



Richborough Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green

Statement of Community Involvement

December 2024

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Cratus Group, a community consultation and engagement company specialising in local government and planning, and it forms part of the planning application made by Richborough (the “Applicant”). The planning application concerns land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green, referred to in this document as the “Site”.
- 1.2 The planning application is an outline application for the “Construction of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), a 5-bedroom property for children’s social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and café provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (All matters are reserved except for vehicular access).”
- 1.3 This statement outlines the community consultation process undertaken by Cratus Group and the wider project team in partnership with the Applicant, as informed by the guidance and principles contained within Three Rivers District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (adopted September 2020) and the National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) and the Localism Act (2011).
- 1.4 The primary objective of the consultation was to ensure that local residents, businesses, interest groups and elected representatives all had the opportunity to provide their feedback on the development proposals.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The objectives of this consultation have been to ensure that local residents, businesses, interest groups, and elected representatives were provided the opportunity to give their feedback on the plans and were made aware of the proposals.
- 2.2 The Applicant informed local residents and businesses of the proposals via an invitation leaflet to 5,197 local households and businesses, which directed them towards the consultation webinar and website, where a recording could be accessed once the event had taken place. In addition, consultation information was circulated to local interest groups (including hard to reach groups) and elected representatives.
- 2.3 As of 1 November 2024, 77 printed feedback forms have been returned by freepost, and 328 responses received online.
- 2.4 A public consultation webinar was held online on Tuesday, 1 October 2024 at 19:00, with 116 public attendees. There were 161 submissions through the “Q&A” feature of the webinar.
- 2.5 The project team also reached out directly to local stakeholders and elected representatives, informing them of the proposed development and the forthcoming planning application.
- 2.6 Feedback from these events both via online and printed feedback forms has been carefully considered and responded to as part of the application process.



3. The Site

- 3.1 The Site covers 40.68 hectares and consists of a single irregular field bordered by woodland, hedgerows, and mature trees to the Western, Northern, and Eastern boundaries, while Little Green Lane and the existing Croxley Green settlement edge form the Southern boundary.
- 3.2 The Site's immediate neighbours to the South are semi-detached and detached dwellings, most of which fronting onto roads adjoining Little Green Lane. To the Western end of the Southern boundary is Little Green Junior School.
- 3.3 Within the Site, there is an area of Ancient Woodland and a hedgerow running North to South, as well as a public right of way crossing East to West.



4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 The process of consultation undertaken has been in accordance with both national and local guidance on best practice of pre-application consultation. The details of the guidance followed is listed below:
- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
 - Localism Act (2011)
 - Three Rivers District Council Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020)

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The document states that applications that can demonstrate early, effective, and proactive engagement with communities and other interested parties should be looked upon more favourably than those that cannot. It specifically sets out the following:

“Pre-application engagement and front-loading

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

43. The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage. Wherever possible, parallel processing of other consents should be encouraged to help speed up the process and resolve any issues as early as possible.

44. The right information is crucial to good decision-making, particularly where formal assessments are required (such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations assessment and flood risk assessment). To avoid delay, applicants should discuss what information is needed with the local planning authority and expert bodies as early as possible.

45. Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions, and should be reviewed at least every two 13 years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in



question.

46. Local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them.

47. Applicants and local planning authorities should consider the potential for voluntary planning performance agreements, where this might achieve a faster and more effective application process. Planning performance agreements are likely to be needed for applications that are particularly large or complex to determine.

Localism Act (2011)

- 4.3 The Localism Act (2011) is intended to empower local communities to participate in the planning process in their areas and the consultation process and accorded with the key principles established therein for consulting with the public. Principally, these are:
- 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 in the vicinity of the land.
 - 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.

Three Rivers Council Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020)

- 4.4 The Applicant has conducted its community consultation work in line with Three Rivers District Council's own Statement of Community Involvement (March 2022) which offers the following guidance:

5.3 Pre-application discussions. Responding to development proposals, in the form of preapplication advice, is a service offered and encouraged by the Development Management section. Whilst there is no legal requirement for pre-application discussions, the Council will welcome such discussions with developers for all applications but particularly for 'major' applications or applications that are likely to be sensitive or controversial. Pre application discussions can provide many benefits in contributing to quality outcomes and avoiding delay, including through:

- *Early identification of key issues*
- *Opportunity to give early guidance on policies*
- *Potential for better quality submissions*
- *Dealing with issues upfront leading to quicker and more straightforward processing of applications*



- Identify proposals which are unlikely to be given planning permission and avoid subsequent appeals
- Potential to save time and money on all sides (in long run)

5.4 Local Planning Authorities do have the power to charge for services provided in the form of pre-application discussions. Although such powers are discretionary, a majority of Local Planning Authorities within Hertfordshire and elsewhere in England have introduced charges for the service. On 4 April 2011 the Development Management Section introduced charges for pre-application advice. The charges for pre-application advice have been based on the amount of time and resource involved in responding to pre-application requests. Details of the service and charges applicable are available at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/pre-applicationstage>.

5.5 Pre-application community consultation. Again whilst there is no legal requirement for pre-application consultation with the community, the Council will encourage developers to undertake this, particularly for large scale developments which are likely to have wider public interest.

5.6 Pre application community engagement events must be organised by the applicant and should be held in a suitable place near to the development site or in a neutral area, and the applicant must pay all costs. It is important that as many people as possible have the opportunity to discuss schemes, and consultation should be held at a stage in the design process where the results of discussion can influence decisions on the development proposed. 13

5.7 The findings of this consultation should then be summarised by the developer, setting out details of whom they have consulted, the responses received and how the consultation has informed the development scheme. This consultation summary should be submitted as part of the planning application. 5.8 Pre-application community consultation may take various forms depending on the nature of the proposal, and may include methods summarised in Table 3 including area forums or public exhibitions. It should be noted that Table 3 is an indicative summary of the consultation methods that may be applicable to broad type of applications. It will not always be necessary to carry out all the consultation methods identified for a particular type of application.

5.9 Table 3: Consultation on Planning Applications

Type of Development	Other Consultation Methods where appropriate
‘Major Applications: • Homes- 10 or more than 0.5 hectare • Offices/ research and development /light industry; heavy industry/ storage/ warehousing; retail, distribution and servicing; agricultural, leisure, clinics, parking, education (including changes of use); all where the floorspace	• Engage in pre-application discussions with the Council • Prepare circular information on the intention to make an application and distribute widely • Online information of relevant information to proposals • Public meeting • Public Exhibition • Development/Planning Briefs • Workshops - Enquiry by Design/Planning



<i>created is 1,000 square metres or more</i>	<i>for Real</i>
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5.10 For the most significant or sensitive proposals where wide community interest is anticipated, it would be advisable to discuss community involvement arrangements with the community at the initial stage to invite suggestions on how involvement should best take place to meet the needs of the community.

5.11 For such proposals, there should be at least one interactive involvement event designed to enable all interested parties to attend, receive information, participate and feedback information on the area and its communities and views on possible development.

5.12 Such an event might take the form of a place check, enquiry by design event, exhibition and workshop, a planning for real exercise, public meeting or similar, facilitated interactive event. More explanation of these terms is included in the glossary.

- 4.5 The Applicant has undertaken a thorough and open process of pre-application consultation on the proposal, with involvement from the full range of relevant local stakeholders.
- 4.6 This activity has met the requirements of both national and local policy with regards to consultation and engagement. More detail on the public consultation activities is set out in this report.



5. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- 5.1 Through the consultation process, the Applicant has ensured that the local community were properly informed of the plans and that they had the opportunity to comment on the proposals.
- 5.2 The consultation strategy implemented by the Applicant included:
- A leaflet advertising the plans and the public consultation event which was distributed to 5,197 local residential and business addresses.
 - A dedicated project website providing information on the proposals as well as access to the content from the community consultation.
 - Email correspondence with local stakeholders inviting them to meet for discussions on the emerging proposals.

Written Engagement

- 5.3 The Applicant has written to a series of key stakeholders throughout the course of the consultation, including politicians and residents surrounding the site.
- 5.4 The following political stakeholders were contacted as part of the public consultation:
- Chorleywood North & Sarratt ward Councillors, Three Rivers District Council
 - Durrants ward Councillors, Three Rivers District Council
 - Dickinsons ward Councillors, Three Rivers District Council
 - Three Rivers Rural Division Councillor, Hertfordshire County Council
 - Sarratt Parish Council
 - Croxley Green Parish Council
- 5.5 To promote the opening of the public consultation, the Applicant produced an invitation leaflet that was distributed to 5,197 addresses in the local area.
- 5.6 The distribution area was decided based on the number and location of addresses in the vicinity of the site who would be closely impacted by the proposed development. The area covered by the leaflet distribution is shown below.





