

Statement of Community Involvement

Land Parcels adjacent to Worsell Drive, Copthorne

December 2025

On behalf of Miller Homes

Statement of Community Involvement

Land Parcels adjacent to Worsell Drive, Copthorne



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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Statement of Community has been prepared by Savills in support of a planning application made on behalf of Miller Homes (the applicant) for the development of the Site to provide much needed new homes at the Land Parcels adjacent to Worsell Drive, Copthorne.
- 1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) summarises the public consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken in relation to the Applicant's (Miller Homes, previously St Modwen Homes prior to acquisition) proposal for the development of residential units on land benefiting from outline consent for a primary school and doctors surgery.
- 1.3 The key objectives of the consultation have been to:
 - Proactively inform and involve all stakeholders within the local community of the development proposals;
 - Actively seek feedback from all participants and positively attend to feedback where necessary to assist in delivering a robustly assessed and accepted scheme;
 - Ensure the proposals maximise sought-after opportunities and benefits and minimise any potential implications for the community; and
 - Accord with national and local planning guidance in regard to proposal design and construction.
- 1.4 Engagement with officers from Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) and the local Copthorne community has been undertaken from October 2024 through to January 2025 through a series of meetings and in-person consultation events.
- 1.5 Pre-submission stakeholder and community public consultation was carried out throughout November and December 2024. This took the form of:
 - The preparation and submission of a Pre-application Enquiry to MSDC, setting out the development proposals and its acceptability in line with national and local policy;
 - Participation in a Pre-application Enquiry meeting (held virtually on Teams) with MSDC officers and the design team, to discuss the development proposal to inform the written response received from the Council;
 - Undertaking a Public Consultation Event at the St Modwen Homes Sales Centre in proximity to the site and within the wider Copthorne community to inform local stakeholders of the emerging proposal and give them the opportunity to provide feedback to inform the proposal ahead of formal application submission in the new year;
 - Letter dropping local residents to inform them of the Public Consultation Event. The Letter also contained an email address and a link to an online website to participate in the consultation event virtually, to ensure all stakeholders were aware of the opportunity to participate.
- 1.6 Feedback, through the meetings, conversations and written feedback has been generally concerned with the overdevelopment of the site for residential use, parking implications and a lack of green space.

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- 1.7 This document demonstrates that the Applicant has proactively informed and involved the local community about the scheme by affording the opportunity for all statutory and non-statutory stakeholders to provide feedback on the development proposal.
- 1.8 This SCI has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for the proposed development of the site, of which has taken into account the feedback received throughout the robust consultation process. The proposal is therefore considered to be vigorously assessed and is considered to be representative of the local community's voice.

2. Purpose of Consultation

- 2.1. Community consultation is an integral component of successful and meaningful planning practice. By engaging with interested statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, their needs and thoughts are made clear, affording the opportunity to shape a development proposal to be representative of the feedback received.
- 2.2. The NPPF (December 2024) places positive community engagement between all parties involved and affected by development proposals. Specifically, the NPPF states (within paragraph 40) 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”*.
- 2.3. Paragraph 41 of the NPPF also recommends that Local Authorities should encourage applicants (who are not already required to do so by law) to engage with the local community before submitting planning applications.
- 2.4. The Localism Act (2011):
 - A duty to consult: There is a new requirement for developers to carry out pre-submission consultation for planning applications
 - A duty to respond: The Act outlines the duty of the person carrying out the consultation to take into account any responses it generates.
 - Power to make supplementary provisions: Sets out further provisions which could be made through development orders – these would create a strong requirement to consult, to respond to comments received and to prepare a statement detailing how consultation has been completed.
- 2.5. Mid-Sussex District Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2011. The Council then updated its SCI in 2019. The SCI acts as a guide and benchmark for all Council services to use when involving communities in planning and in designing Community Involvement Plans. As such it sets out key principles that need to be met when engaging with the public on development proposals.
- 2.6. The Applicant’s pre-application consultation strategy was developed in line with the key policy directives set out within National and Local policy guidance, of which was agreeable and accepted by officers from MDSC.

3. Statutory Stakeholder Engagement

3.1. In summary, the statutory stakeholder consultation programme included:

- Engagement with officers and representatives from MSDC under their formal Pre-application Enquiry services. This included a meeting to discuss the development proposals and the receipt of detailed written feedback on the acceptability of the scheme, with guidance on scheme amendments and deliverables ahead of any formal full planning application submission. This consultation was undertaken between September – November 2024.

3.2. The Pre-Application meeting was held on the 28th October 2024 on Microsoft Teams and was attended by the following members of Mid Sussex District Council:

- Caroline Grist – Senior Planning Officer
- Irene Fletcher – Case Officer
- Elaine Clarke – Community Facilities Project Officer
- Anna Kramarczyk – Architect & Urban Designer
- Emma Rivett – Assistant Tree Officer
- Helen Blackith – Housing Officer
- Christopher Philips – Local Councillor
- Graham Casella – Local Councillor

3.3. The discussion held with Mid Sussex District Council were generally positive, with support for the proposals subject to accordance with feedback received. The key feedback received and discussed were as follows:

- Proximity to buffer zone of the ancient woodland;
- Placemaking implications of replacing the previously allocated primary school and GP surgery uses with additional housing;
- Introduction of further soft landscaping;
- The access and layout was identified as needing to be improved;
- Dwelling Mix, specifically the exact dwelling type for affordable housing.

3.4. The principal feedback received during the meeting was reinforced with receipt of detailed written feedback from MSDC in December 2024. Further to this, continued discussions with officers from MSDC took place to elaborate on aspects of the feedback received. The detailed responses on the indicative proposal assisted in achieving the final design of the scheme subject of the recent Full Planning Application submission. The statutory consultation received to date therefore heavily influenced the design of the proposal.

4. Non-Statutory Stakeholder Engagement

4.1. In summary, the Non-Statutory stakeholder consultation programme included:

- Undertaking a Public Consultation Event at the Sales Centre in proximity to the site and within the wider Copthorne community to inform local stakeholders of the emerging proposal and give them the opportunity to provide feedback to inform the proposal ahead of formal application submission in the new year;
- Letter dropping local residents to inform them of the Public Consultation Event. The Letter also contained an email address and a link to an online website to participate in the consultation event virtually, to ensure all stakeholders were aware of the opportunity to participate.

