



Statement of Community Involvement

Land West of Gatesmead

Prepared for Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd
May 2026

Contents.

1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Summary of consultation.....	5
3.	The Site and local context.....	6
4.	Community engagement.....	8
5.	Review of comments.	11
6.	Response to comments.....	15
7.	Post-submission engagement.	16
8.	Conclusion.	17
9.	Appendices.	18

1. Executive Summary.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd (hereafter referred to as the 'Applicant') has developed plans for 49 new homes, together with open space and associated infrastructure on Land West of Gatesmead.
- 1.1.2 The Applicant appointed Cavendish Consulting (Cavendish), a specialist communications consultancy, to assist with the pre-application stakeholder and community consultation for the project. Cavendish has produced this report to outline the consultation process undertaken and the feedback received.
- 1.1.3 This consultation process involved a 3 week online consultation between **Monday 23rd February 2026 and Monday 16th March 2026** using a dedicated consultation website - <https://haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk/>. This followed the circulation of invitations and information newsletters to local residents and stakeholders.
- 1.1.4 Residents and stakeholders were able to provide feedback via a number of different channels, including an online feedback form on the dedicated consultation website, email address (haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk), and freephone telephone number (020 3398 1590). These were monitored throughout the consultation period and continue to be available if residents have any further queries. Residents were also able to request hard copies of the feedback form to be sent to their home address and returned via a provided freepost envelope.
- 1.1.5 The proposals received mixed feedback responses, with many residents raising comments around the loss of green space and walking routes, the potential impact on local services and infrastructure, and the safety of access to Gatesmead.

Consultation in numbers.

21

Days of consultation

40

Responses received through the online
feedback form

1,659

Views on the consultation website

1,089

Leaflets delivered to neighbouring
addresses to advertise the consultation

2. Summary of consultation.

Process

1.

The consultation process for this scheme followed a virtual approach, involving an online public consultation on the dedicated consultation website, as well as contact points including email and Freephone to give the community the chance to view the proposals, provide their feedback and ask questions.

2.

A consultation invitation was distributed to **1,069** residential and business addresses surrounding the site. This included information about the virtual consultation, how they could provide feedback and contact details.

3.

A consultation notification email was issued to the identified key stakeholders on **Monday 23rd February 2026** to introduce Crest Nicholson, invite them to take part in the consultation and offer a meeting to brief them on the plans.

4.

The virtual public consultation was held between **Monday 23rd February 2026** and **Monday 16th March 2026**. This was hosted on the dedicated consultation website – www.haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk – and was viewed a total of **1,659** times over the consultation period.

5.

During the consultation, access to a freephone telephone enquiry line (**020 3398 1590**) and email address (haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk) was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposals, or to register their comments via the telephone or email.