- 5.7 The invitation leaflet provided an overview of the plans, as well as details of the public consultation webinar, a feedback questionnaire and contact details should members of the community wish to get in touch.
- 5.8 A copy of the invitation leaflet is available as **Appendix A**.
- 5.9 To make the process as accessible as possible, leaflets included details to contact the Cratus Group team by email, phone or freepost with both a printed feedback form attached to the leaflet and a version available online.

Public Consultation Webinar

- 5.10 The public consultation webinar event took place on Tuesday, 1 October 2024 at 19:00.
- 5.11 During the event, information on the proposed development was presented via a presentation and members of the project team were available to answer any questions on the day. The presentation covered the following:
- The planning background
 - The background history of the Site
 - Local Built Context
 - Site Considerations
 - Landscape: Green Belt
 - Landscape Concept
 - Summary of Site Constraints



- Site Vision and Masterplan
- Ecology
- Key Transport Nodes
- Next stages of the consultation

- 5.12 Following the presentation, a Q & A session took place which lasted for approximately 45 minutes with the project team.
- 5.13 A copy of the slides shared with attendees is available as **Appendix B**. Feedback given at and after these events is detailed in section 6, 'Consultation Feedback'.
- 5.14 In total, 127 people joined the webinar including 11 members of the project team.
- 5.15 A video the public consultation webinar was posted on the project website on 2 October 2024 for visitors to the website to view. It was made clear during the public consultation webinar that a video would be posted on the project website.

5.16 Project Website

- 5.17 To reach a wider range of people and create a more accessible engagement programme, the Applicant deployed digital engagement methods as part of the engagement strategy. This has taken the form of a dedicated website.
- 5.18 The dedicated website ([www.https://bit.ly/Croxley-Green](https://bit.ly/Croxley-Green)) was set up by Placechangers Ltd, a digital planning engagement platform, as a gateway to the scheme. The website acts both as an information resource and a route for the local community to provide feedback.
- 5.19 The website includes information about the development, an interactive map of the proposals, a video of the public consultation webinar and how to get in touch.
- 5.20 As of 1 November 2024, the project website has received 1,937 individual clicks.

5.21 Direct Engagement Meetings

- 5.22 In addition to the public-facing activity undertaken as part of the consultation strategy, the Applicant offered to meet key political stakeholders in September 2024, including those listed in section 5.1.
- 5.23 As a result of this direct engagement, discussions have taken place with several Three Rivers District Councillors around the planning application. Issues discussed include access arrangements, public open space, the density and tenure of housing provided, the local centre, community infrastructure provision, construction traffic, landscaping and drainage.



6. Consultation Feedback

Feedback Questionnaire

- 6.1 To give an opportunity for attendees to provide feedback on the scheme, the Applicant provided a feedback questionnaire that was mailed to residents through the consultation leaflet and online via the website. The feedback forms are reproduced in **Appendix C**.
- 6.2 The printed questionnaire comprised the following questions:
- Do you support the provision of 50 per cent affordable housing in these proposals?
 - What type of housing would you like to see more of in the local area?
 - A design code will be prepared as part of an outline planning application. What aspects do you consider are especially important for this?
 - General Comments
- 6.3 The online questionnaire comprised the following questions:
- Do you like to leave any general comments on the proposals? If so, please add them below.
 - How can the development foster community spirit and sense of pride? Do you think local stewardship schemes would help with this ambition
 - Are there any reasons you may be more sensitive to the impacts of the project
 - Is there anything specific about the project that you would like more information on because you are concerned it may affect your health
 - Is there anything else we should consider in the health impact assessment?

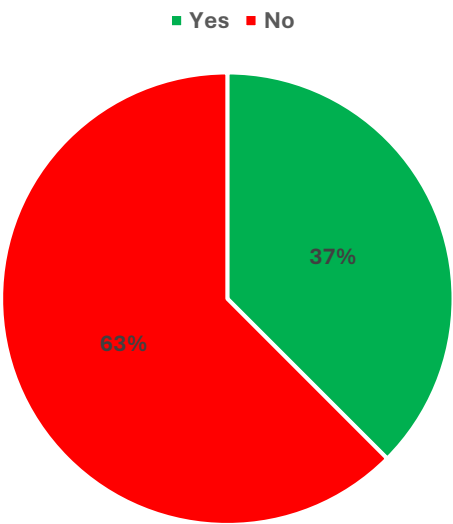


Feedback Summary

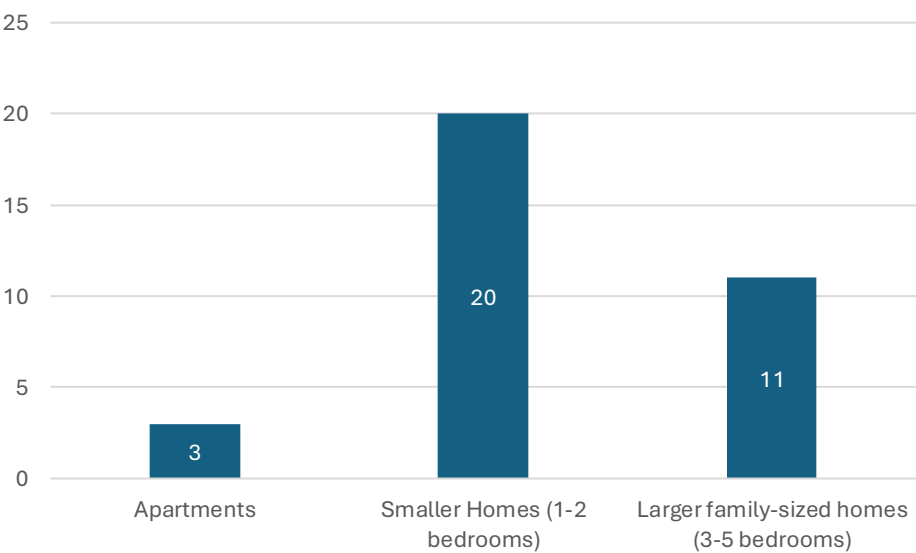
6.4 As of 1 November 2024, there have been 1,937 clicks on the consultation leaflet online and 77 physical feedback questionnaires processed. Feedback was requested by 13 October 2024. A summary of the feedback received is as follows:

6.5 Physical Feedback Forms

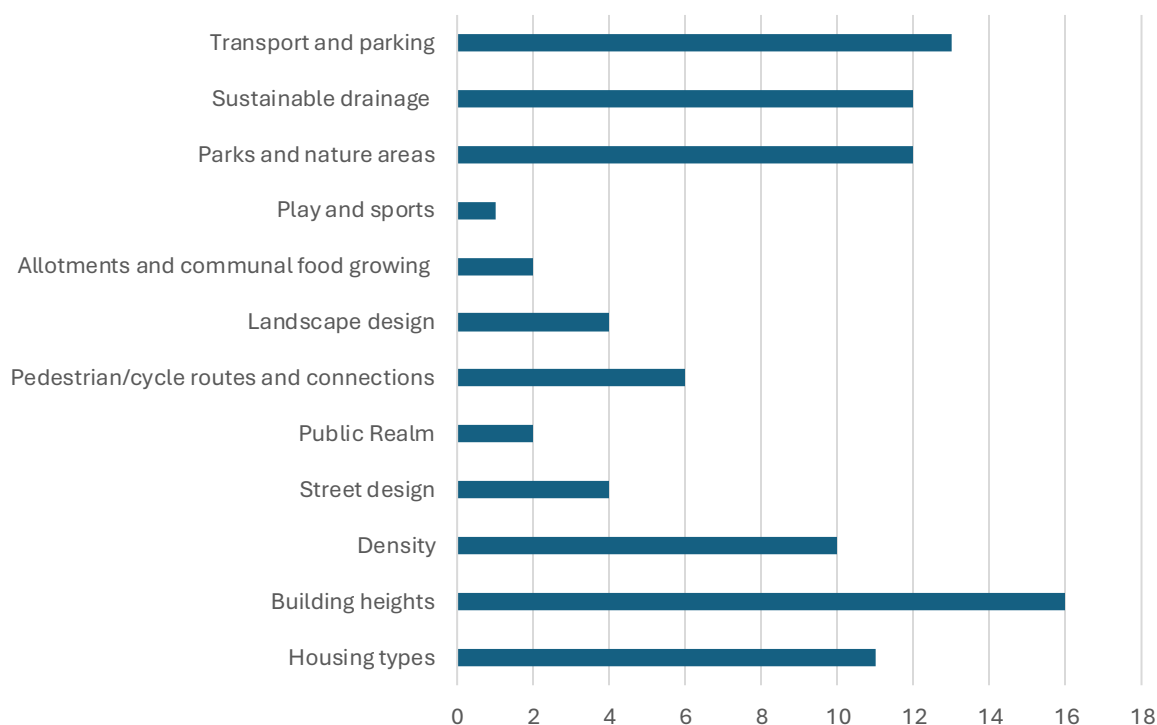
1. Do you support the provision of 50% affordable housing in these proposals?