4.2. The dates of the above consultation events occurred as follows:

Date	Action
25 th November 2024	The launch of consultation website
25 th November 2024	The launch of the response email: Worselldrive@stmodwen.co.uk
25 th November 2024	Issue of leaflets to each resident of the community
4 th December 2024	Public exhibition of proposals for land parcels off Worsell Drive
16 th December 2024	Collation and review of feedback, finalisation of proposals
January 2025	Submission of full planning application following consultation.

Consultation Website

- 4.3. Onto the previously existing St Modwen Homes website, an additional page was updated and added for the Land Parcels off Worsell Drive providing details of the proposed scheme and details of the upcoming public consultation events on the proposals which are being brought forward. The scheme proposal was found through the following URL: <https://stmodwenhomes.co.uk/land-off-worsell-drive/>.
- 4.4. The website afforded the opportunity to view information and leave feedback on the proposals via the feedback form or email. The feedback form provided / made public is extracted in Appendix 2 for reference. It comprises leading questions which were drafted to allow for detailed feedback to be issued by participants.

Leaflets & Mailing Area

- 4.5. The community leaflet were printed and distributed 1st Class via Royal Mail to addresses in and around the Heathy Woods development and surrounding roads, such as Shipley Bridge Lane and West Way. A total of 590 invitation were issued within the local area.

Public Exhibition

- 4.6. The in-person public exhibition was held within the onsite sales centre at Heathy Wood, close to the Site, on Wednesday 4th December between 4pm-7pm. The event was advertised directly via St Modwen Homes website and the resident leaflet. A press release was shared in late November 2024 which allowed the event to be further promoted by the press, over several sources.

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- 4.7. The event was attended by over 120 members of the local community, with councillors from Copthorne invited to a pre-exhibition opening from 3pm to allow direct communication within a partially private setting.
- 4.8. Members of the project team were on hand to welcome visitors and talked them through the proposals whilst answering their questions alongside listening to their feedback.
- 4.9. The proposed scheme was presented on six A1 display boards covering aspects of:
- Board 1: The core purpose of providing development, the building delivery
 - Board 2: A draft red outline of the site and its wider context, explaining why the Board 3: Site has not come forward as a school and GP site.
 - Board 4: The development proposal
 - Board 5: Street Scenes
 - Board 6: The next steps of giving feedback and the proposed development layout of both parcels
- 4.10. The consultation boards utilised are set out in Appendix 1 for context.

Feedback Mechanisms

- 4.11. Visitors to the exhibition were encouraged to complete and return a feedback form, to allow the provision of opinions on the proposals. The form contained the following questions:
- Question 1: Location of respondent
 - Question 2: The proposals include a range of new homes, which will help to improve housing choice within the area and provide first time buyers with the opportunity to get onto the property ladder. What do you think of this? Additional comments
 - Question 3: The proposed development will provide landscape amenity space for new and existing residents and will also accommodate new pedestrian routes. What do you think of this? Additional comments
 - Question 4: What are your initial thoughts on the proposed residential development?
 - Question 5: What aspects of the development do you support?
 - Question 6: Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?
 - Contact details
- 4.12. Feedback forms were both distributed and collected in-person and online. During the in person public consultation, a feedback box and the forms were provided alongside distributing the email Worselldrive@stmodwen.co.uk to ensure that any feedback could be collected both in the moment and in the immediate future.
- 4.13. The completed feedback form could be placed in the feedback box at the exhibition, or provide an email response to Worselldrive@stmodwen.co.uk. Both the online and in person feedback forms were collated, a copy of the feedback form provided can be found in the Appendix 2. Responses were advertised as being accepted until Friday 13th December 2024, however we did accept up until the 16th December 2024 to ensure all responses were successfully obtained.

5. Feedback from consultation

- 5.1. The consultation generated formal feedback of 49 responses in total, comprising in-person responses from the public consultation event, and written feedback from the feedback form made public.

Overall Response / Themes

- 5.2. Throughout the public consultation event, much of the feedback received was informal, through conversations and discussions held between stakeholders and the project team in attendance.
- 5.3. The majority of the feedback received however was via the feedback form, which comprised more formal responses albeit in short-hand.
- 5.4. The general feedback received overall has been summarised into themes and set out in the below table:

Positive Themes	Negative Themes
• Scope of Landscaping and Pedestrian Routes proposed as part of the scheme; and • Affordable Housing Provision.	• Overdevelopment of the site for residential use; • Transport Implications, including lack of parking infrastructure; • Lack of Green Space / Open Space; and • Lack of Community uses within the vicinity.

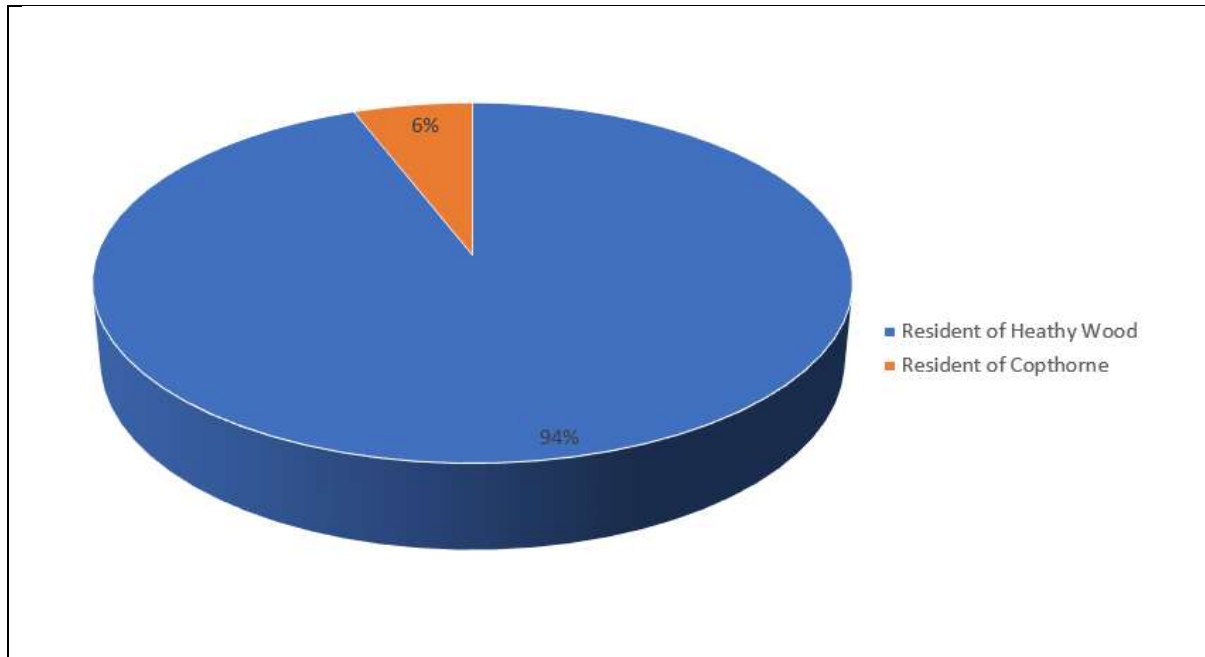
- 5.5. The feedback received in response to the feedback form made public has been analysed, and the results set out overleaf.

