



MEMO

To: Picture Estates
From: Icen Engagement
Date: 4/7/2024
Title: Land North East of Great Ashby, Stevenage – Consultation Summary

Context

Iceni Engagement organised a public consultation event on behalf of Picture Estates in relation to proposals for Land North-East of Great Ashby, Stevenage.

The consultation ran from Wednesday 8th May to Thursday 6th June and included a dedicated website, emails to identified local stakeholders, a leaflet posted to 2,618 local addresses and an in person drop in event. After the event stakeholder meetings were undertaken. Images of the consultation website and a copy of the leaflet are included in Appendix 1 and 2.

The drop-in consultation event took place on Thursday 23rd May 2024, from 4pm to 7pm at Great Ashby Community Centre. At the event display boards outlined the plans for the Site and members of the project team (including ecologists, engineers, architects and designers) were on hand to speak with attendees and respond to questions.

The event was attended by 109 members of the public and 156 feedback forms were completed during the course of the consultation period, 26 of these were completed at the event and 130 were completed online.

92% of feedback forms were completed by those who stated they were local residents. A copy of the feedback form is included in Appendix 3.

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to be kept informed about the proposals by providing their email address, all 156 respondents chose to do this.

Following the consultation event, meetings were held with Great Ashby Community Council and Herts and Middlesex Badger Group on the 13th June to discuss their feedback in more detail. Meetings were also offered to Cllr Steve Jarvis, Weston Parish Council and the Friends of Great Ashby.

Summary of feedback form responses

Question 1: Are you aware the site is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of around 600 new homes within North Hertfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2011 – 2031?

- Yes 91%
- No 9%

Question 2: Do you have any comments on the design approach outlined?

153 out of 156 answered this question with feedback comments that covered the following themes.

1. Traffic and transport – 52%
2. Lack of amenities and infrastructure - 40%
3. Community character and quality of life – 21%
4. Impact on wildlife – 21%
5. Public health and safety – 9%
6. Environmental impacts – 7%

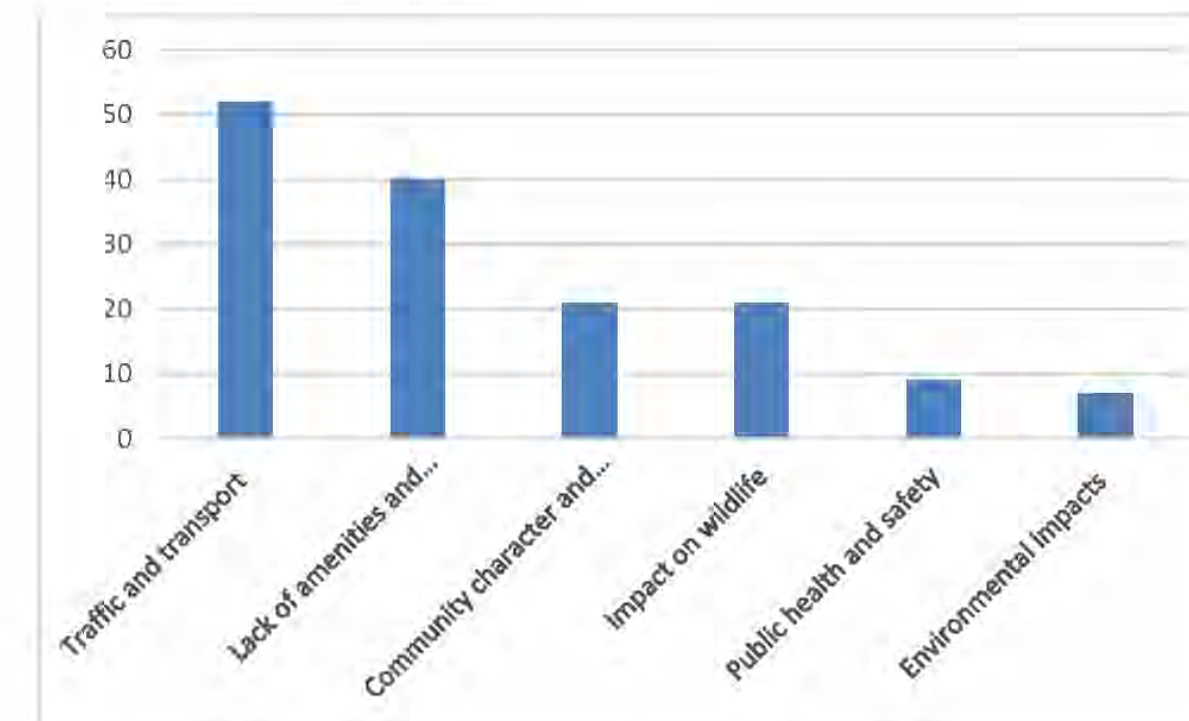


Figure 1: Free text responses to 'Do you have any comments on the design approach outlined'.