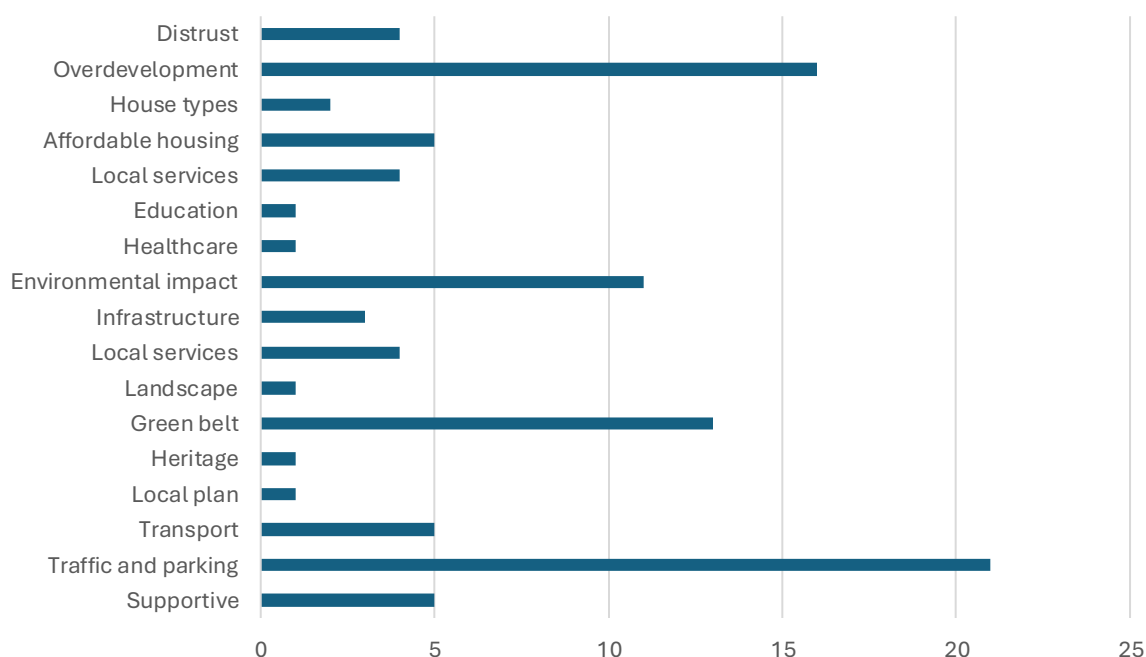
2. What type of housing would you like to see more of in the local area?



3. A design code will be prepared as part of an outline planning application. What aspects do you consider are especially important for this?



4. General Comments on Proposals



6.6 Online Questionnaire

For the online questionnaire the responses to the questions have been grouped into three categories: productive suggestions, critiques/objections, and key questions. In total, there were 328 responses with three peaks in response, one at the time of the leaflet distribution, another at the time of the webinar, and a final peak as the advertised consultation period ended.

1. Do you like to leave any general comments on the proposals?

Positive Suggestions

- **Affordable Housing (15 responses):** Highlighted a demand for truly affordable homes, stating most proposed housing would not benefit local families. There were calls for a higher percentage of smaller homes.
- **Improved Infrastructure (11 responses):** expressed the necessity for enhanced road and public transport links, stressing that local infrastructure cannot support the proposed housing. Suggestions included traffic calming measures and additional bus routes.
- **Increased Green Space (8 responses):** suggested prioritising green spaces over housing, citing a need for parks and recreational areas. They argue for a healthier balance between development and conservation.

Critiques/Objections

- **Inappropriate Development on Green Belt (56 responses):** objected to the project based on its location on Green Belt land, fearing long-term damage to the community's character and environment
- **Traffic Congestion (41 responses):** emphasised the negative impact of increased traffic, citing existing congestion and inadequate access roads.
- **Excessive Density (31 responses):** highlighted concerns over the proposed density of 600 homes, suggesting it would overwhelm local infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare.

Key Questions

- **Traffic Management (16 responses):** Questioned how traffic congestion would be managed, particularly during peak hours and school runs.
- **Local Infrastructure Readiness (12 responses):** Asked if local infrastructure, specifically schools and healthcare facilities, would adequately accommodate the influx of new residents.
- **Affordability and Housing Type (10 responses):** Enquired about the housing types planned and their affordability for local residents, requesting clearer details on pricing and inclusivity.

2. How can the development foster community spirit and sense of pride? Do you think local stewardship schemes would help with this ambition?

Positive Suggestions

- **Amenities and Facilities (7 mentions):** Enhancing community spirit through the introduction of communal spaces, facilities such as sports centres, and maintaining green spaces were highlighted as essential for integration and pride.



- **Nature Conservation (6 mentions):** Preserving local habitats and adding more green areas, alongside protecting existing trees and wildlife, was viewed as vital for maintaining community identity and pride.
- **Local Involvement (5 mentions):** Engaging the community and involving younger residents was suggested as a way to foster pride and spirit, with local stewardship schemes proposed to enhance community life.

Critiques/Objections

- **Opposition to Development (45 mentions):** A significant number of responses vocally opposed the proposed development, asserting it would destroy the existing community fabric and rural charm of Croxley Green.
- **Insufficient Infrastructure (14 mentions):** Concerns were raised about adequate infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities, to support the additional population from the proposed development.
- **Negative Impact on Environment (10 mentions):** Many responses felt that the development would lead to detrimental effects on the countryside, wildlife, and overall quality of life in Croxley Green.

Key Questions

- **Community Character (7 mentions):** How will the development integrate with and enhance the village's character, preventing urban sprawl and preserving local identity?
- **Impact of Development Size (5 mentions):** Queries were raised regarding the large scale of housing proposed and its implications for congestion and infrastructure capacity.
- **Sustainability Plans (4 mentions):** Questions focused on how the development would ensure environmental sustainability, maintain green spaces, and avoid overcrowding.

3. Are there any reasons you may be more sensitive to the impacts of the project?

Positive Suggestions

- **Preservation of Green Spaces (16 mentions):** Many respondents expressed the importance of maintaining green spaces and local natural habitats, emphasising their role in community wellbeing and recreational activities.
- **Infrastructure Improvements (12 mentions):** There were strong calls for adequate infrastructure developments, including schools, roads, and public transport options, to accommodate the expected population increase from the housing project.
- **Enhanced Community Facilities (10 mentions):** Suggestions were made to improve local amenities, including sports facilities and playgrounds, to benefit both existing residents and future inhabitants.



Critiques/Objections

- **Traffic and Congestion Concerns (30 mentions):** A significant number of responses highlighted the detrimental impacts of increased traffic on local roads and safety, questioning the capacity of existing infrastructures to handle the projected flow.
- **Environmental Impact (28 mentions):** Many residents objected to the potential destruction of local wildlife habitats and green areas, stressing the need for environmental preservation amidst development.
- **Overdevelopment of Area (24 mentions):** Respondents voiced fears that the project would lead to overdevelopment, turning Croxley Green from a village into a town, diminishing its community feel.

Key Questions

- **Traffic Management (15 mentions):** Questions arose regarding how the increased traffic and construction-related disruptions would be managed, especially concerning safety in residential areas.
- **Environmental Assessment (10 mentions):** Residents sought clarity on how the environmental impact of the development would be assessed and mitigated, particularly concerning local wildlife and ecosystems.
- **Infrastructure Adequacy (9 mentions):** There were inquiries about the capacity of local services, including schools and healthcare facilities, to accommodate new residents given their current strains.

4. Is there anything specific about the project that you would like more information on because you are concerned it may affect your health?

Positive Suggestions

- **Traffic Measures (6 responses):** Highlighted the need for effective traffic management, including alternative routing for vehicles to minimise congestion and improve safety around local schools.
- **Mental Health Considerations (4 respondents):** Suggested addressing the mental health impacts due to increased noise, construction, and loss of green spaces, implying that health services should be prepared for potential increases in demand.
- **Environmental Impact Reporting (4 responses):** Recommended a detailed environmental impact assessment, particularly regarding air quality, noise pollution, and the ecological consequences of construction activities.