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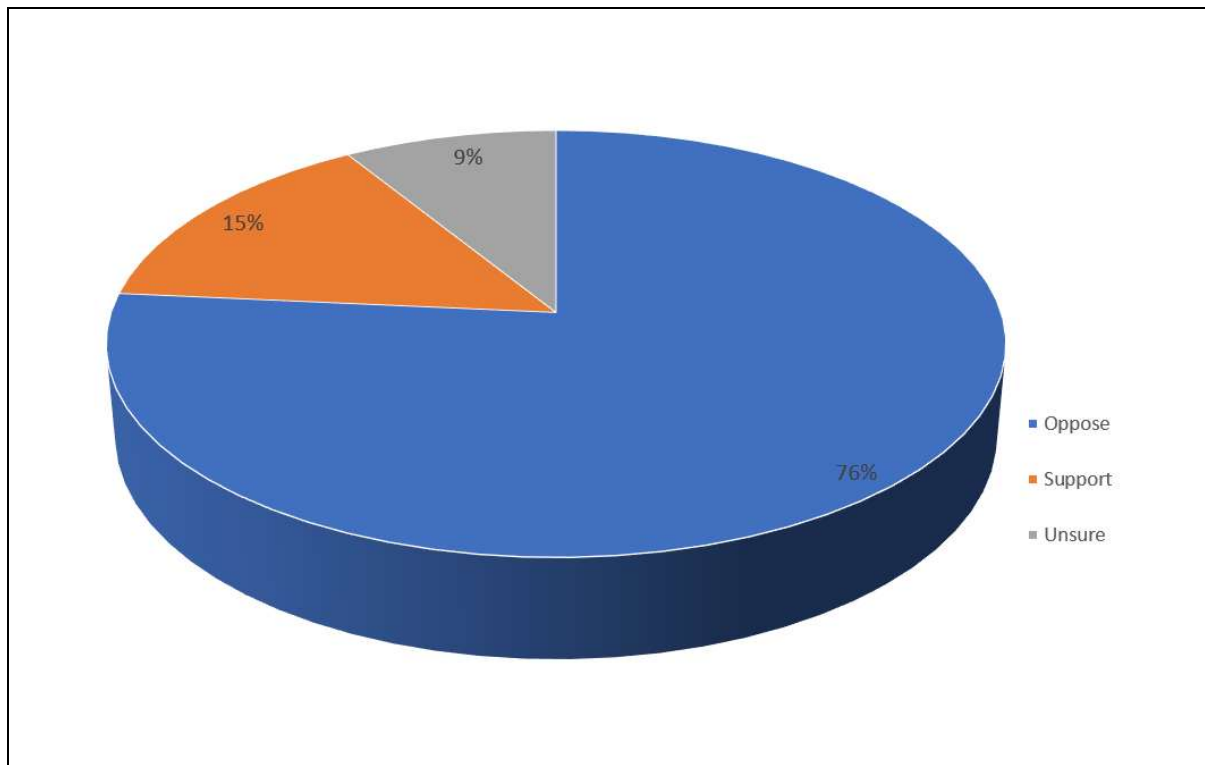
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Q1: Are you a resident of...?



Q2: The proposals include a range of new homes which will help to improve housing choice within the area and provide first time buyers with the opportunity to get onto the property ladder. What do you think of this?

