on this forthcoming application to provide 24 new homes, including 2, 3 and 4 Bedroom Houses with 35% being affordable homes.' and 'Please visit the website: www.sandygatelane.co.uk to take a look at the proposals and provide feedback.' There are also several 'Our Proposal' buttons throughout the page.

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Page 2

**Scan the QR code to access the website and to see the answers to these frequently asked questions:**



**What is being proposed?**

**Where is the site located?**

**Why is this site suitable for housing?**

**Will there be affordable housing?**

**What will the homes look like?**

**How will traffic and access be managed?**

**How will neighbouring homes be protected?**

**What happens to existing trees and landscaping?**

**Will there be green space and sustainable features?**

**What stage is the project and how can I comment?**

[www.sandygatelane.co.uk](http://www.sandygatelane.co.uk)

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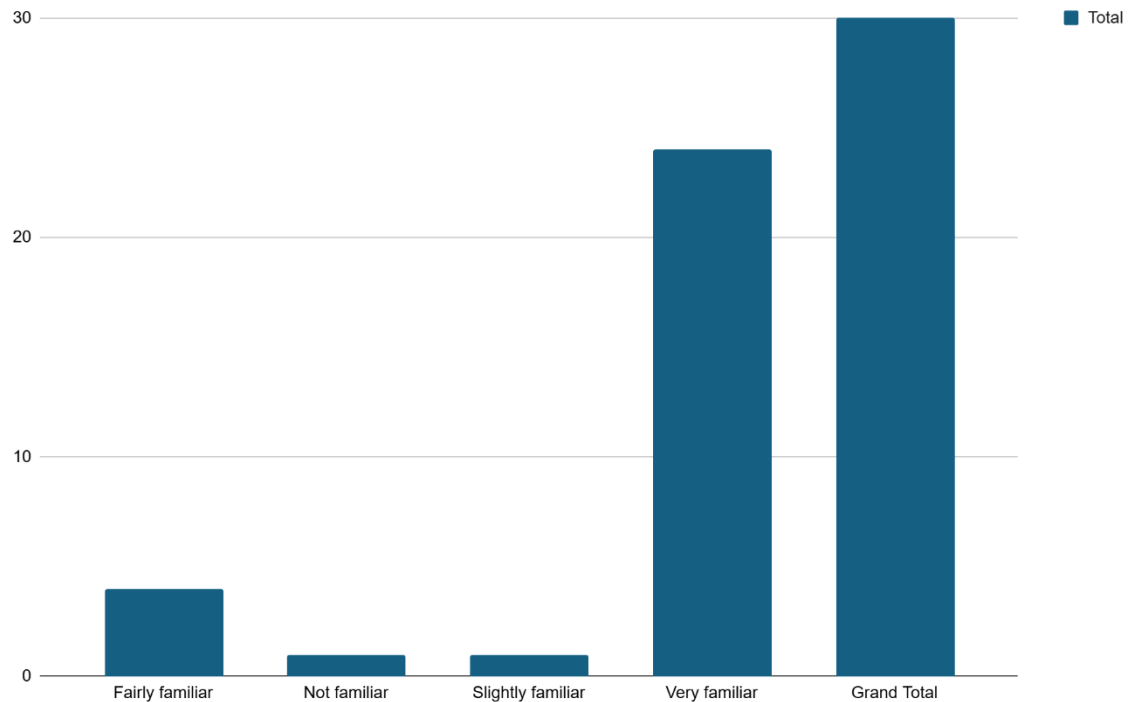