Critiques/Objections

- **Overdevelopment Concerns (11 responses):** Categorically opposed the scale of the project, arguing that it threatens the village's character and the green belt, with several stating that they feel it is unnecessary.
- **Increased Traffic and Pollution (8 respondents):** Expressed significant concern about traffic congestion and the resultant pollution, highlighting that the infrastructure is already strained.



- **Noise and Dust Effects (7 responses):** Specifically mentioned worries about noise and dust during construction, asserting that it would negatively impact residents' daily lives and health.

Key Questions

- **Construction Timeline and Noise Management (5 respondents):** Inquired about the expected duration of construction and measures to mitigate noise during the building phase.
- **Impact on Local Services (5 queries):** Focused on how the development would affect local health services, especially considering already experienced pressures on hospitals and clinics.
- **Traffic Projections (5 respondents):** Sought clarity on how many additional vehicles were expected and how traffic flow would be managed, particularly around schools.

7. Response to Feedback

- 7.1 This section summarises the Applicant's response to the feedback received and explains how the comments and suggestions from all consultation participants have informed the final planning application submission.
- 7.2 There has been a large volume of feedback received in relation to the proposed development, and this is likely to continue during the planning application process and beyond. It is not possible to respond to every detailed point or question received so the commentary below focuses on the key themes identified.

Key Issue Raised	Consultant Team Response
The Green Belt designation of the site and whether this designation makes the site unsuitable for development	Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Applicant contends that 'very special circumstances' do exist and that the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed. Notwithstanding the above, the draft NPPF sets out a new designation of grey belt. This is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising of parcels that make a limited contribution to the five purposes. For reasons set out in the supporting Planning Statement, the Applicant contends the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt. Development in this instance is not regarded as inappropriate, provided the necessary tests are met, all of which are true in this case.



Increased traffic congestion on key routes and concerns around access roads into the site	The Transport Assessment (TA) will the traffic generation of the proposed development and assign this to the network on the basis of information from the Herts CC COMET traffic model. We have collected traffic count data at a number of off-site junctions and, with appropriate traffic growth added, the addition of development traffic will be tested at these junctions and appropriate mitigation measures considered if necessary. The TA will also consider the proposed access roads to the development and how they will cope with the additional development traffic in terms of the available road space and their connections to the wider highway network. We have been discussing such issues with the local highway authority and the agreed approach is to put active and sustainable travel measures at the top of the transport considerations for the development. As a result, we shall be looking towards providing walk/cycle infrastructure and priority for such modes, potential for Beryl Bikes on the development, bringing a bus onto the site, and actively promoting use of such transport. All of these measures, along with the local centre and school offering on site, will improve the travel choice offering for the residents of the new development and for those residents of the existing residential estate to the south.
Increased demands on parking in the Croxley Green area. How will this be mitigated?	The proposed development will provide sufficient on-site parking for the proposed development uses. The promotion of active/sustainable travel from the site will tend not only keep use of the private car to a minimum but will also help to help to reduce car ownership within the development and keep parking demand to a minimum. We do not envisage parking from the development spilling over into adjoining residential areas.
The proposed density of the development and the perception that this is out of character with the local street scene in the Croxley Green area	The overall average density across the development is 44DPH lower than that suggested in the Emerging Local Plan Regulation 18 which proposes densities of 50DPH. There are several benefits of increased density living. Firstly, it can build larger communities and promote greater social interaction. It leads to better utilisation of public transport compared with lower density areas which are typically more reliant on cars. This can result in significant benefits both from an environmental and personal cost basis. Being closer to places of work and leisure also mean people in increased density areas can opt to walk or cycle to their destination more so than lower density suburban areas. Other public infrastructure also benefits from economics of scale, making it more efficient and cost effective by serving more people in less space.



	Increased density development can be visually appealing and provide a desirable living environment. It promotes the concept of ‘compact development’ as an alternative to urban sprawl. Provision of high quality public outdoor space and other amenities is also an essential driver in quality of life. Where parcels have increased density, the development is based on the concept of ‘gentle densities’ which captures developments of higher storey heights, essentially emulating the Victorian mansion blocks of that era. This can increase the number of homes whilst also maintaining a ‘human scale’ character. The design code will help deliver appropriate densities with a compact, land efficient development; more walkable, less car dominated neighbourhoods; better use of green and blue infrastructure; and socially positive public realm design. Croxley Green has areas of strong existing character, and the design code has emerged from an in-depth contextual analysis with development proposals taking cues and inspiration from the best of Croxley Green. The proposed character of the development will create a harmonious relationship with Croxley Green by design being informed by its surroundings. Architecture that uses materials that are native to the development location which further strengthens the connection with its environment and gives the development a sense of belonging.
The provision of affordable housing on the site and the type of tenure of the affordable housing provided	Providing a significant boost in the delivery of housing, and in particular affordable housing, is a key priority for the Government. Having a housing market that offers choice, flexibility and affordable housing is critical to our economic and social well-being. The proposed development includes 50% (up to 300 units) on site affordable housing provision which exceeds the requirements of Policy CP4 (45%) of the Core Strategy. The proposed affordable housing tenure split is 70% Social Rent, 25% First Homes and 5% Shared Ownership provided in line with the tenure split requirements of Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. The Applicant recognises that the highest need for affordable housing in Three Rivers District is for social rented properties; therefore, all of the rented affordable housing provision comprises social rented units which was strongly encouraged by the District Council during the pre-application process. It is considered that the enhanced affordable housing offer meets the District Council’s affordable housing policy requirements in full and will be secured by way of a Section 106 planning obligation.



	The delivery of up to 300 affordable homes at the application site will make a very substantial contribution towards the on-going annual affordable housing needs of the district, particularly when viewed in the context of past rates of affordable housing delivery identified in the Affordable Housing Statement that accompanies the application.
The environmental impact of the development including the impact on local wildlife habitats and ecosystems and whether there will be a Biodiversity Net Gain	Avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures identified in this EclA will be incorporated into the detailed design proposals for the Scheme and implemented as part of the overall development of the Scheme. The Scheme has maximised opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity within the proposals wherever possible. The scheme will deliver a biodiversity net gain in excess of 10%. The potential to maximise net gain within the redline boundary of the Scheme has been explored based on the scheme's design parameters and targeting realistic and deliverable habitats as part of the scheme's soft landscaping. The mandatory requirement for 10% BNG has been achieved and surpassed for the scheme and the Trading Rules have been met.
The impact the development will have on the existing local infrastructure including healthcare and education services	The Project's inclusion of a large space in the local centre for NHS health and social care provision offers a range of opportunities, including to improve GP facilities locally. This could benefit not only residents of the development, but also the existing fourteen thousand local people who use the existing outdated New Road Surgery converted townhouse premises. The Project therefore offers NHS space for substantial improvements to local health and social care infrastructure. For example, moving the New Road Surgery a short distance to new purpose-built facilities in the Project's Local Centre is supported by local consultation feedback as well as in principle by the practice. While new dwelling delivery has been consistent in the area, birth numbers have been falling, leading to a potential surplus in school capacity in the future. However, despite the projected decline, the scheme reserves land for a potential new two form-entry primary school to accommodate the expected increase in primary school students from the development. The impact on secondary schools will likely be manageable, given the existing spare capacity and potential for expansion at Croxley Danes School. It is acknowledged a potential impact on early years and special educational needs provision could arise and it is likely CIL funds will be used to address these needs, potentially by incorporating these services into the proposed new primary school.