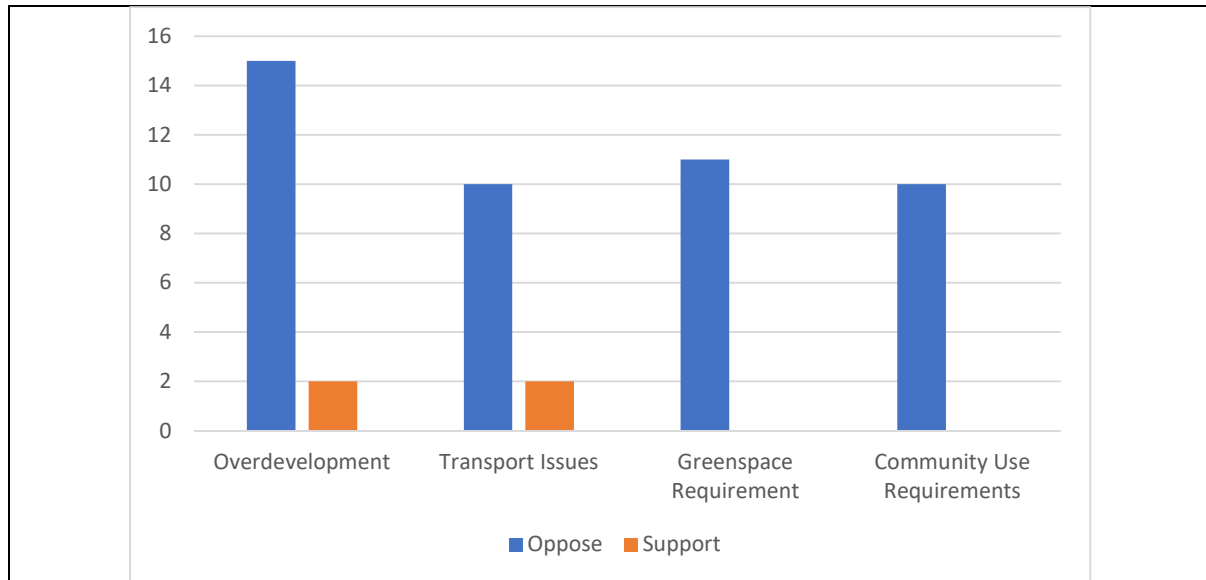


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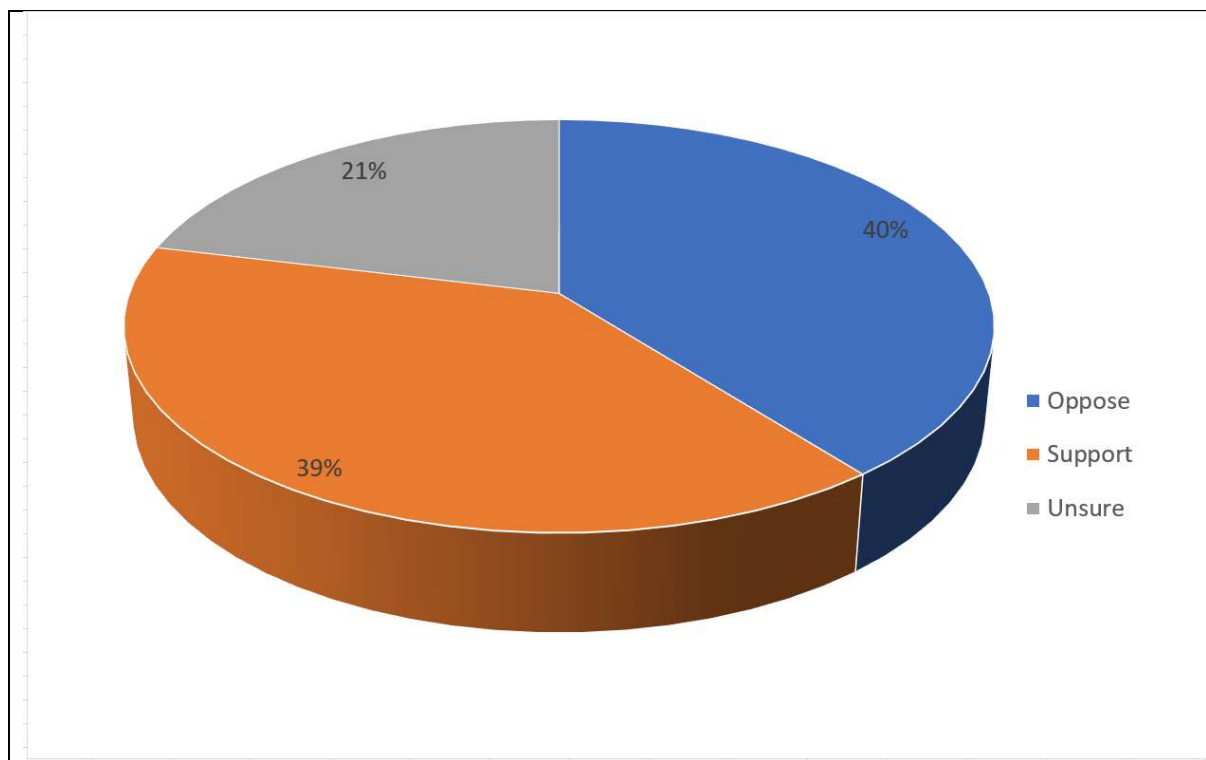
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Q2: Additional Comments (summarised into themes)



Q3: The proposed development will provide landscape amenity space for new and existing residents and will also accommodate new pedestrian routes. What do you think of this?