Example feedback comments:

- 'Too many houses not enough amenities in the area e.g. Doctor's dentist's hospital'
- 'I am still concerned with the accessibility and impact to Mendip Way houses including parking. There is not enough GP and dental places too. It will also impact local green area and wildlife.'
- 'I'm against this development because of the negative impact it will have on the local life and environment and lack of suitable infrastructure to accommodate the increase in the local population. There isn't a sufficient existing road network to the new houses and will lead to a significant increased traffic in the local area, and not enough parking space. Partial destruction of woodland and Green Belt that is used by many Not enough services like doctors or dental surgery with space, schools etc.'
- 'Yes! Why only one road access??'

Question 3: A new community centre will be delivered as part of the proposals for the benefit of the wider community. Do you have any thoughts on how this centre could be used by the community?

122 out of 156 respondents answered this question with feedback comments that covered the following themes.

1. Opposition to a new community centre – 37%
2. Alternative use for the space – 26%
3. Specific needs and features of the community centre - 19%
4. Scepticism over delivery – 4%
5. Questions over need – 3%

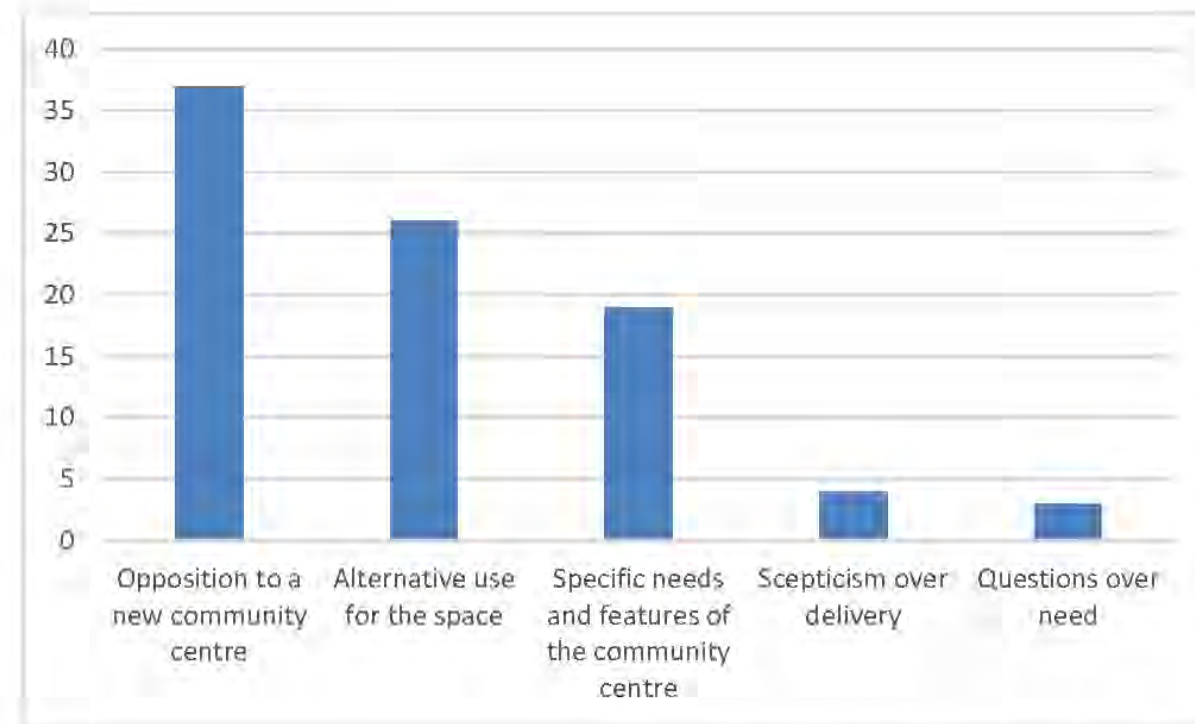


Figure 2: Free text responses to 'A new community centre will be delivered as part of the proposals for the benefit of the wider community. Do you have any thoughts on how this centre could be used by the community?'