The impact on the local community during the construction phase of the development	There will be additional traffic associated with construction, including heavy vehicle traffic. A Construction Management Plan, including proposed lorry routeing, will be in place during the construction phases of development. The plan will also include restrictions on timing of deliveries to site, suitable measures to ensure the highway is kept clear of dust and mud.
The provision of the local centre and the nature of the community facilities to be provided on the site	The mix of community services are centred upon a distinctive public square, which has been designed so that it can be utilised flexibly for a range of community activities as well as providing additional parking for the local centre, parents evenings or events held at the Community Hub, the result is a public amenity as well as a commercial entity. Incorporated within the centre is provision for EV charging and Beryl Bike hire, potentially reducing car trips and encouraging cleaner transportation, giving the best chance for local business to attract trade and thrive within its setting. The Local Centre has provision for 0.82 hectares of community space excluding the school, delivering a small and large retail unit, which could be occupied by a convenience store and café, NHS health and social care services and the Community Hub providing a Hall (multi-purpose space) and a self-contained communal workspace.
Whether the development be highly sustainable and the provisions being taken to ensure the maximum levels of energy efficiency	The development will adopt an all-electric strategy, eliminating fossil fuel use and integrating renewable technologies such as PVs and ASHPs. It will be designed to exceed Part L (2021) requirements by achieving a significant reduction in regulated CO ₂ emissions, as outlined in the Energy Statement.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Applicant has sought to engage with the community, including local residents, businesses and representatives to inform them about plans at Little Green Lane and to take onboard their views about the proposals.
- 8.2 The consultation strategy has set out to engage widely, with the event being planned outside of school holidays during the evening, when the most people could attend virtually, including those with work or family commitments.
- 8.3 With 5,197 invitation leaflets and feedback forms distributed locally, a wide area of the community in Croxley Green has been notified of the plans and invited to give their feedback.
- 8.4 The webinar held by the Applicants was well-attended, with 116 total attendees who engaged throughout with 161 submissions through the Q&A function of the webinar.

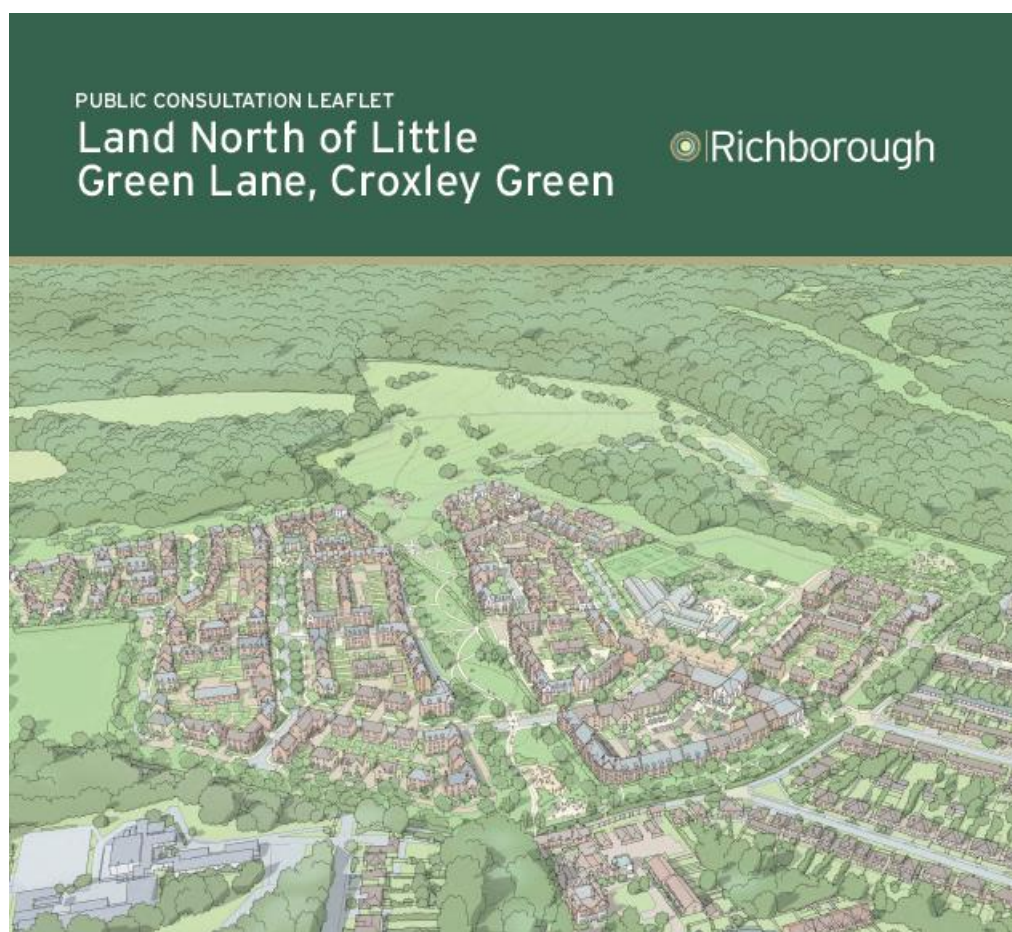


- 8.5 In the event someone could not attend the event, they could access a recording online and ask questions by email or by phone. They would also have had an option to give their feedback on a printed form for free, or via the project website.
- 8.6 The response through both means of feedback was also strong, with 1,937 individual clicks on the consultation website, 328 responses to the online consultation and 77 printed feedback forms returned by freepost.
- 8.7 Insightful questions and comments from the community alongside constructive conversations with local representatives have informed the plans as they are now submitted.



Appendices

Appendix A – Community Consultation Leaflet



Introduction

Richborough is pleased to be bringing forward proposals for a new residential-led mixed use development on land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

The development has the potential to provide up to 600 new homes and we are committed to consulting with the local community in order to hear your views. We will be holding a public webinar with the project team on **Tuesday, 1 October 2024 at 19:00** which you are very welcome to join and ask questions.

This leaflet has been produced to offer a summary of the emerging proposals and to provide you with an opportunity to provide your feedback, either by post or via the project website. To sign up for the public webinar, please visit our website <https://bit.ly/Croxley-Green> or scan the QR code.



About Richborough

Established in 2003, Richborough is one of the UK's leading promoters of land for development. Our multi-disciplinary team comprises qualified planners, architects, urban designers and engineers who work on behalf of a range of landowners to bring their holdings forward through the planning process.

Richborough is committed to creating new places which achieve design quality and leave positive legacies. We work collaboratively with Councils, local communities and key stakeholders to ensure our proposals meet local needs and aspirations.

The Site

The Site comprises approximately 41 hectares of land lying immediately north of Little Green Lane, which forms the settlement boundary of Croxley Green. The Site currently comprises private agricultural land and, historically, has been under arable rotation. Should it be decided that local housing needs necessitate the Site's release from the Green Belt, then we are fully committed to delivering the right mix of homes and substantial public benefits to meet local needs. Importantly, this includes bringing well over half of the Site into the public realm as high quality, usable open space.





Our Vision

Richborough's vision for the Site is as a high quality, well-connected and highly sustainable new neighbourhood of up to 600 homes of which 50% will be affordable housing with a choice of dwelling types and sizes including adaptable and accessible wheelchair housing. The proposals have been founded upon the creation of an extensive network of new green space to showcase the Site's surroundings.

Taking cues from some of the older parts of Croxley Green and the surrounding villages, our vision aims to create a lasting legacy and a place to be proud of, comprising a variety of well-designed homes suitable for people at every stage of life and including the development of a new community hub, a new primary school, local shops and medical centre. Coherently laid out streets and green spaces will promote healthy, active lifestyles and alongside creating new habitats for wildlife, flora and fauna.

The new local centre will introduce new services and amenities to Croxley Green and help establish an enhanced sense of local community. The local centre is proposed to comprise:



A new medical centre and allied services, including a pharmacy



Visitor parking spaces



A new one form entry primary school with additional land to safeguard expansion to two form entry if required



Electric Vehicle charging



A convenience store and associated parking



Cycle stands and bike hire scheme



A healthy eating café

The location of the proposed local centre towards the southern edge of the Site with Little Green Lane, aims to provide new community focus for the area but equally, to ensure delivery at an early stage of construction, should outline planning consent be granted.



Access and Movement

The proposed development will be a walkable and well-connected new place to live. A new network of pedestrian and cycle routes is proposed to safely and conveniently link housing to the new school, facilities within the local centre and landscaped green space. Furthermore, pedestrian and cycle connectivity will be improved via enhancements to Canterbury Way and Durrants Drive.

Two vehicular accesses are proposed into the development via Little Green Lane, opposite Durrants Drive and Canterbury Way. These locations are currently in discussion with both Hertfordshire County Council and Three Rivers District Council, as are other potential signal and junction improvements. Overall, the proposed development will give rise to a wider transport network serving Croxley Green.

Environment and Sustainability

As acknowledged by Three Rivers District Council, there is a climate emergency and we are considering a range of ways to ensure the proposed development will appropriately respond to achieve good environmental sustainability. An all-electric servicing strategy is proposed for the development to eliminate fossil fuel use and significantly reduce carbon emissions. Renewable energy sources will be integrated to meet a portion of the development's energy needs, with roof-mounted photovoltaic panels generating electricity on-site. We envisage circa 50% biodiversity net gain will be provided, far exceeding policy requirement.



Feedback Questionnaire

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

1. Do you support the provision of 50 per cent affordable housing in these proposals?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. What type of housing would you like to see more of in the local area?