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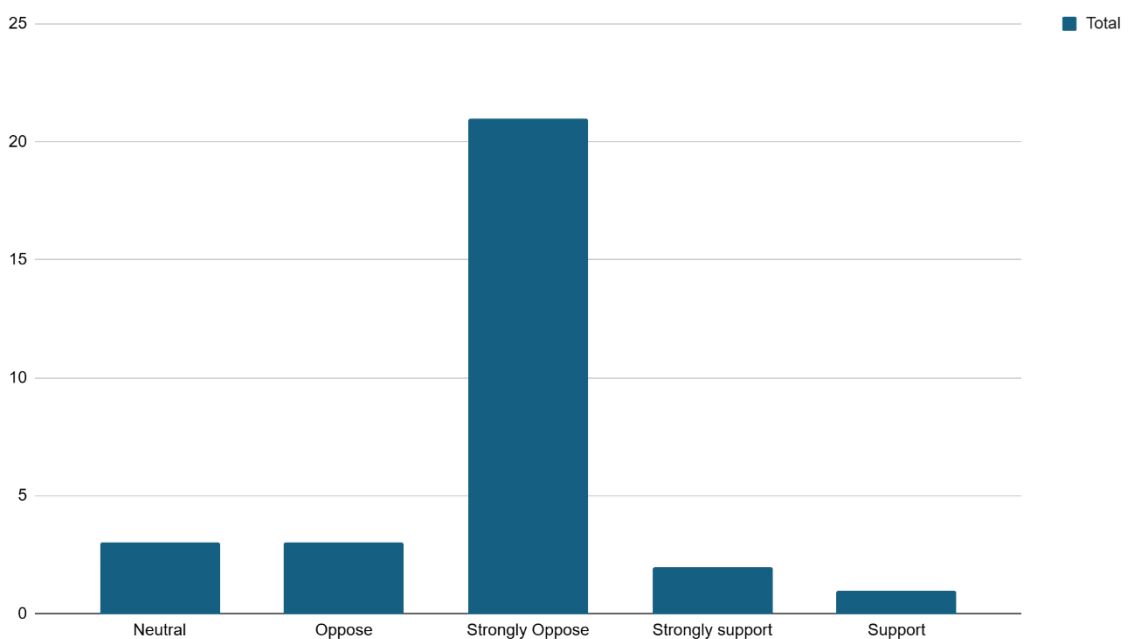
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## Appendix C – Public consultation feedback

How familiar are you with the site at Cedar Cottage, Sandygate Lane?



Overall, how do you feel about the principle of new housing on this site?



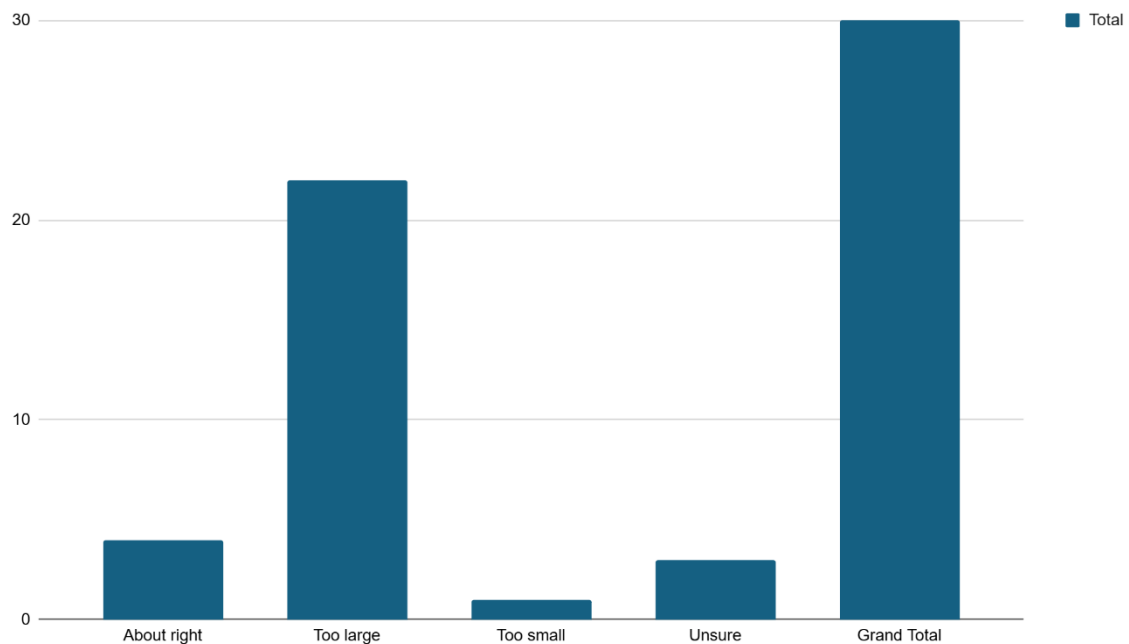
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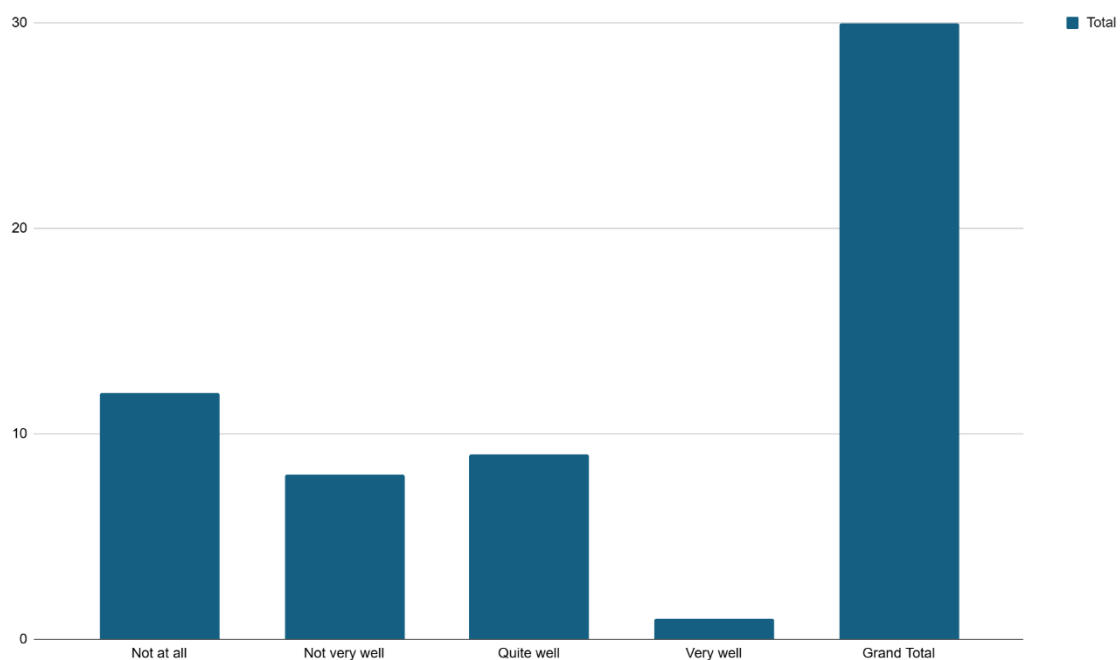
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What are your views on the proposed scale of development?