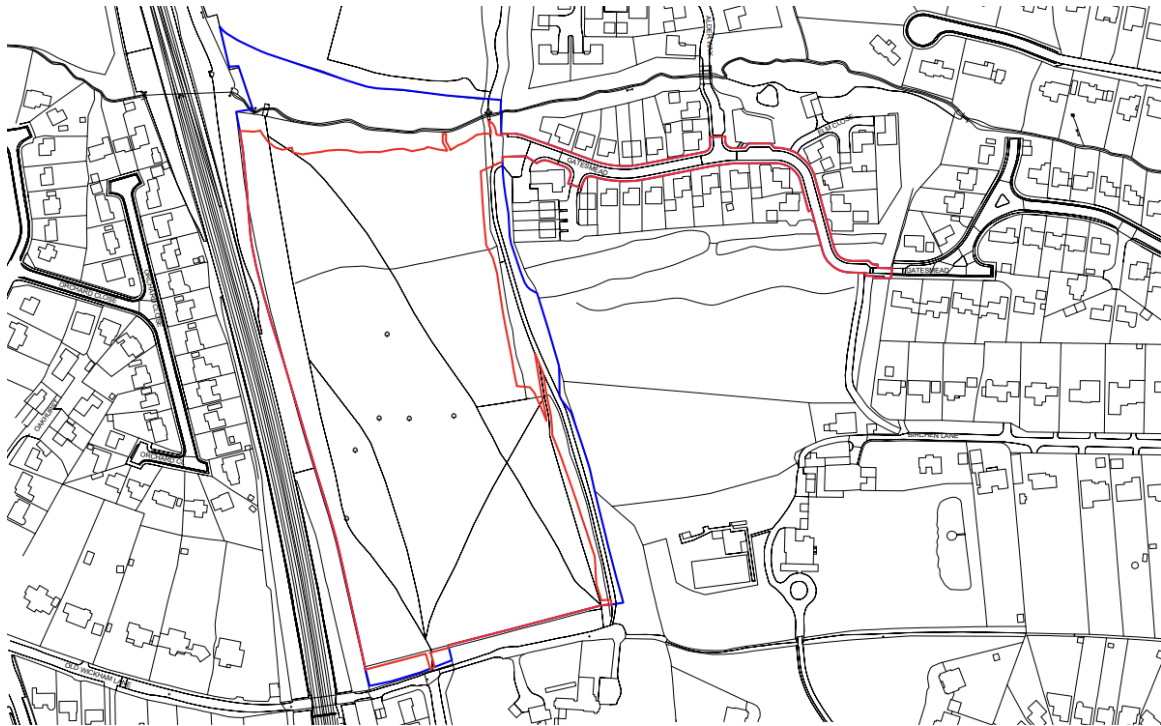
These contact details were circulated via the invitation newsletter and were available on the project website.

6.

A total of **40** feedback forms were received through the website and **3** emails to the dedicated email address.

3. The Site and local context.

3.1 The site and local context.



RED LINE SITE BOUNDARY

- 3.1.1 The site lies to the west of Gatesmead on the northern edge of Haywards Heath, within the administrative area of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). It forms part of the town's built-up fringe, positioned close to existing residential areas while adjoining open land to the north and west.
- 3.1.2 Extending to approximately 11 acres, the land is currently open grassland and is well enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows, creating a visually contained and defensible landscape setting. These natural boundaries form a strong green framework around the site and help protect the character of the surrounding area.
- 3.1.3 To the east, the site adjoins the established residential area accessed from Gatesmead, while to the north it is bordered by further open land and mature vegetation. The railway line lies to the south-west, with Haywards Heath railway station situated approximately 900 metres away, offering convenient access to regional and national transport networks.
- 3.1.4 Haywards Heath is a well-connected and sustainable settlement, providing a wide range of local amenities including shops, schools, healthcare facilities, employment opportunities, and leisure spaces. The site is located within walking and cycling distance of many of these services and is

positioned to integrate sensitively with the existing community, supporting access to everyday facilities and sustainable travel choices.

3.2 Policy context

- 3.2.1 The Applicant has complied with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025) which states that *"early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties."* The NPPF also highlights that *"good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."*
- 3.2.2 Mid Sussex District Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018) states that the aim of consultation prior to application is to *"front-load' the process by encouraging discussion before a formal planning application is made. It should enable communities to have real influence over proposals before they are finalised. The process can help to identify improvements and overcome objections at a later stage."* Applicants are advised to *"demonstrate that the consultation prior to application has been effectively undertaken and to provide the Council with the results of the process."*
- 3.2.3 The Applicant sought to incorporate these points into its engagement programme. Government guidance and the Council's SCI encourage pre-application discussions and community involvement at an early stage in the design process.
- 3.2.4 The Applicant has sought to comply with local and national guidance in undertaking a programme of pre-application consultation.