☐ Apartments ☐ Larger family-sized homes (3-5 bedrooms)
☐ Smaller homes (1-2 bedrooms)

3. A design code will be prepared as part of an outline planning application. What aspects do you consider are especially important for this (please choose up to two options)?

☐ Housing types	☐ Pedestrian/cycle routes and connections	☐ Play and sports
☐ Building heights	☐ Landscape design	☐ Parks and nature areas
☐ Density	☐ Allotments and communal food growing	☐ Sustainable drainage
☐ Street design		☐ Transport and parking
☐ Public realm		

4. General Comments on proposals



Timeframe and Next Steps

Our outline application is due to be submitted in the coming months with timings dependent on a range of factors including the completion of the necessary technical work and the consultation process.

We'll carefully consider all your responses to the questionnaire included within this consultation leaflet provided you return it to the FREEPOST address provided.

Richborough is committed to hearing from you before any formal plans are submitted. We have community consultation experts ready to answer your questions and provide printed materials in different formats if you need them.

Do you have any questions or requests? Please scan the QR code to fill out the short survey or visit the project website - <https://bit.ly/Croxley-Green>

Please return all completed surveys to FREEPOST-Cratus Communications, Fora, 180 Borough High Street, SE11LB or email to dflynn@cratus.co.uk

For any queries please feel free to call the project team on 0800 8611 218.

All consultation responses are requested by Sunday, 13th October 2024.



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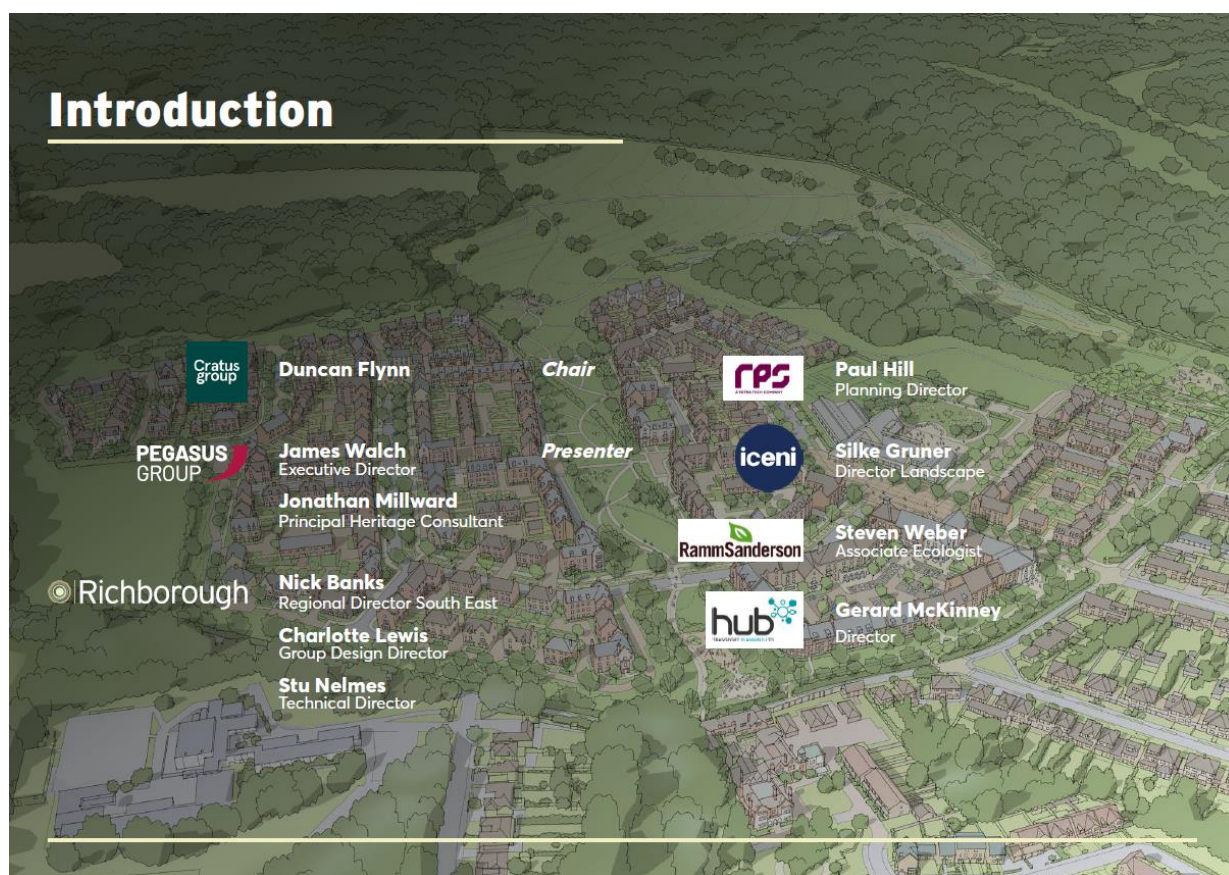
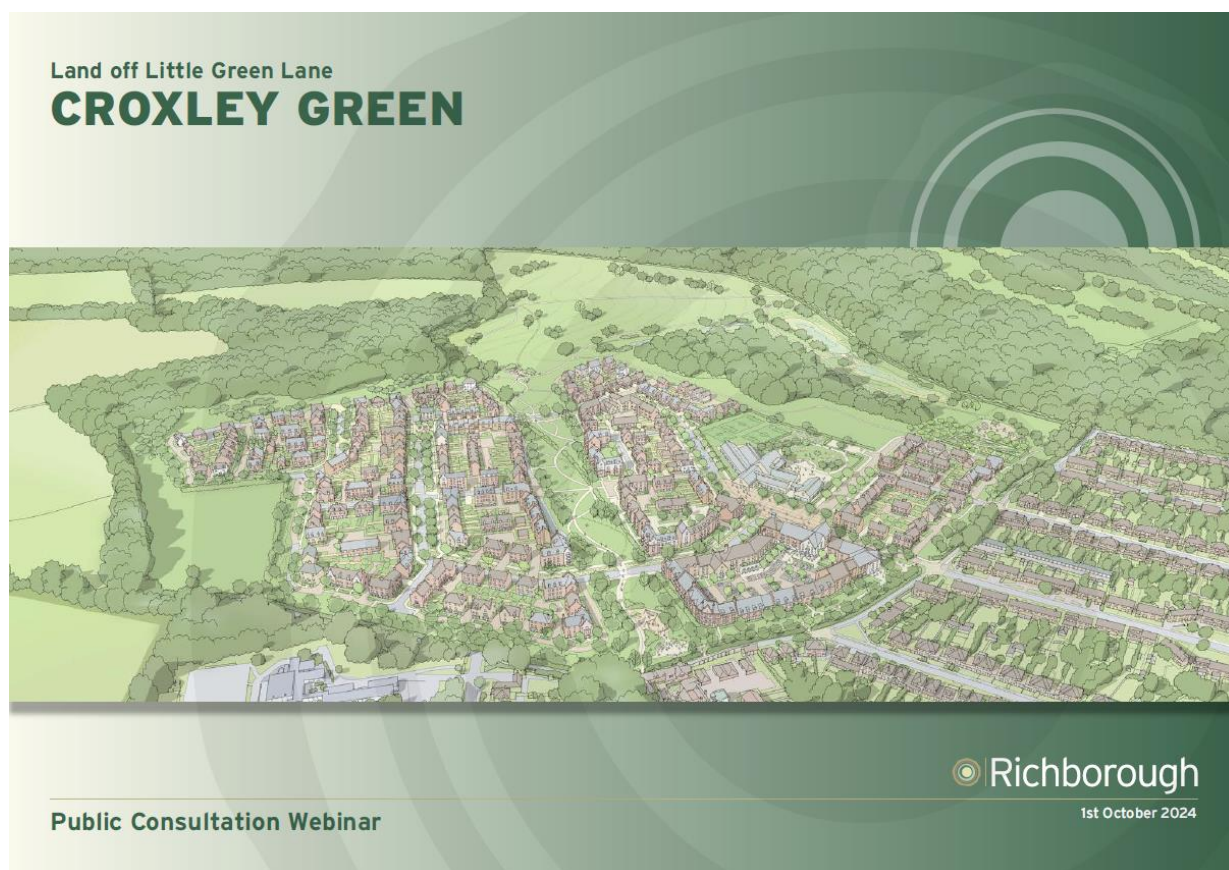
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Appendix B – Public Consultation Webinar presentation



About Richborough

Established for over 20 years, Richborough is at the forefront of the UK's strategic land promotion industry.