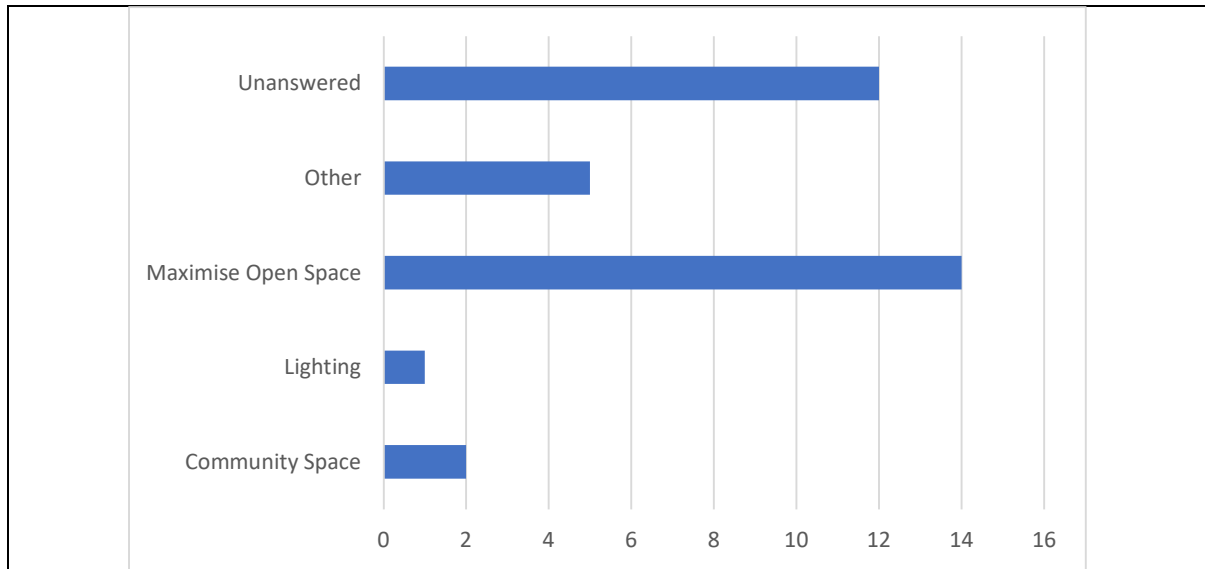


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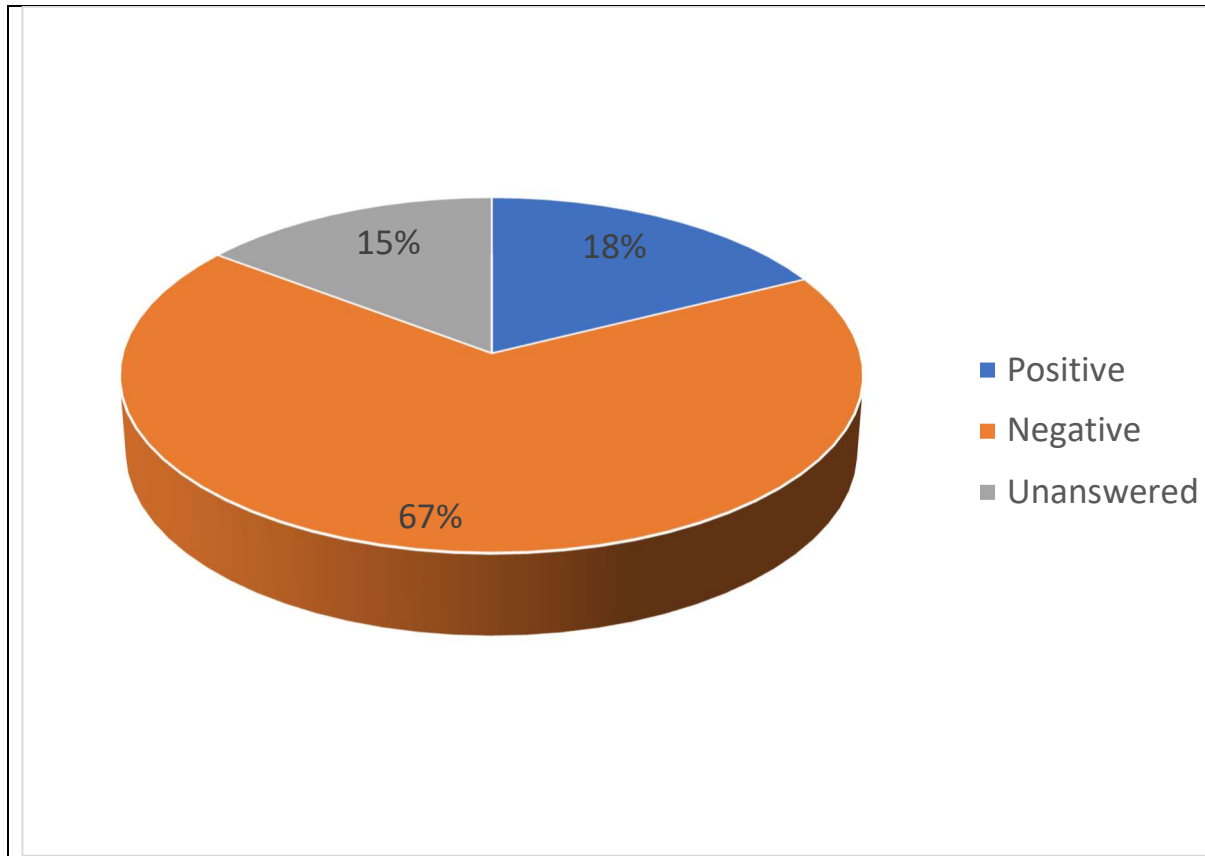
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Q3: Additional Comments (summarised into themes)

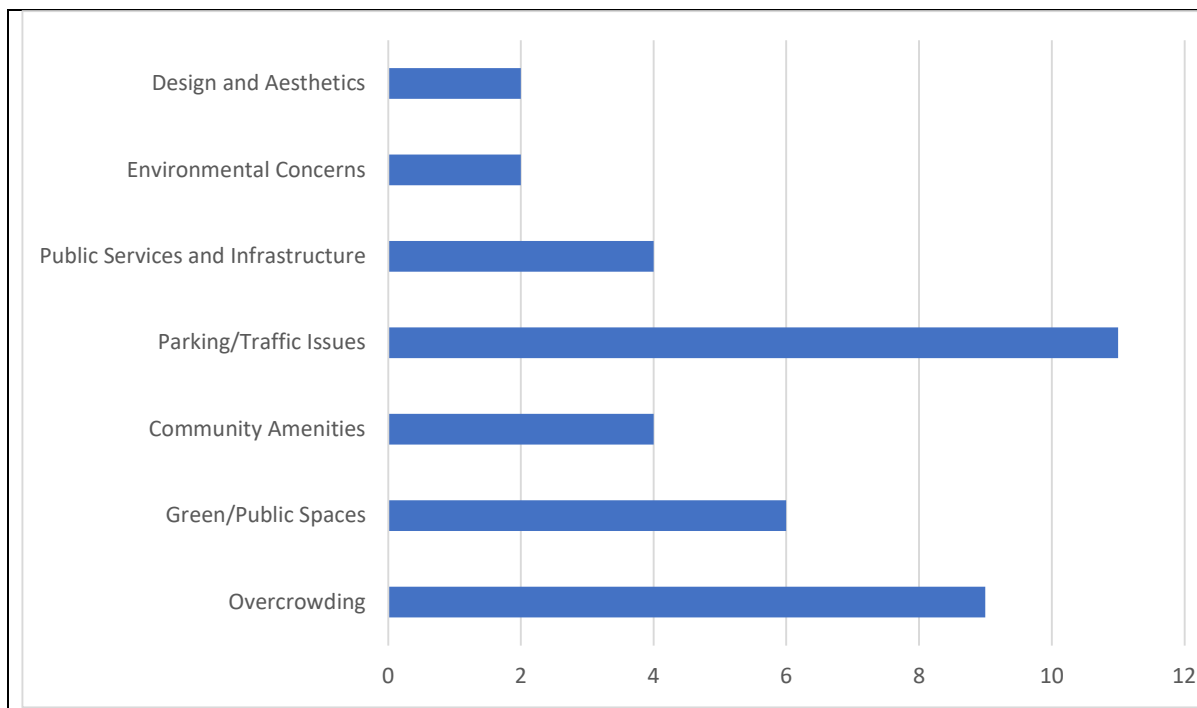


Q4: What are your initial thoughts on the proposed new homes? (mood response)