4. Community engagement.

4.1 Consultation process

- 4.1.1 The consultation took place virtually between **Monday 23rd February 2026** and **Monday 16th March 2026**. The virtual consultation was hosted on the dedicated project website (www.haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk), where local residents and stakeholders could view the proposals and provide their feedback.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement

- 4.2.1 An email was sent to key local stakeholders on Monday 23rd or Tuesday 24th February, inviting them to take part in the consultation and offering them a meeting with the project team to discuss the proposals. The following local stakeholders were contacted on:

- Cllr Anne-Marie Cooke, Lindfield ward member
- Cllr Cavan Wood, Lindfield ward member
- Cllr Robert Eggleston, Leader of Mid Sussex Council
- Cllr Ian Gibson, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing
- Haywards Heath Town Council
- Lindfield Parish Council
- Lindfield Rural Parish Council
- Alison Bennett MP

- 4.2.2 A copy of the stakeholder email can be found in Appendix A.

4.3 Consultation website

- 4.3.1 A website was set up displaying information about the proposals and was updated throughout the public consultation process. The website – www.haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk – hosted virtual consultation between **Monday 23rd February 2026** and **Monday 16th March 2026** and remains open to view the information.
- 4.3.2 The website address was printed on the invitation newsletter and relevant correspondence. The website includes:
- Background to the proposal
 - The vision and details of the proposal

- Key benefits
- FAQs
- Information on where to provide feedback and how contact us

4.3.3 The website was viewed a total of 1,659 times over the consultation period. Although feedback contribution is now closed, the website will remain live and will be updated with key information as required throughout the planning process.

4.3.4 A screenshot of the website landing page can be found in Appendix B.

4.4 Invitation flyer

4.4.1 A two-page newsletter was distributed to approximately **1,069** homes and businesses surrounding the proposal site. The addresses to which the newsletter was sent were chosen due to their proximity to the site as well as the likely interest in the plans.

4.4.2 The invitation newsletter contained the following information:

- Overview of the proposals
- Information about Crest Nicholson
- Information about the virtual exhibition
- Explanation of how to provide feedback
- Contact details for the project team

4.4.3 A copy of the distribution area and the newsletter can be found in Appendices C and D respectively.

4.5 Feedback form

4.5.1 A digital feedback form was available online on the project website as part of the virtual exhibition and hard copies were made available to be posted upon request.

4.5.2 Over the course of the consultation, a total of **40** feedback forms were received. The questions used for the feedback form and the responses received have been detailed in Section 5 of this document.

4.5.3 A copy of the feedback form can also be found in Appendix E.

4.6 Email and freephone

4.6.1 Local residents and stakeholders could also provide feedback and ask the project team questions by email via haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk. This email address was also provided on the invitation and consultation website.

4.6.2 All feedback received through the email inbox was acknowledged, and where required, responses were issued.

- 4.6.3 During the consultation, access to a freephone voicemail service was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposals or to register their comments via telephone.
- 4.6.4 The freephone number **(020 3398 1590)** used was operational throughout the consultation period and remains live. The information line provided a voicemail facility for messages to be left and responded to by the project team.

5. Review of comments.

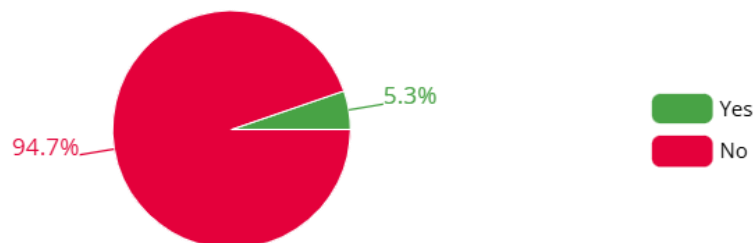
5.1 Overall feedback received.

- 5.1.1 A deadline of **Monday 16th March 2026** was set for feedback. Up to this date the Applicant received **43** pieces of feedback, including **40** pieces of feedback via the website and **3** responses via email.
- 5.1.2 Overall, the feedback was mixed, with many residents expressing concern around the loss of green space and walking routes, the potential impact on local services and infrastructure, and the safety of access to Gatesmead.