We use a responsible approach to design and secure planning permission for high quality residential and commercial developments.

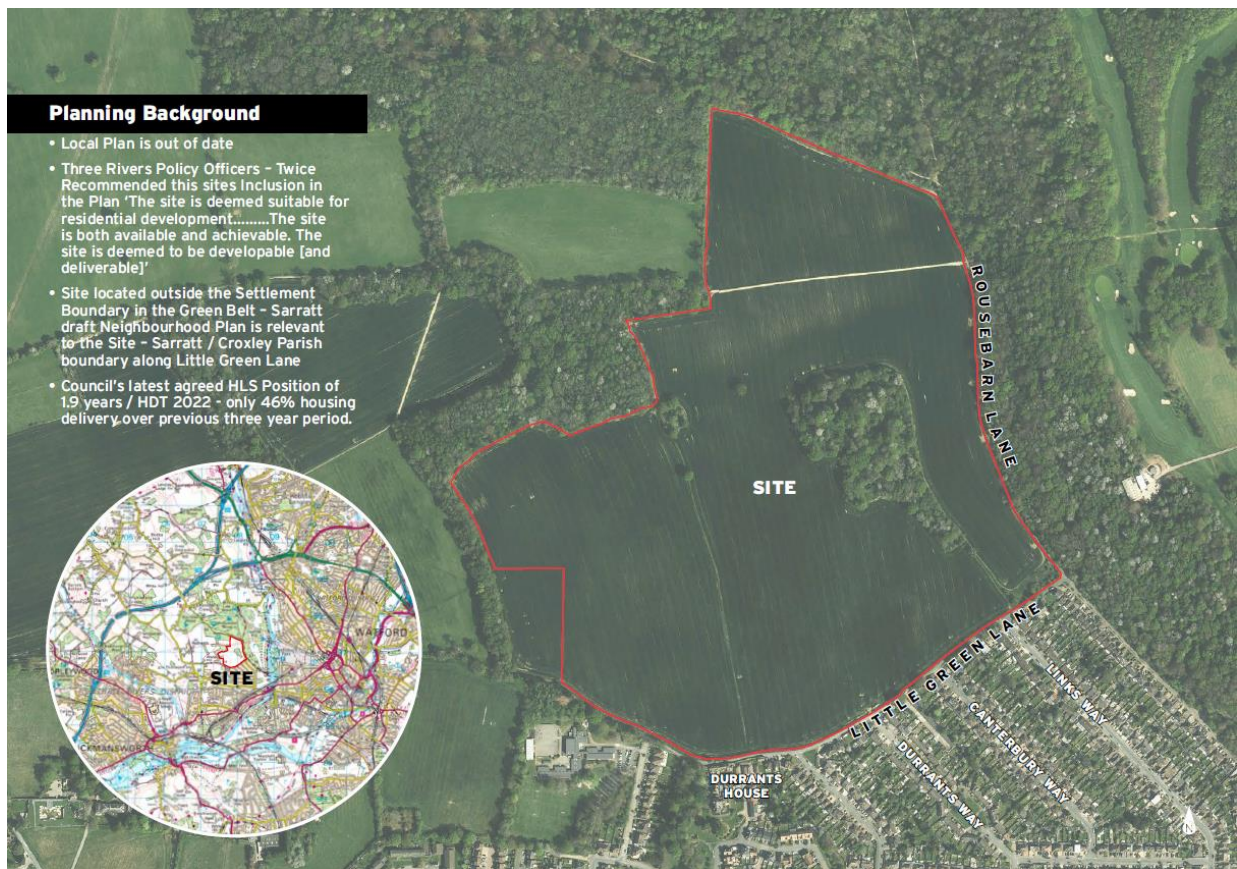
Our teams in Birmingham, Bristol and London comprise chartered industry professionals including planners, surveyors, architects, urban designers and engineers.

Our approach ensures that our masterplans and design legacies can be easily delivered by developers, enhance communities for generations to come and maximise landowners' assets.



Planning Background

- Local Plan is out of date
- Three Rivers Policy Officers - Twice Recommended this sites inclusion in the Plan 'The site is deemed suitable for residential development.....The site is both available and achievable. The site is deemed to be developable [and deliverable]'
- Site located outside the Settlement Boundary in the Green Belt - Sarratt draft Neighbourhood Plan is relevant to the Site - Sarratt / Croxley Parish boundary along Little Green Lane
- Council's latest agreed HLS Position of 1.9 years / HDT 2022 - only 46% housing delivery over previous three year period.



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The Site

- The site area is approximately 40.68 hectares.
- The site is formed of one irregular field enclosure contained by woodland, hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.
- The western, northern and eastern boundaries are broadly contained by mature woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow trees. The southern boundary is formed by Little Green Lane and the existing settlement edge of Croxley Green.
- The topography generally falls from the south-west to the eastern boundary ranging between 84m AOD to 58m AOD.
- Within the site is an area of Ancient Woodland and a hedgerow running north to south.
- A public right of way crosses the site from east to west.
- The site lies approximately 4.0km to the west of Watford town centre.



01 View from public right of way looking west across the site



02 View from public right of way looking south towards Durrants House



03 View from the south-east corner of the site looking north-west towards the ancient woodland



04 View from Little Green Lane along the southern boundary hedgerow

Local Built Context



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Site considerations



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Landscape: Green Belt

Green Belt Policy

Green Belt is a spatial planning policy, which controls which types of development can come forward within certain areas of the countryside.

It is not concerned with natural beauty, or the quality of the land or landscape.

There are 5 purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in national planning policy.

- To prevent sprawl
- To prevent towns merging into one another
- To prevent encroachment into the countryside
- To protect the special character and setting of historic towns
- To encourage the recycling of urban or derelict land.

Ordinarily, most development is not permitted within the Green Belt, except in certain circumstances. Richborough believe that very special circumstances exist to allow development here within the Green Belt.

The current Green Belt boundary follows Little Green Lane.

The dense woodland forms a very strong natural boundary to further development north of Croxley Green.

The woodland and clearly identifiable treelines around the Site would provide an equally strong boundary to sprawl (purpose 1), and would also for a strong defensible boundary between the settlement and the countryside (purpose 4). The Site plays no role in relation to Green Belt purposes 2 or 4, and all Green Belt land performs equally in relation to the 5th purpose.



Landscape: Concept

The GI is structured around the retained woodland block, and the northern and eastern parts of the Site. The southern boundary hedgerow will also form a GI corridor.

A central green along the vista from the public footpath to Durrants House, and incorporating the field hedgerow, forms the third key GI link.



Summary of site constraints



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Site Vision

Land north of Little Green Lane will be a high quality, well-connected and highly sustainable new neighbourhood, founded upon the creation of an outstanding network of green infrastructure which showcases its rich surroundings. Taking cues from some of the older parts of Croxley Green and surrounding local villages, the vision aims to create a lasting legacy and place to be proud of, comprising a variety of well-designed homes suitable for people at every stage of life, supported by a community hub, formed of a new primary school, local shop and medical centre. Coherently laid out streets and green spaces will promote healthy, active lifestyles and protect, enrich and create habitats for wildlife, flora and fauna.



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Green Infrastructure Strategy

- Site boundary
- Existing vegetation
- Proposed native trees
- Proposed native thicket planting
- Proposed ornamental shrubs
- Wildflower/long grass
- 3m wide cycleway
- 2m wide footway
- Hoggin path
- Mown path
- Paved square
- Drainage basins and swales
- Marginal and aquatic planting
- Decking area
- Locally Equipped Area for Play
- Potential locations for Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
- Community orchard
- Community allotments
- Focal feature, public art or LAP
- Seating area
- Public footpath
- Bridleway
- Lanes



Durrants View

Durrants View is a linear area of open space, providing physical and visual connections between the country park in the north and the residential areas in the south. It is specifically aligned to provide a vista towards Durrants House from the public footpath within the Site to the north. Durrants View will provide recreational space for residents, with areas of amenity grass for informal recreation, as well as seating areas with public art or toddlers play equipment. A cycleway and a separate footway will weave through the green from north to south, linking the various paths and streets to the east and west of the green, with the open space to the north and the settlement to the south. The green will also include areas of meadow grass, and tree and shrub planting to create areas of varied character within the wider green.



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Durrants Square



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Kitchen Garden and Play

A new area of allotments and communal growing plots, as well as an orchard is proposed within the south east of the development, providing a green connection between the new homes and the country park. The allotments are proposed to be terraced along the steeper ground here, with the terraces also providing seating and informal recreational space overlooking the NEAP area.