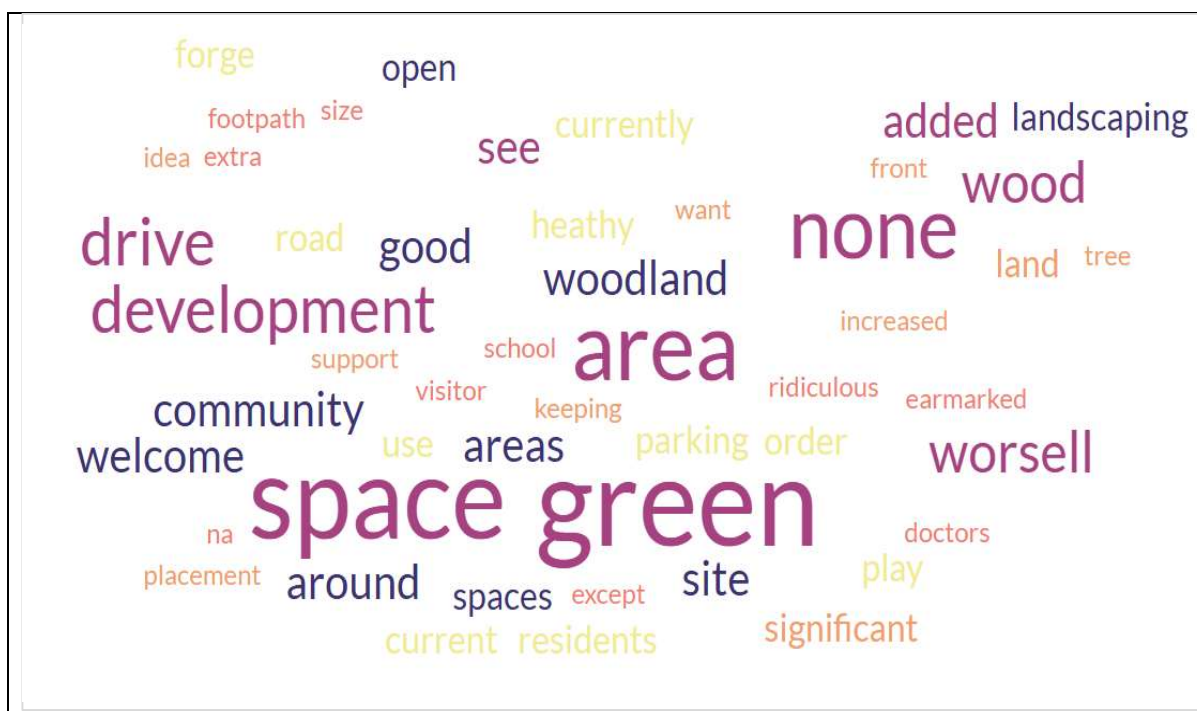


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Q4: Additional Comments (summarised into themes)



Q5: What aspects of the proposals do you support? (summarised into themes)

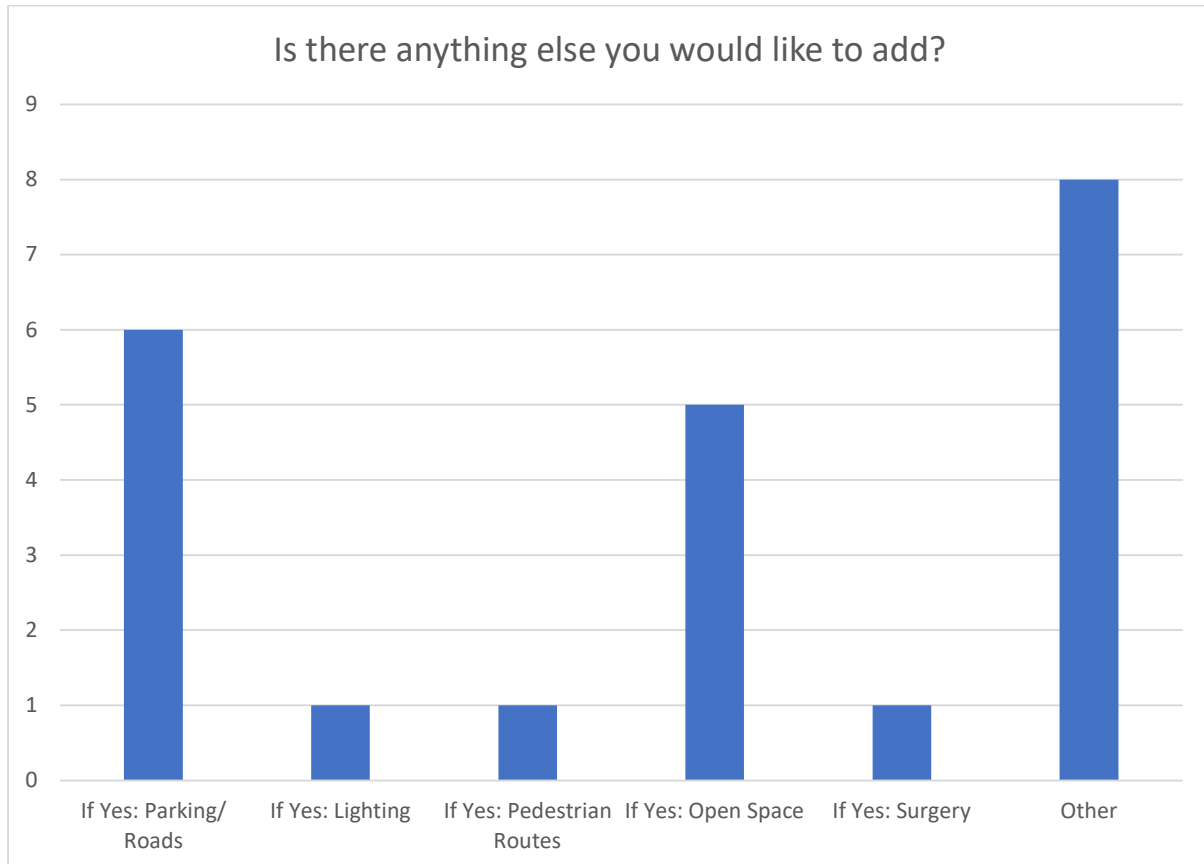


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Q6: Is there anything else you would like to add? (summarised into themes)



6. Applicant's Response to Feedback

- 6.1. The Applicant has carried out an extensive consultation process, affording the opportunity for all statutory and non-statutory stakeholders the opportunity to set out feedback on the development proposal.
- 6.2. This section looks at the major negative themes that arose from the consultation process, and sets out the Applicant's response to each identified summarised theme.