5.2 Feedback analysis

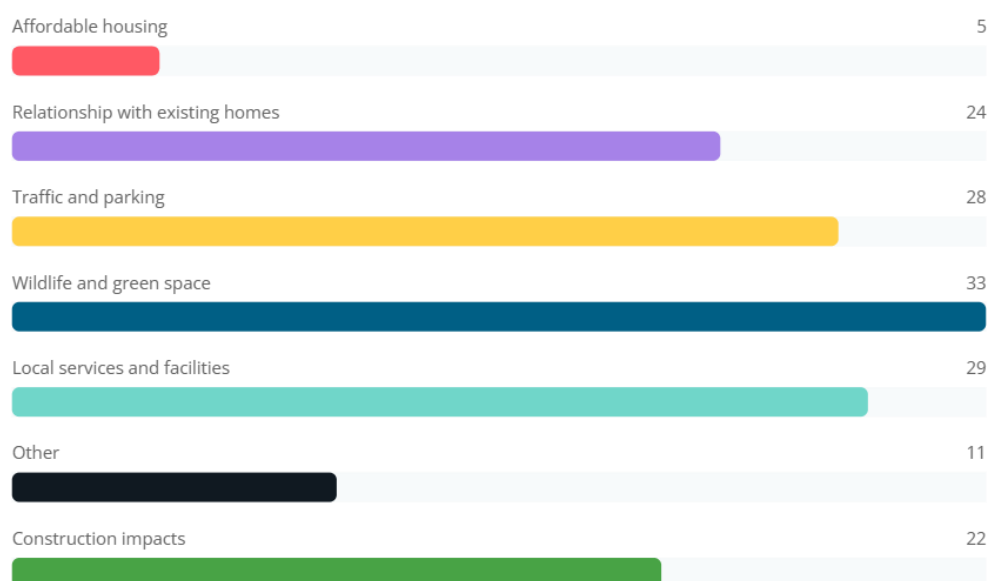
- 5.2.1 The below analysis, charts and tables illustrate the feedback received via the online feedback form.

Q1. Overall, do you support our plans for the site?



- 5.2.2 Responses to this question showed a majority being against the plans for the site with 94.7% of respondents (38) saying they did not support them. 5.3% (2) said they did support the plans.

Q2. What topics related to the potential development are most important to you?



5.2.3 82.5% of respondents chose **wildlife and green space** (33), closely followed by 72.5% choosing **local services and facilities** (29) and 70% choosing **traffic and parking** (28). **Relationship with existing homes** was also considered important, as it was chosen by 60% (24) as well as **construction impacts** with 55% (22) choosing this.

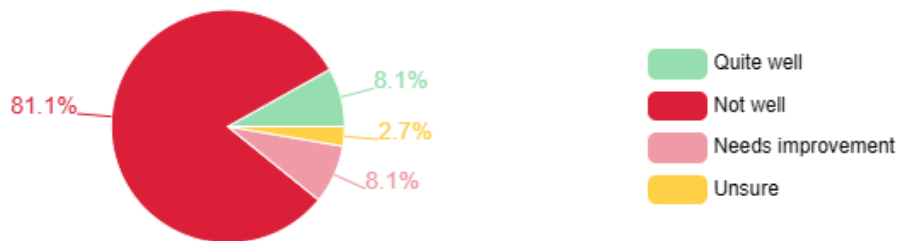
5.2.4 11 people chose 'other' and were given the opportunity to provide more details on other topics that were most important to them about the potential development. The key themes that were raised most frequently can be found below, as well as some example comments:

- Loss of green spaces and access to walking routes
- Impact on existing infrastructure – roads, traffic and local services

Example comments

- "The land above Wickham Way is regularly used by walkers, runners and dog walkers. It would be a real shame to lose this leafy space. Please ensure the bluebell woodlands, trees and hiking paths are protected as well as open green space. Please ensure - there are pedestrian footpaths to access the sites."
- "This will take away much used green space for dog walkers and wildlife alike - totally not required with vast swathes of housing already available in the local area."
- "There are not enough GP surgeries, school places or dentists and local roads are falling apart. It is not appropriate to build more housing until local services can meet existing needs."

Q4. How well do you feel the current proposals respond to the site's landscape and surroundings?