A large play area catering for toddlers up to teenagers, is proposed at the southern end of the Country Park. It will be designed with natural materials and timber play equipment to reflect its location within the country park.

It will be adjacent to an area of amenity grass, which could be used for informal recreation and play. Seating and picnic benches will be located within this space, which will be overlooked by the new houses to the west.



Rousebarn Country Park

A country park will be wrap around the north and east of the development. It will provide an appropriate transition between the new houses and the adjoining woodland and Park and Garden.

The country park will mostly comprise areas of meadow grass, with parkland trees and recreational paths located within it. This open character will contrast with the woodland around it, creating a parkland that retains the woodlands as the focus.

The park will include made and mown paths, seating areas and picnic benches, signage and information boards. There will be smaller areas of amenity grass for picnics and other informal recreation.



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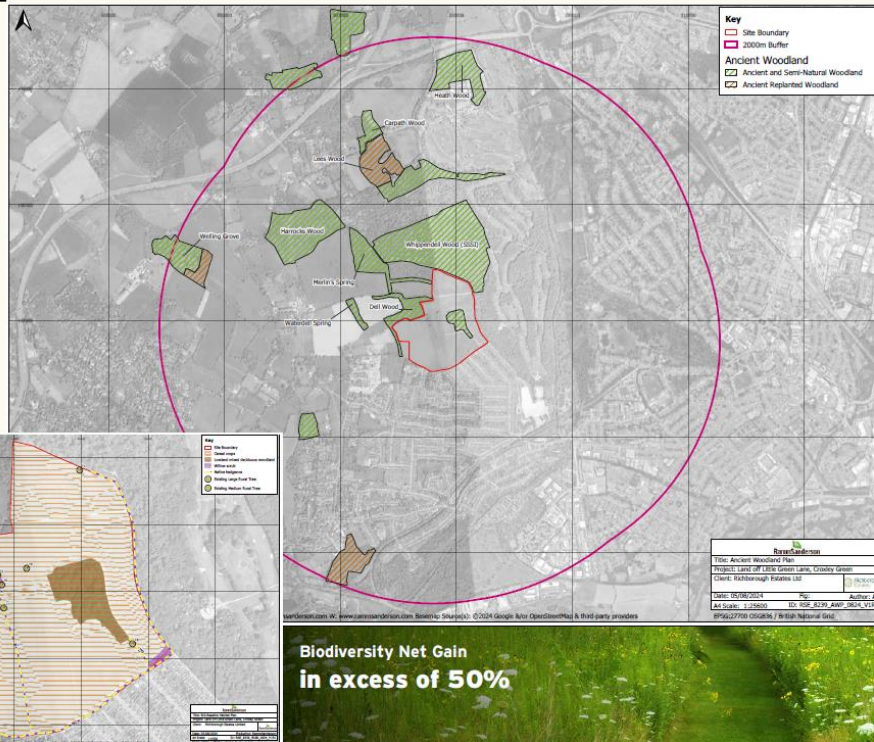
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Ecology

- Cropland is the dominant habitat within the Site. A parcel of Ancient Woodland is located within the Site to the east with other areas of Ancient Woodland surrounding the Site to the north, east and west. A native hedgerow runs through the middle of the Site with additional native hedgerows present along highway boundaries. Scattered field trees are present close to wooded edges.
- Our bat surveys of the Site have identified common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule bats, with activity mainly concentrated along woodland edges.
- Our bird surveys have identified ground nesting skylarks within the cropland. Within woodland areas we have identified bird species such as willow warbler, Cetti's warbler, linnet, goldfinch, song thrush, mistle thrush and ring-necked parakeets.
- Hedgerows were found to support scrub-nesting bird species such as whitethroat, blue tit, robin and wren.
- We identified a pair of red kites nesting within the Ancient Woodland on-site.
- We have found evidence of badger moving through the Site, but no actual setts.



Key nodes



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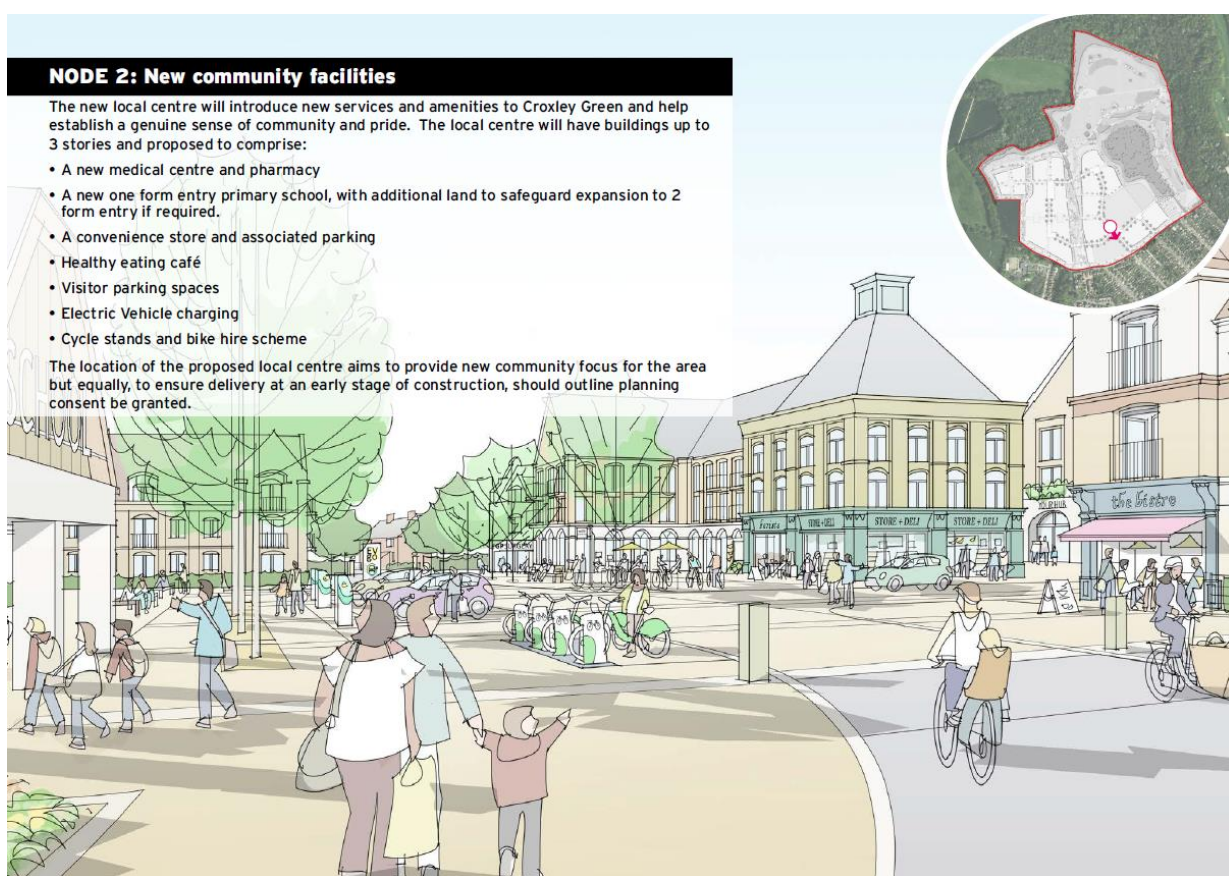
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Consultation

Over **5,000** consultation leaflets have been sent out to properties close to the site.

There are multiple ways of contacting us during the public consultation period:

- **Project Website** - <https://bit.ly/Croxley-Green>
- **Post** - FREEPOST-Cratus Communications, Fora, 180 Borough High Street, SE1 1LB
- **Email** - dflynn@cratus.co.uk
- **Telephone** - 0800 8611 218

All consultation responses are requested by:

Sunday, 13th October 2024.



Questions



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Appendix C – Printed Feedback Forms

Feedback Questionnaire

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

1. Do you support the provision of 50 per cent affordable housing in these proposals?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. What type of housing would you like to see more of in the local area?

☐ Apartments ☐ Larger family-sized homes (3-5 bedrooms)
☐ Smaller homes (1-2 bedrooms)

3. A design code will be prepared as part of an outline planning application. What aspects do you consider are especially important for this (please choose up to two options)?

☐ Housing types	☐ Pedestrian/cycle routes and connections	☐ Play and sports
☐ Building heights	☐ Landscape design	☐ Parks and nature areas
☐ Density	☐ Allotments and communal food growing	☐ Sustainable drainage
☐ Street design		☐ Transport and parking
☐ Public realm		

4. General Comments on proposals