Negative Theme	Applicant Responses
Overdevelopment of the site for residential use	The proposed development density aims to optimise site capacity, in line with national and local planning policy, and is akin to the surrounding development densities throughout Heathy Woods. In responding positively to comments, the Applicant has reduced the site density from 77 units to 69.
Transport Implications, including lack of parking infrastructure	The scheme has undergone a separate pre-application enquiry with the Council's Highways Department, of whom did not object to the scheme. Further to this, a Transport Assessment has been prepared to support the application which confirms the proposal accords with the local plan's transport requirements, most notably in regard to trip generation and parking. The proposal ensures there is also adequate infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, to reduce overreliance on private cars, limiting impact on the existing highway network.
Lack of Green Space / Open Space	The proposal has been designed to ensure the residential units proposed are supported by adequate levels of green / open space, including areas of external amenity such as gardens and balconies. In responding positively to comments, the Applicant has incorporated a larger green public open space to the south-eastern corner of the southern plot. Further to this, any future residents will also benefit from the wider levels of green / open space that already serve the Heathy Woods development area, including extensive areas of informal open space, a designated Ancient Woodland, and an allocated Allotment and Play Space area.

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• Lack of Community uses within the vicinity.	Given the lack of identified demand for alternative community uses, and the demand for residential housing throughout the authority (heightened in light of the recent changes to the NPPF), the decision to utilise these parcels for residential use considered appropriate, as confirmed with Officers of the Council during pre-application dialogue. Notwithstanding the above, the proposal incorporates a community orchard with supporting planting, benches and play equipment, to provide a designated area for community interaction.
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7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This Statement of Community Involvement has met the requirements outlined as a part of the NPPF, the Localism Act and Mid Sussex District Council Statement of Community Involvement.
- 7.2. The project team has proactively engaged with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders through a number of means including formal pre-application services and a widely publicised in-person consultation event.
- 7.3. Having successfully reached a wide consultee threshold, all feedback obtained has been collated and utilised to inform and shape the refinement of the design of the proposal subject of the recent Full Planning Application submission by the Applicant.
- 7.4. Mid Sussex District Council will now begin their statutory consultation on the submitted Application.

Appendix 1 – Consultation Board



Our core purpose is:
Changing Places. Creating Better Futures.

We are leading the way in delivering quality places to live and work by enhancing the communities in which we build.

St. Modwen Homes always strives to leave a long-lasting legacy that we can be proud of.

We do this through our industry expertise.

Our high specification and quality fittings together with the careful choice of materials ensure that our homes are something to enjoy long after the initial excitement of moving in has worn off.

Height

At St. Modwen Homes, all our homes are designed to have higher ceilings than most other housebuilders – and it's a key principle of how we build our properties. We create homes that feel both spacious and unique.

Light

We use architecture and design to make the best use of natural light. When you step into a St. Modwen home, you'll instantly notice how each room is flooded with natural light. With less need for artificial lighting, our customers can benefit from lower energy bills.

Airtight

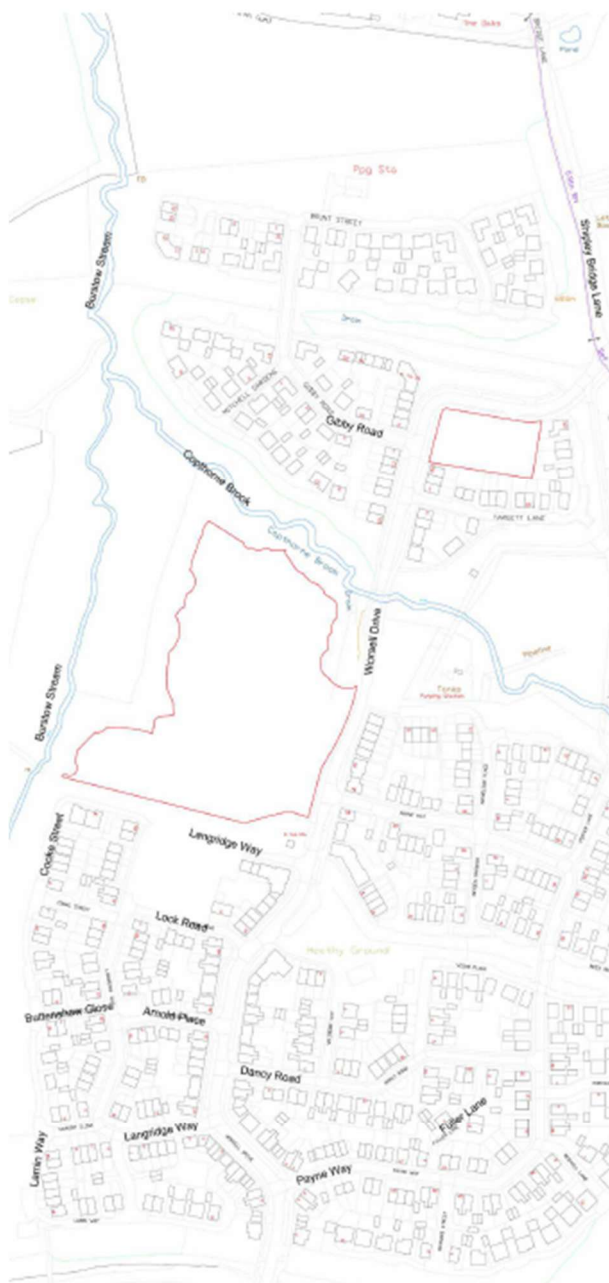
All our homes are airtight, meeting or exceeding building regulations requirements, so they save even more heat and waste even less energy. This, paired with less need for artificial lighting, means our customers and their families can take advantage of extra warmth all year round.

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Introduction to the site and its wider context

St. Modwen Homes is preparing a full planning application for around 70 new homes on two parcels of unused land off Worsell Drive in Copthorne.

These parcels of land sit within the wider Heathy Wood development at Copthorne which was granted outline planning permission for 500 homes by Mid Sussex District Council in May 2016.

Following this, detailed design applications have been submitted to create the new community at Heathy Wood.

The parcels, which measure approx 2.04ha and approx 0.22ha, were previously considered for a school and doctors surgery. However, after extensive review, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) has confirmed that a new primary school is not required at this location. This is because there is currently limited demand in the area and a new school could put the sustainability of existing schools at risk.