5.2.5 81.1% of respondents (30) said that they do not feel the current proposals do not respond well to the site's landscape and surroundings. 8.1% (3) said they respond quite well, another 8.1% (3) said they need improvement, and 2.7% (1) are unsure.

Q5. What improvements, if any, would you like to see made to walking routes in and around the site?

5.2.6 This question was an open comments box to allow respondents to provide a qualitative answer about what improvements they would like to see made to walking routes in and around the site. The key themes that were raised most frequently can be found below, as well as some example comments:

- Loss of green spaces and walking routes
- Impact on existing infrastructure – roads and local services
- Impact on wildlife
- Access to Gatesmead, road safety and traffic capacity

Example comments

- "Vehicular access from Wickham Way to have a two way access / exit as private roads can be adopted in construction proposals."
- "I am concerned about the damage you will do to the mediaeval sunken path which goes from Old Wickham Lane to the Golf Course, as your access road appears to cross it."
- "The current plan seems to encourage everyone to walk down Wickham way which is currently a quiet private road. This is not desirable."
- "There needs to be more open space and how will you deal with traversing/preserving the public footpath at the end of Gatesmead"
- "This site will negatively impact the quality of life of the surrounding residents and wildlife."
- "This will have a substantially negative impact on the surrounding area and the infrastructure is at breaking point as it is."

Q6. Do you have any other comments, suggestions or priorities you would like the project team to consider?

5.2.7 This question was an open comments box to allow respondents to provide a qualitative answer about any further comments or suggestions they would like the project team to consider. The key themes that were raised most frequently can be found below, as well as some example comments:

- Loss of green spaces and walking routes
- Impact on existing local infrastructure – roads and local services
- Environmental impact
- Access to Gatesmead, road safety and traffic capacity

Example comments

- “The access via Gatesmead is not viable for all this additional traffic, and it is currently used by hundreds of dog walkers every day with no realistic alternatives.”
- “Widening the road on Gatesmead from single lane to double.”
- “The existing overloaded local infrastructure can not support this! More and more houses but the same old roads, water supply (hose pipe bans), schools, healthcare, public transport etc.”
- “As a professional ecologist, I would like to see: any Tree/hedgerow/vegetation planting to comprise 100% native species with a good mix of fruit and berry-producing species to provide year round feeding opportunities for local wildlife. Swift bricks incorporated into the design of houses to provide nesting opportunities. 'Hedgehog highways' incorporated into fencing to allow hedgehogs and other wildlife to freely move between gardens.”

5.3 Feedback received via email or phone.

- 5.3.1 A total of **three** original feedback emails were received during the consultation period via email.
- 5.3.2 All three expressed concerns around the potential impact of the proposals on the patient population and the capacity of the surgery to deal with the increase.
- 5.3.3 Two of the emails expressed concerns about the potential impact of the proposals on the flooding risk in the area. Meanwhile, one of the emails asked questions relating to the increase in construction traffic and how the site will be accessed.

6. Response to comments.

6.1 Applicant's responses to feedback received

- 6.1.1 The Applicant has carefully reviewed all the feedback received from the public and stakeholders during the consultation.
- 6.1.2 Several feedback themes were raised regarding the proposed development of the site. As part of the application, the Applicant has sought to respond and address the key points raised through the information submitted as part of the planning application.
- 6.1.3 The table below provides a summary of the Applicant's response to key themes raised during the whole consultation process.

Feedback received	Applicant's response
Concern about the loss of green space and impact on wildlife	The scheme is designed to integrate sensitively with its surroundings – making the most of its well-enclosed and visually-contained setting. The proposals seek to integrate and formalise the existing desire line footpaths across the site to reduce impacts on trees. The development will provide new public open spaces, a Local Area for Play (LAP), and improved pedestrian and cycle connections to the wider area as well as new habitats and wildlife enhancements. The scheme will achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain, with habitat creation, protection of existing woodland and rush pasture, and targeted enhancements for local wildlife including bats and dormice.
Feedback received	Applicant's response
Concern about the impact on local services and infrastructure	The development will include a substantial financial contribution towards local services and infrastructure, in accordance with Council policy. The relevant providers, such as West Sussex County Council (for highways and education) and the NHS (for GP services, etc), will decide how and where to spend these financial contributions.
Feedback received	Applicant's response
Concern about road safety and the current access to Gatesmead	The site is well connected to public transport, with bus stops and Haywards Heath railway station within reasonable walking distance. The layout design promotes walking and cycling, and a full Transport Assessment will be submitted to ensure impacts are managed. Access to the site will be via Gatesmead. A comprehensive construction management plan will be agreed with Mid Sussex District Council before any works can begin, to ensure that the construction process does not have an unacceptable impact on Gatesmead residents.