Example feedback comments:

- 'This needs to house a GP surgery and a cafe for community living and providing a basis for the new residents.'
- 'Yes ... a cafe, a social club for loneliness, a community cafe, as well as the usual community groups such as keep fit etc.'
- 'Why build a second centre when the first centre has never been properly supported & not fully extended. Better spend funds on facilities in Serpentine Park, where there were plans for a "pavilion".'
- 'I doubt it will be delivered- most promised amenities aren't. Focus on proper access & they can use the GA one.'
- 'Youth club'
- 'Co-working space. Community pub and cafe.'
- 'There shouldn't be one. There is already a community centre in great ashby'.
- 'I am strongly opposed to this development and as such do not want a community centre as this will increase traffic levels.'
- 'Free to use by the community, community events, groups, classes etc'.
- 'You need more than a community centre. You need shops, restaurants, cafes, pubs, doctors, dentists, etc. Learn from the mistakes of great Ashby'.
- 'How will it work with existing centre nearby? Can it have space for medical/dental facilities?'
- 'The provision is essential. It would be a good idea to provide this more as a pub/sport centre too. There is little provision for sports for such a large community. Tennis, cricket, rugby and football teams would help bring the community together. There seems little provision for such. Look at Letcombe Regis village hall and facilities. It fits many uses and is appealing. Not a mundane utility building like at Great Ashby. An awful eyesore.'

- 'I would imagine the demand may be similar to that of the current Great Ashby community centre. This offers a nursery and sports and leisure activities for adults and for children. There used to be a community cafe which was popular but became a casualty of the pandemic and never reopened. Something similar might be useful.'
- 'Need extra roads and amenities before community centre though community centres are good.'

Question 4: Do you have any other comments for the team at this stage?

131 out of 156 respondents answered this question with feedback that covered the following themes.

1. Traffic and transport – 39%
2. Infrastructure and community facilities – 24%
3. General opposition to development – 19%
4. Loss of greenspace and wildlife – 19%
5. Environmental concerns – 10%
6. Healthcare and public services – 8%
7. Consultation process – 8%
8. Affordability of new homes – 4%
9. Economic impact – 2%