Instead, WSCC would like to see investment in existing local schools with more places offered if required. In line with the obligations of the original, and consented, planning application, we have made a financial contribution of £4.1 million to WSCC towards education in the local area.

Due to viability matters, Pound Hill Medical Group has advised it will not be bringing forward a doctors surgery at this location. As required by the consented planning permission, we have made a financial contribution of £300,000 to Mid Sussex District Council for local healthcare facilities.

stmodwenhomes.co.uk



Development proposals

Our proposals for the development include around 70 new homes, comprising a range of styles and sizes.

Following pre-application discussions with Mid Sussex District Council we have taken onboard their initial feedback and evolved our plans to include more areas of green space and to reduce the proposed number of homes.

Key details of our proposals:

- Approximately 70 new homes ranging from 1-4 bedrooms
- 30% of the homes will be affordable housing, fully meeting local planning policy
- New areas of green open space
- Retention of existing boundary hedges and trees
- New, additional planting to protect the retained and unaffected woodland
- New public amenity open space along the eastern boundary of the larger parcel
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points to parking spaces
- Homes with high quality design and materials
- Provision of hedgehog highways
- High performance sustainability fittings in all new homes to reduce water and energy consumption

In terms of access, each parcel will have one vehicular access, linking to the existing transport network predominantly served off Worsell Drive. Worsell Drive is a residential spine road that dissects the overarching St Modwen Homes site and adjoins both Shipley Bridge Lane to the north and Copthorne Way to the south.



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Street scenes

The following images show a selection of how the proposed new homes may look.



Images indicative only

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Next Steps

If you have any questions or feedback please leave your comments on the feedback form provided or send them to Worselldrive@stmodwen.co.uk

You can also post your comments to:

Worsell Drive Consultation
Two Devon Way
Longbridge
Birmingham
B31 2TS

Comments on these proposals are welcome until Friday 13 December 2024

All feedback we receive will be considered as we finalise our plans and submit a full planning application to Mid Sussex District Council in the next few weeks.

After our application has been submitted, the council will carry out a statutory consultation and you will have a further opportunity to provide comments to the council directly.

We currently expect that the application will be presented to Mid Sussex District Council's Planning Committee in Spring/Summer 2025.

You can also visit <https://stmodwenhomes.co.uk/land-off-worsell-drive/> to learn more about our proposals.

Thank you for attending today.

stmodwenhomes.co.uk

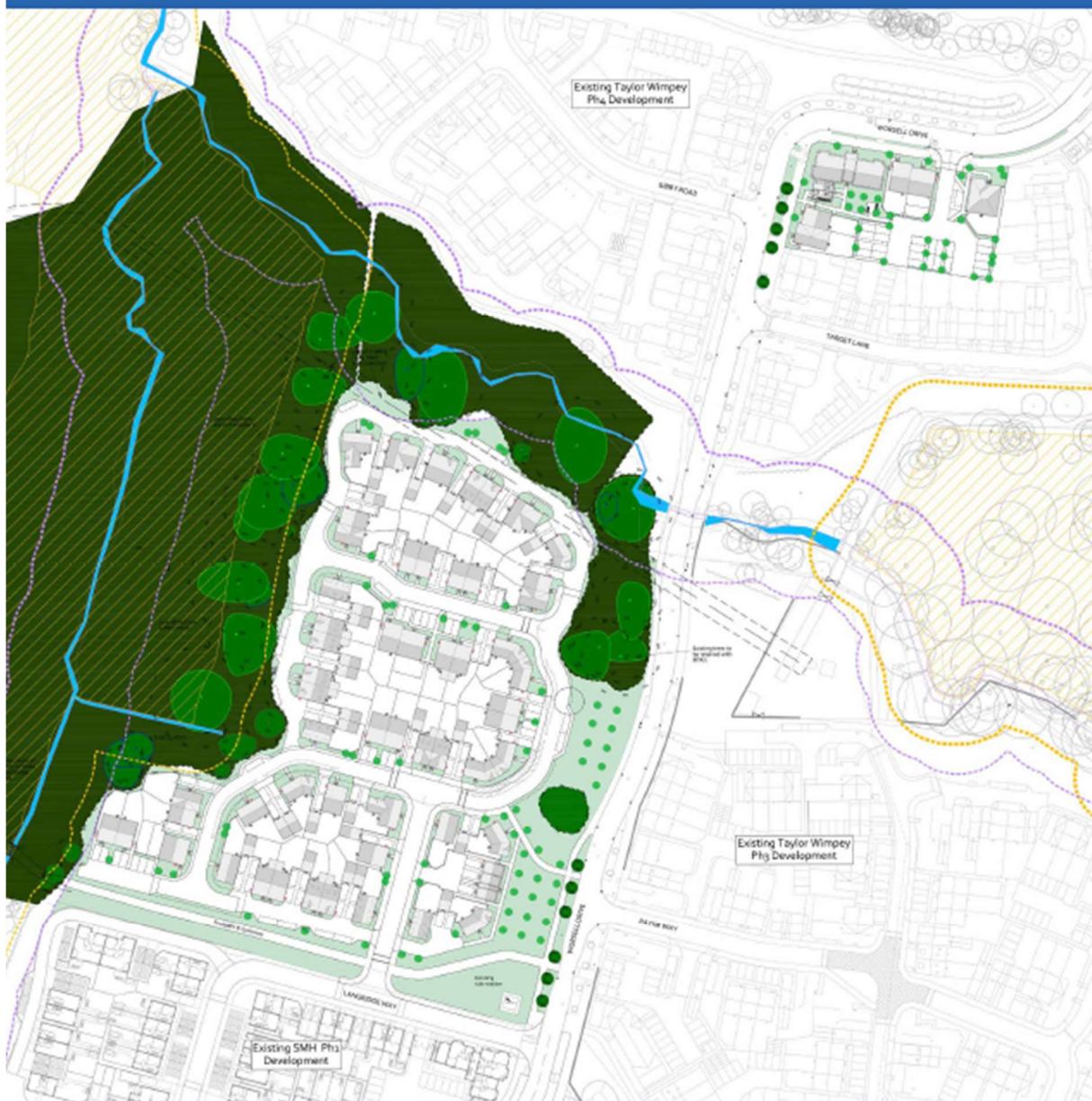
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Proposed development layout



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Appendix 2 – Feedback Form