7. Post-submission engagement.

7.1 Ongoing engagement

- 7.1.1 The Applicant commits to ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders and the local community, and the contact details outlined in all correspondence remains the same for residents to ask any questions throughout the planning process.
- 7.1.2 The project website will remain active during the post consultation period, and the project team will ensure that the site is updated with information relating to the submission of the application.
- 7.1.3 Local stakeholders, third party groups, and those who stated that they want to be kept up to date with the progression of the application will also be updated with future notifications regarding the application.

8. Conclusion.

8.1 Concluding statement

- 8.1.1 The Applicant has remained committed to ensuring that the public consultation for the proposals was thorough and accessible, and allowed for residents, stakeholders, and other groups to be able to engage with the team and provide their feedback on the proposals.
- 8.1.2 Those who sought to provide their feedback on the proposals were able to online via the virtual feedback form on the dedicated consultation website, as well as via email and telephone. Hard copies of the consultation material and feedback form were made available to be posted upon request.
- 8.1.3 . Ahead of the launch of the consultation, stakeholders were identified and notified about the upcoming consultation and were offered meetings with the wider project team. No responses were received.
- 8.1.4 Overall, respondents provided a mixed response regarding the development of the site, with concerns raised around the loss of green space and walking routes, the potential impact on local services and infrastructure, and the safety of access to Gatesmead.
- 8.1.5 Throughout the pre-application period, the Applicant has sought to ensure local residents, local elected representatives and others in the community were made aware of the proposed development, key consultation activities and outcomes to develop a holistic proposal which is of high quality and delivers significant benefits to the local community.
- 8.1.6 The Applicant would like to thank all members of the local community and others who have taken the time to participate in the consultation, ask questions and provide feedback. The Applicant will continue to engage with the local authority, local stakeholders, and surrounding community post-submission.

9. Appendices.

Appendix A - Stakeholder email

Dear Haywards Heath Town Council,

I am writing on behalf of Crest Nicholson, who are launching a public consultation on proposals for new homes on land to the west of Gatesmead, Haywards Heath (site location plan below).

Crest Nicholson are proposing around 50 new homes, including 30% affordable housing, alongside new public open space, a children's play area and associated infrastructure. The plans have been developed to respond sensitively to the surrounding area while helping to meet identified local housing needs.

A newsletter will be delivered to residents this week – we will share a copy of this with you before it is distributed. We will also be promoting the consultation on social media.

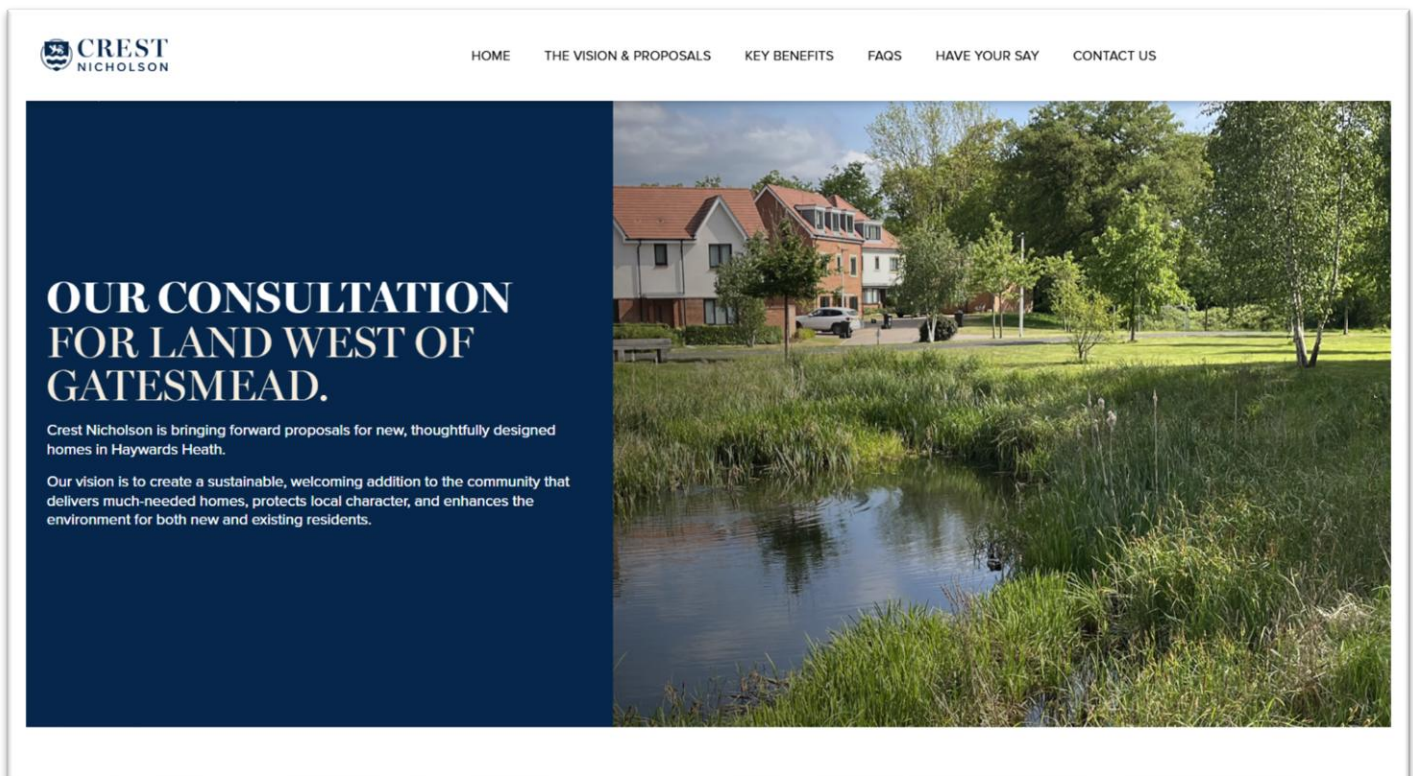
Residents will be able to view the proposals and provide their feedback via the consultation website at **haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk** – which will be going live shortly. Comments may also be submitted by email to haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk or by calling the project team on [020 3398 1590](tel:02033981590).

We recognise that not all residents are able to access materials online. Hard-copy versions of the exhibition boards can be provided on request, and residents can speak directly with the project team using the contact number above.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the proposals in more detail and would be happy to arrange a suitable time at your convenience – please let me know if this of interest?

Kind regards,

Appendix B – Website landing page



Appendix C - Distribution area



Public consultation

Improving the housing choice for people in Haywards Heath



Find out more via our public consultation

When?

Our virtual exhibition will be live between
23 February and 16 March 2026
Access the consultation by visiting
haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk
or scanning the QR code to the right.

How can you comment on the plans?

- Complete the online feedback form on the consultation website.
- Provide comments via email to haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk
- Call us during office hours on 020 398 1590

All feedback received
will be evaluated and
considered before a
planning application
is submitted.



Crest Nicholson is bringing forward proposals for new homes and public open space on land to the west of Gatesmead, north of Haywards Heath and less than 1km from the railway station.

We are proposing around 50 new homes, including 30% affordable housing, together with new public open space, a children's play area and associated infrastructure, set within the existing landscape. The scheme has been designed to integrate sensitively with the surrounding area, while delivering a range of benefits for both new and existing residents.

Mid Sussex District Council is under increasing pressure to provide new homes in line with national requirements, with between 2,200 and 3,500 homes required over the next five years. This site has been chosen carefully to support this aim in a responsible and locally sensitive way, supporting local families and contributing much needed affordable housing.

As part of our commitment to early and meaningful engagement, Crest Nicholson is sharing information about the proposals ahead of submitting a planning application to Mid Sussex District Council. We invite local residents to learn more about the plans and share their feedback as we develop the scheme.



Key benefits



Affordable homes: a policy-compliant 30% of homes will be affordable, helping local people access high quality housing and supporting a balanced community.



Community infrastructure: New public open space, a children's play area (LAP), and improved walking links.



Protecting character & heritage: Strong landscape buffers and screening, with the site layout designed to safeguard existing mature trees.



Sustainable living: Easy access to local services and transport, with EV charging for every home and homes built to Future Homes Standard.



Environmental resilience: Low flood risk site with a sustainable drainage strategy and energy efficient design.



Meeting housing need: Supports Mid Sussex's significant housing shortfall, providing much needed market and affordable homes for local families.

About Crest Nicholson

Crest Nicholson is a leading housebuilder with a long standing commitment to creating vibrant, sustainable communities.

Our developments are shaped by strong placemaking principles, delivering high quality homes alongside well designed public spaces and green infrastructure.

Our portfolio ranges from first time buyer homes to larger family houses, as well as mixed use schemes that include apartments and commercial facilities. Across all our projects, our aim is simple: to enhance quality of life for individuals and communities by providing attractive neighbourhoods, community focused facilities, and thoughtfully landscaped environments.

Contact us



Email: haywardsheath@consultationonline.co.uk



Phone: 020 3398 1590



Website: haywardsheath.consultationonline.co.uk

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact us on 020 3398 1590, and you'll be able to speak with a member of the project team as well as arranging for copies of the virtual exhibition display material to be sent in the post.

Appendix E – Digital Feedback form

Step 1/7

Choose up to 7

What topics related to the potential development are most important to you?

Tick all that apply

Traffic and parking

Local services and facilities

Wildlife and green space

Relationship with existing homes

Construction impacts

Affordable housing

Other

Back

Next

Skip

Step 3/7

How well do you feel the current proposals respond to the site's landscape and surroundings?

Very well

Quite well

Needs improvement

Not well

Unsure

Back

Next

Skip

Step 4/7

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What improvements, if any, would you like to see made to walking routes in and around the site?



Back

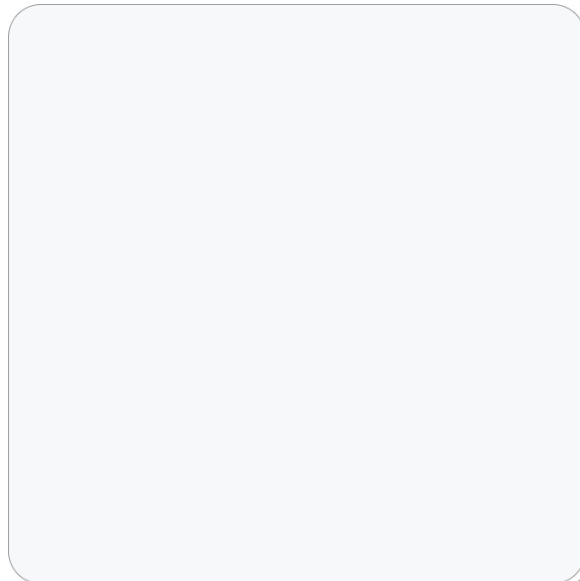
Next

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Step 4/7

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What improvements, if any, would you like to see made to walking routes in and around the site?



Back

Next

Skip

Step 5/7

Overall, do you support our plans for the site?

Yes



No



Unsure



Back

Next

Skip

Step 6/7

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Do you have any other comments, suggestions or priorities you would like the project team to consider?

Back

Next

Skip

CAVENDISH Have questions?

For any further support, please contact:
george.burr@cavendishconsulting.com