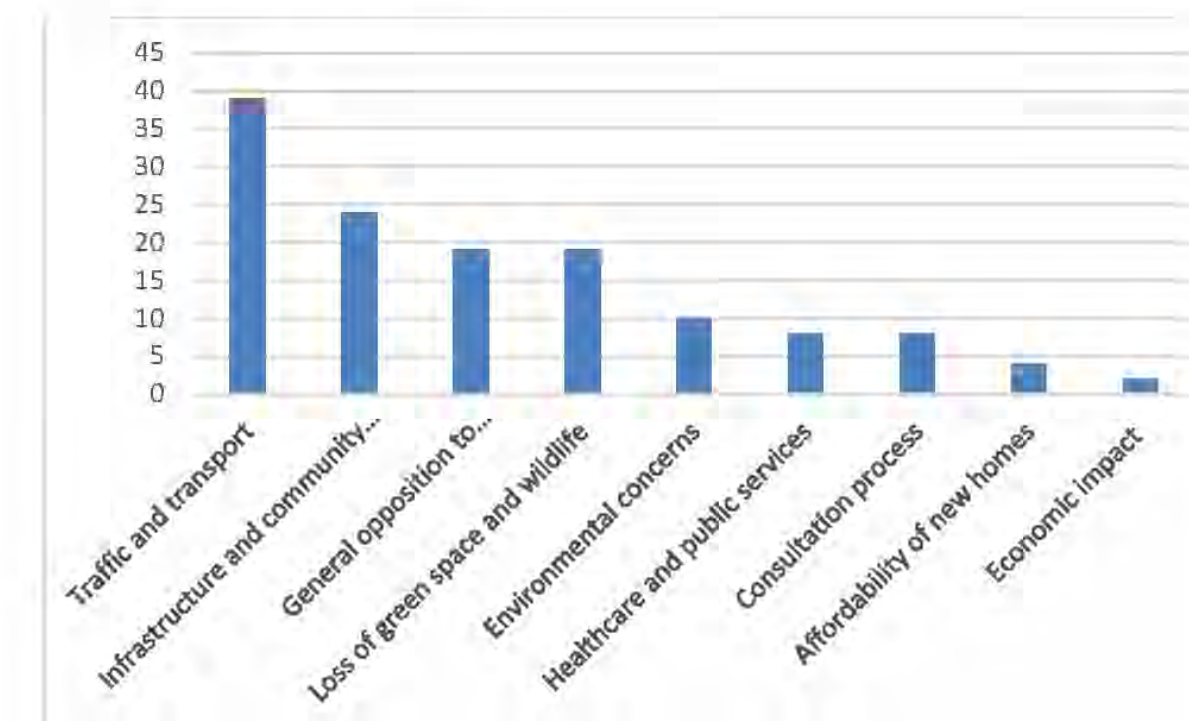


Figure 3: Free text responses to 'Do you have any other comments for the team at this stage?'

Example feedback comments:

- 'Building these houses won't solve local people's issues with housing. The green space you will take is used by many people for recreational purposes. The wildlife has lost a lot of habitats due to other new build projects. The roads won't cope with the traffic. Altogether a bad idea'
- 'The area cannot cope with another 600 houses meaning at least 1200 more residents. Along with their cars and the problems that brings the roads can't cope now. The doctors' surgeries won't cope. Dentists won't take any new patients on NHS as it is. The Lister Hospital is not coping now. We have lost enough of our green spaces in this area as it is. This housing will not benefit local people and surrounding villages as the housing won't be affordable to these people. The wildlife has lost woodland and fields already. Many people

use this green space for recreational purposes. The houses will have a disastrous effect on the area.'

- 'How will the new site be accessed as I've heard it will be from Mendip way. I can't see how this will work with the amount of cars already parked along this road.'
- 'I'm not happy to have the only access road outside my front door! Traffic will be constant; parking is already horrific and where are all these residents meant to shop? There's no supermarkets, doctors, dentists, pub/restuarants! The list goes on and on.'
- 'Environmental destruction of local countryside would be detrimental to the planet and the wellbeing of wildlife and local residents.'
- 'I don't want the development to go ahead where it is, but if it did, then the general design/look and feel do look good. I do have concerns that, like most new developments, the plot sizes seem small. Be generous with garden size as to not cram everything in. We do need more amenities to deal with such an increase in population and also that an additional point into the new estate should be reviewed so traffic is not pushed down a single entrance (down the bridleway on Fairfield way?). The pedestrian link to Back Lane goes nowhere, so a wider piece should be reviewing this link to other the paths to the North to make this useful.'
- 'I am opposed to the development. I don't believe that adequate consideration has been given to the increased resources that would be required by an expansion (and are arguably required even now). I think that the development will cause damage to our local area and quality of life.'
- 'No, very concerned we're going to lose our beautiful walking area and very concerned for our wildlife that lives there. There is an abundance of deer and badgers. What is going to happen to them?'

Stakeholder group feedback

Discussion points raised during the stakeholder meetings are included below:

Great Ashby Community Council:

- Access road – stressed the need for improvements to local road network to accommodate development and questioned County Council highways response.
- The need for a doctor's surgery
- Queries over the opportunity for the allotments to be delivered in phase 1.

Hertfordshire and Middlesex badger group:

- Questions on protection between ancient woodland areas Nine Acre Spring to Newbury Grove and reconsideration of the access road here.

Applicant response to feedback

To enable the project team to respond to the main issues raised during the consultation, the full team reviewed all feedback provided to draw out common themes.

These have been grouped in the table below alongside a summary on how they have been responded to by the team.

Key issue raised	Applicant response
Impact of proposals on local traffic conditions	Local highway surveys and assessments were completed ahead of the production of the final masterplan design.

	<p>A transport assessment will be submitted with the application which will assess the impact of the proposal on local traffic.</p> <p>Initial work has indicated that the number of vehicles associated with the development would not have a significant adverse impact on the local highway network, and off-site mitigation would be incorporated where required.</p>
Concerns on proposed access and public safety	<p>The proposals aim to promote a sustainable development and the scheme has been designed to prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. New cycle routes and links will be designed into the layout, leading to areas that people may wish to go. These will be safe, overlooked and direct.</p> <p>Pedestrian links will also be provided through the site and to the adjoining areas. New footways will be provided alongside the majority of the streets within the development, and the smaller streets and lanes will be designed to be shared by pedestrians and cars, with pedestrians given priority.</p>
Lack of existing amenities and infrastructure to support development	<p>The proposals seek to deliver a new neighbourhood with new local provisions.</p> <p>The proposals will seek to make a contribution to North Herts District Council, which will assist with any demands that the development will have on local services.</p>
Impact of proposals on local greenspace and wildlife	<p>We are aware that badgers use the site, and our surveys indicate that the badger setts of importance are located within the woodland areas. Therefore, they will be protected alongside the woodlands, and also by the additional planted buffers around the woodlands.</p> <p>Other protected species that use the site include bats, which mostly use the woodland edges and some of the hedgerow corridors). The woodlands and vast majority of hedgerows will be retained within the development. Surveys for dormouse found no evidence of their use of the site.</p> <p>A wide range of bird species were recorded on site, and mitigation measures will be included within the proposals as needed. No reptiles were recorded on the site. eDNA testing found no evidence of great crested newts using ponds on or near the site.</p> <p>The proposed development includes much new native planting, including scrub, hedgerows, trees, and wildflower and long grassland meadows. The development will also include further off-site planting within the wider land within the control of the promoter, to enhance</p>

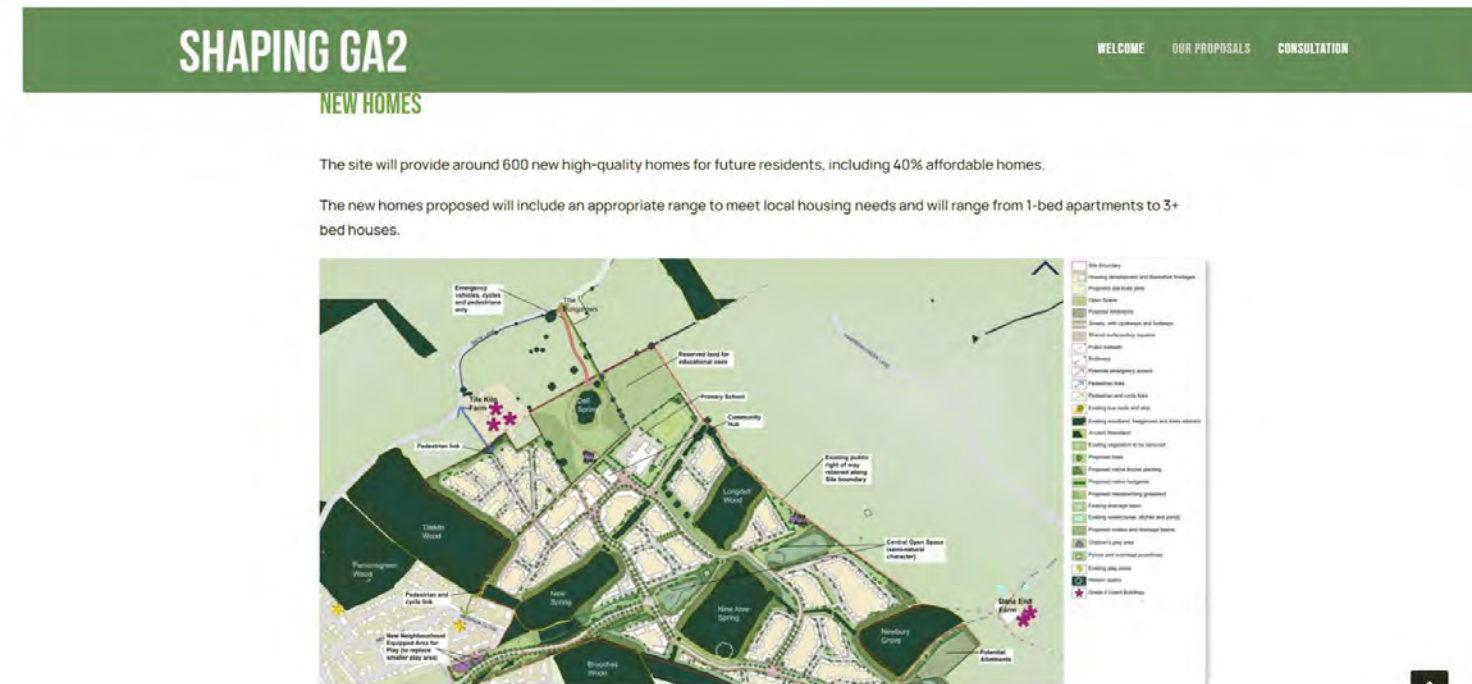
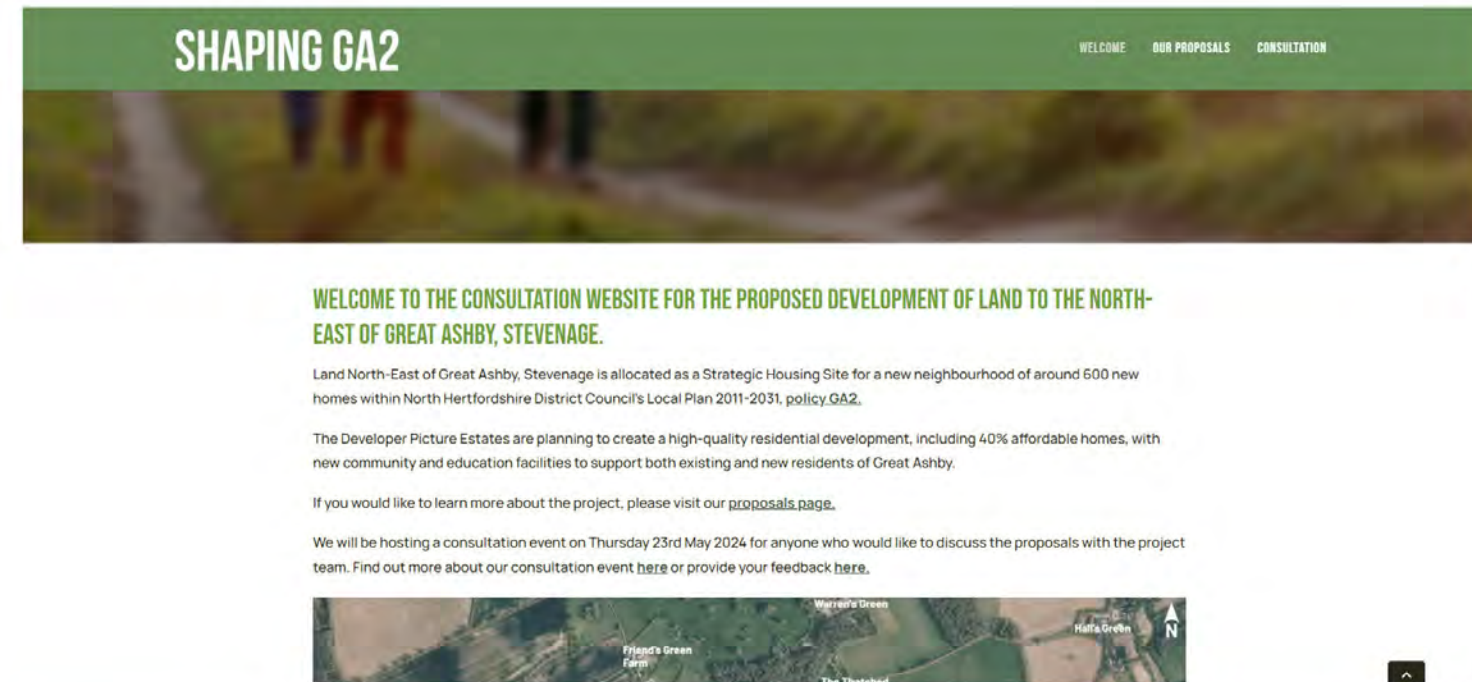
	<p>the landscape and ecological value of these areas, whilst also ensuring that the development delivers a net gain in biodiversity.</p> <p>Further ecological mitigation measures will be designed into the scheme to ensure that harms to protected species and habitats are minimised and mitigated. These include measures such as bird and bat boxes, as well as hibernacula, and the planting will be designed to maximise ecological benefits and opportunities for wildlife.</p> <p>The scheme will deliver a net gain in biodiversity through new planted and managed areas.</p>
The need for a new community centre and suggestions for alternative uses	The proposals include an opportunity to provide a mixed-use community building, which could include a variety of indoor sports uses (table tennis, dance classes, yoga etc.), as well as meeting spaces, performance uses, and coworking space, for example. The building could include a café, or a small community shop. This building will be located close to the primary school, to create a central hub, or focus to the neighbourhood, around which daily life could be centred.
Questions on consultation process	The applicant engaged with 2,618 local residents as well as offering briefing meetings to a number of stakeholder groups. There will be further opportunities for the community to provide comments following the submission of the outline planning application.
During the consultation event, residents along the north-south spur of Grampion Place stated that that part of Grampion Place was within private ownership and that there was therefore no public right of way across that section of private drive into the Site.	The design team have since removed the pedestrian link from this part of Grampion Place into the site.
Stakeholder group suggestions	
Access road – improvements needed to local road network	The design team shared the findings of their preliminary highways and transport assessments with the Community Council and will continue to respond to any queries ahead of the submission of the planning application.
The need for a doctor's surgery to be provided as part of the proposals	At the meeting, the design team noted that the use of the proposed community building was not fixed, and that it could be used as a medical centre, should the local NHS Trust deem it a suitable, necessary, and viable location
Opportunity for allotments to be delivered in phase 1	The design team have considered the potential to relocate the allotment alongside consultation with the Council, and it is now likely that allotments could be delivered during the early phases.
Questions over protection of the ancient woodland areas Nine Spring to Newbury Grove and reconsideration of access road here	The Herts and Middlesex Badger group were happy to hear that the Ancient Woodlands would be retained, and also made some suggestions as to how the scheme could be amended to better benefit badgers. The design

team explained that, while the badger population on the site is important concerns in relation to badgers had to be balanced with other ecological concerns and mitigation measures, alongside the need to accommodate the built development.

Conclusion

This report highlights that the local community overwhelmingly have some concerns with the impact of the proposals on local wildlife, existing local infrastructure and the local road network. The team are considering the feedback received as the proposals are being finalised. The team are in ongoing dialogue with Great Ashby Community Council and the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Badger Group and responding to any requests for further information.

Appendix 1 – Images of consultation website



Appendix 2: Consultation leaflet



DEAR RESIDENT,

Picture Estates Limited would like to invite you to a resident's drop in consultation event to hear about plans to create a new high-quality residential development in Great Ashby.

The site is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of around 600 new homes within North Hertfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2011-2031 (policy GA2).

THE PROPOSALS INCLUDE:

- New high-quality homes, including affordable homes
- A new primary school, as well as reserved land for educational use
- A new community centre
- Public open space
- Allotments

Front page



COME ALONG AND MEET THE TEAM AND SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

Date: Thursday 23rd May 2024

Time: 4pm – 7pm

Venue: Great Ashby Community Centre, Whitehorse Lane, Stevenage, SG1 6NH

We look forward to meeting you and hearing your feedback.

For more information about the proposals, please visit the website www.shapingga2.co.uk where you can also view the proposals and leave feedback, or contact us:

E: consultation@icenprojects.com

T: 07795 614 307



Appendix 3: Feedback form

LAND NORTH-EAST OF GREAT ASHBY, STEVENAGE FEEDBACK FORM

Your feedback is important to us.

Please let us know your thoughts by completing a feedback form.

We would be grateful for comments back before 6th June 2024.

ABOUT YOU

1. Are you: <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident <input type="checkbox"/> Work locally <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	2. Age Range: <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 65 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
3. If you're prepared to, please also provide your postcode:	4. If you would like to be kept up to date please leave your contact details: Email:

FEEDBACK

1. Are you aware the site is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of around 600 new homes within North Hertfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2011 - 2037?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your response to this question below.

Front page

2. Do you have any comments on the design approach outlined?

3. A new community centre will be delivered as part of the proposals for the benefit of the wider community. Do you have any thoughts on how this centre could be used by the community?

4. Do you have any other comments for the team at this stage?

We are managing the consultation process on behalf of Future Estates. All team projects we are committed to maintain the trust and confidence of those we engage through our consultation activities. In particular, we want to help you know that team projects does not sell, rent or trade any personal information with other companies or businesses. All information you provide is confidential and will only be used in connection with this project. We will use the information you provide to better understand your views and help you inform about the project. You are entitled to view, amend or delete the personal information we hold. Please email your request to our data protection officer: info@futureestates.com

You can scan your completed form and email it to: consultation@icenprojects.com

Or post it to:
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