How well do you think the proposed design reflects the character of Lower Beeding?



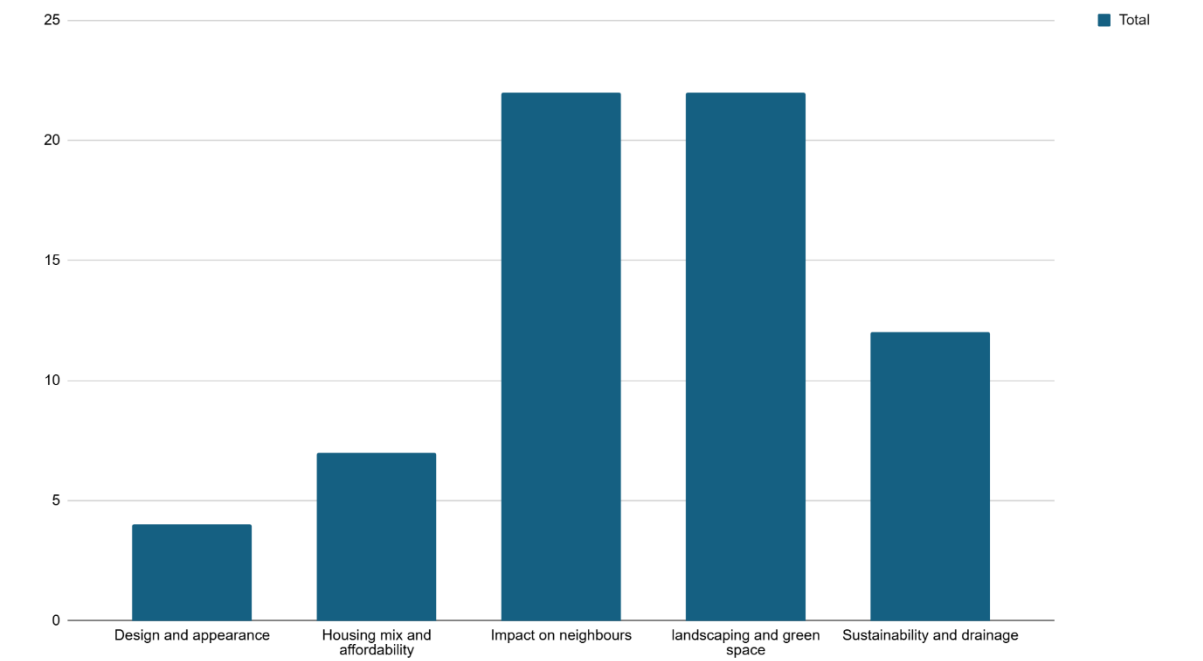
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Which aspects of the proposals are most important to you?



Age range of respondents:

