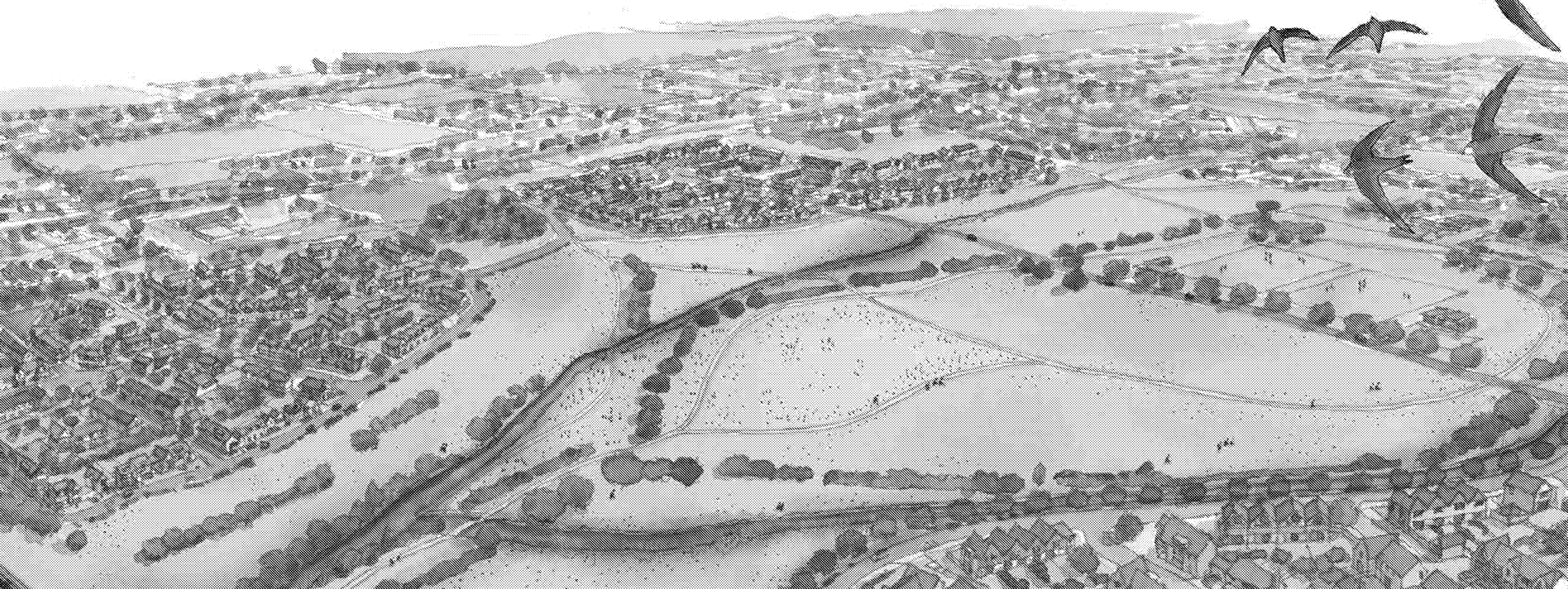


Woodgate, Westergate



Statement of Community Engagement

Prepared by MPC on behalf of Pye Homes

July 2021

PYE
homes

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Background

Pye Homes is submitting an application for up to 180 new homes and public open spaces on land off Woodgate Road, Woodgate, which will deliver part of the Barnham, Eastergate, Westergate (BEW) strategic development site. BEW will eventually provide up to 4,300 new homes and forms part of Arun District Council's Local Plan, a strategic development plan adopted in 2018 to deliver 20,000 houses by 2031 across the district.

The masterplan shows how the development aims to preserve the separate identities of the villages, creating a series of new communities around a public park which follows along the Lidsey Rife. The development will include two new primary schools and two new local centres with shops, office space, cafes and community facilities alongside a library and healthcare centre.

The masterplan for BEW was consulted upon in 2020 and formally approved on 25 November 2020. Pye Homes has prepared a planning application which seeks to follow the principles set down by the masterplan. The development site links the homes of Woodgate on its western edge to the new green park on its eastern edge, therefore providing both new homes and green space alongside an east/west pedestrian and cycle connection.

About Pye Homes

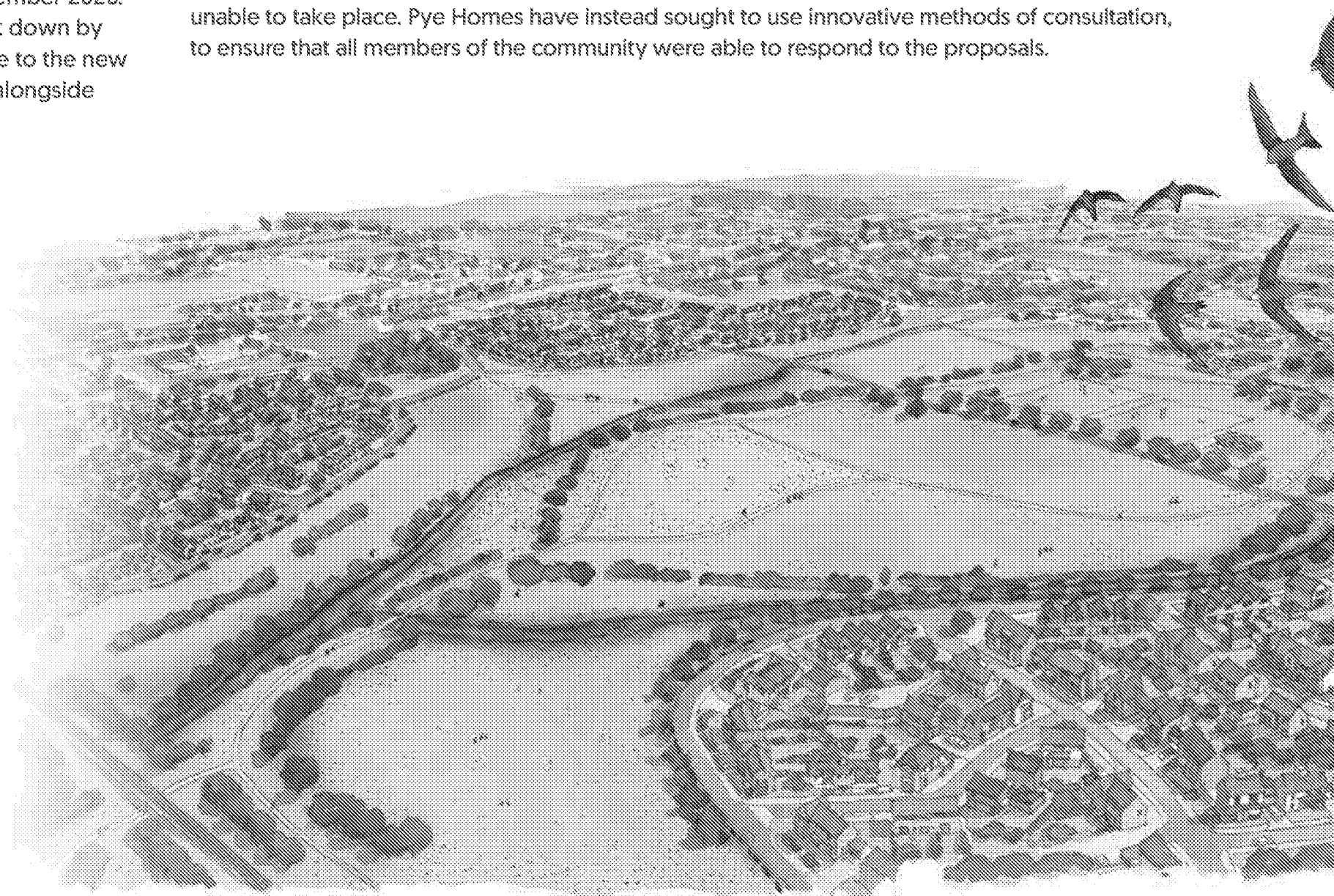
Founded in 1927 in Oxfordshire, Pye Homes take pride in building outstanding communities which everyone can be proud and where local people truly want to live, grow and prosper. Working together with the Blenheim Estate since 2018, Pye Homes share a desire for progress alongside a deep-rooted sense of place and enduring connection to neighbours and local communities.

Pye Homes build in harmony with nature and the local area, so that new homes simply belong as part of a community, right from the start. Pye Homes build from highest quality materials, with forward thinking technologies integrated into construction (such as energy saving insulation, electric vehicle charging points, low energy lighting and heating), so that the development stands the test of time.

Approaching the consultation

The project team built upon responses to previous applications, noting that there have been concerns raised broadly falling into the categories of the environment and transport. From the outset, the Pye Homes team has sought to try and address these issues within the plans, reflecting that the background and context to the application has changed. This included reviewing comments made by the CPRE Sussex, the West Sussex Wildlife Protection Group and West Sussex County Council, who had objected to previous applications.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent government action (workers being advised to work from home, the shut-down of any social activities and vulnerable individuals unable to leave their homes) presents unprecedented challenges for the whole of society. Current circumstances mean that traditional methods of consultation such as face-to-face meetings, events and presentations are unable to take place. Pye Homes have instead sought to use innovative methods of consultation, to ensure that all members of the community were able to respond to the proposals.



Engagement strategy

Given the commitment of Pye Homes to community consultation, the team has sought to involve and engage residents and key stakeholders such as statutory consultees from the very inception of the proposals.

Arun District Council's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in November 2018, with a significant update in June 2020 to reflect the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The SCI states that:

"The need for wider involvement of the community and stakeholders at an early stage in the development management process is of benefit to the public, local groups and organisations, developers and local authorities."

It notes that pre-application consultation can be helpful because discussions between a developer and local residents can help to identify potential problems or improvements that could be made to proposals at an early stage. Local residents can benefit from this by providing their input to help ensure the development is acceptable. It can also assist developers by reducing the scope for objections at a later stage.

Responding to the requirements of the SCI, Pye Homes sought to:

- Set clear objectives and agree the consultation approach with Development Management, including who will be consulted and how social distancing restrictions could be observed.
- Let the community know what the scheme is proposing and be clear about the background and what can be influenced through the consultation in light of the adopted masterplan.
- Use different engagement approaches to maximise opportunities for people to influence the proposals.
- Submit a statement alongside the planning application outlining the community involvement work that has been undertaken and a summary of feedback with responses.

The Council recommends that developers adopt at least one of the consultation methods listed in the SCI in advance of submitting planning applications for both minor and major applications. The type and nature of this consultation however, due to Covid-19 restrictions, has been significantly limited, with almost all face-to-face activity being advised against.

To satisfy the requirements of the SCI and support the planning application, Pye Homes sought to:

- Host useful information about the application on the Pye Homes website
- Deliver an informative newsletter to neighbouring residents with contact points and ability to submit feedback
- Engage with local stakeholders through a variety of channels, including virtual meetings and telephone discussions.
- Hold virtual near-neighbour meetings for those living close to the site.
- Summarise our consultation responses in a Statement of Community Involvement, which will be submitted upon completion of the consultation process.

Timetable of activities

November	
25 November	BEW Masterplan adopted by Arun District Council
December	
2 December	Email sent to local district and parish councillors, offering more information and a meeting if requested
2 December	Website goes live
7 December	Newsletter is distributed to local residents around the site
7 December	Letter is sent to near neighbours inviting them to one-to-one virtual meetings
January	
January	Meetings with near neighbours
12 January	Presentation to Aldingbourne Parish Council
21 January	Presentation to BEW Advisory Group
February	
February	Continued contact with near neighbours and statutory consultees
June	
16 June	Update emails sent to local representatives, offering update meeting
July	
1 July	Meeting with near neighbour to discuss scheme
13 July	Update presentation to BEW Advisory Group
16 July	Update to website
16 July	Distribution of update newsletter to residents

Supporting the Application

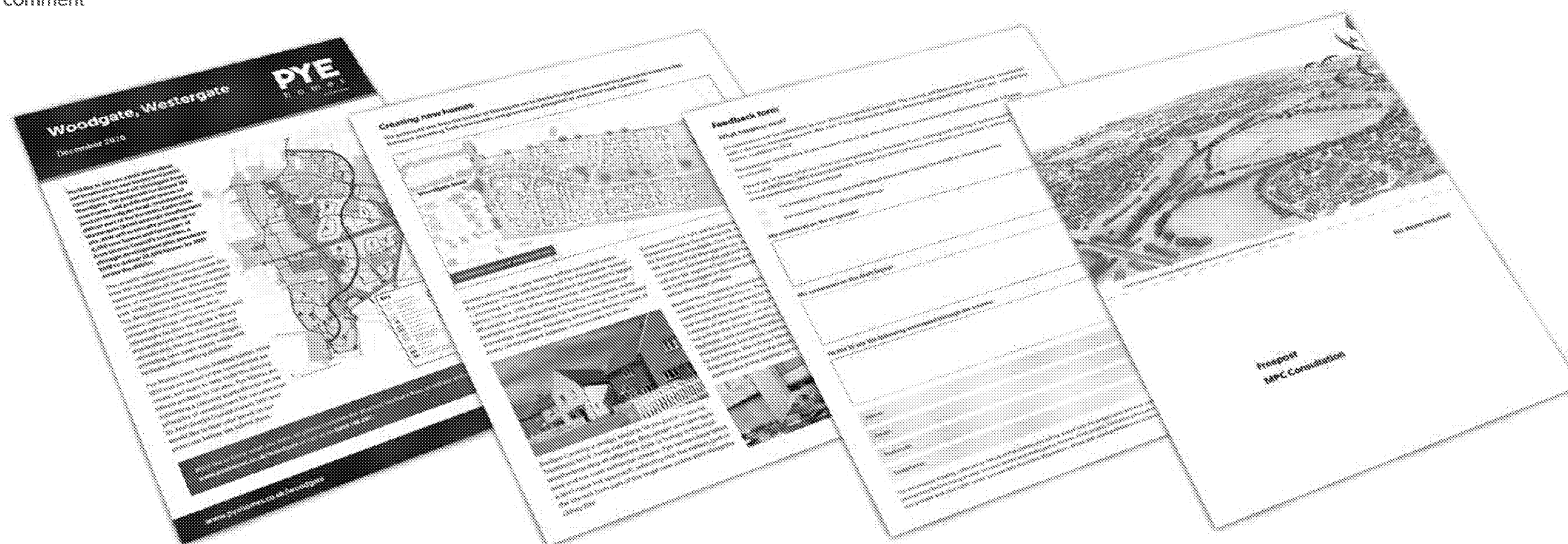
Newsletter

A four-page newsletter and feedback card were distributed to residents of the local area (608 addresses), informing them about the evolving proposals and allowing them to feedback via:

- A Freepost card included in the newsletter
- By phone – 0800 148 8911
- By email and via the website
- By letter to FREEPOST, Meeting Place Communications

The content of the newsletter included:

- Background to the proposals – the Local Plan and wider BEW masterplan
- The proposals for the site
- What stage we are at
- How to comment



Supporting the Application

Near neighbour meetings

A separate letter to the wider newsletter was sent to those on Woodgate Road and Woodgate Close, allowing them to call and arrange individual meetings with the team to discuss proposals either by phone or by virtual means, such as Teams or Zoom, which went to 19 addresses.

The meetings were to:

- Discuss specific parts of the proposal and how they relate to the properties
- What concerns they may have and how we might be able to mitigate them
- Identify residents and properties with particular concerns.

These letters were sent by Royal Mail, to those properties that border the site on Woodgate Road. These meetings included:

14 January, resident on Woodgate Road

Discussions took place regarding congestion on the A29, large vehicles moving down Woodgate Road and the use of the road by the future homes. Potential solutions were discussed such as hatched markings on the junction with the A29, and the possibility of works to Woodgate Road – which it was agreed would be discussed and shared with all residents in February.

2 July, update meeting

A further update meeting was offered to the same resident, where we discussed progression of the plans, creation of a pedestrian only cycle bridge rather than a road link and the resulting positive impact on traffic movements this change would make.

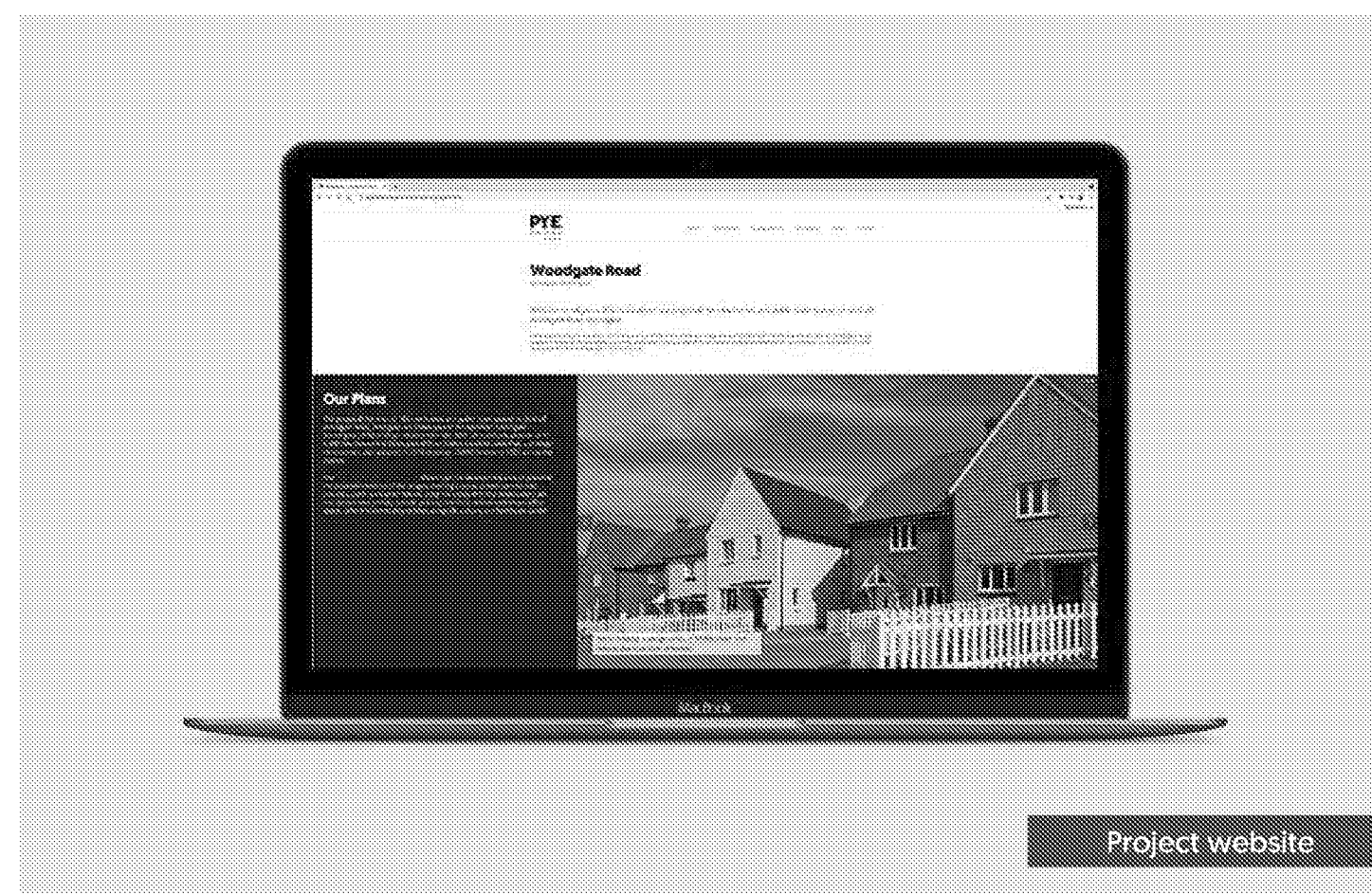
Project website

The project website – www.pyehomes.co.uk/woodgate - hosted details about the proposals and the application. This included:

- Information about the scheme and the BEW masterplan
- Current plans, including layout and design
- Contact details (including by email and phone)
- Ability to comment online

The website was updated prior to submission with a copy of the update newsletter and revisions to the proposals.

Up to 6 July 2021, this received 816 views from 597 unique users.



Supporting the Application

Stakeholder meetings

A letter was sent to parish and district councillors for the area in December, inviting them to one-to-one virtual meetings with the project team. These were followed up by phone calls to ensure they had been received. Contact was had with:

West Sussex County Ward Councillor - Cllr Derek Whittington and, post election, Cllr Trevor Bence

- Arun Ward Councillors - Cllr John Charles, Cllr Christopher Hughes, Cllr Isabel Thurston
- Aldingbourne Parish Council
- Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council
- BEW Advisory Group

Letters were sent to: CPRE Sussex, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Villages Action Group and Barnham and Eastergate Community Trust.

Two presentations were held as part of our outreach programme, noted below.

Further offers of an update meeting were made in advance of submission.

12 January 2021:

Presentation to Aldingbourne Parish Council

A presentation was given to Aldingbourne Parish councillors, to inform them of our proposals and to get their feedback. This allowed the team to cover the following:

- Introduction to Pye Homes
- Background to the scheme – the Local Plan and BEW masterplan
- Details of the scheme, including affordable homes, sustainability, access and open space
- Set out the timetable going forward
- Discuss resulting issues and comments

Issues and subjects raised included:

- The location and management of affordable homes
- Protection of the chalk stream running through the site
- Use of S106 funding for Aldingbourne Community Sports Centre
- Drainage and flooding
- Habitats and biodiversity
- Concerns about access from Woodgate Road
- Provision of cycle paths
- Timeline of development
- Dark skies and light pollution

Supporting the Application

21 January 2021: Presentation to BEW Advisory Group

A presentation was given as part of the regular meetings of the BEW Advisory group, which included updating members on the plans to date within the context of the wider allocation. A presentation was given to the group which covered:

- Introduction to Pye Homes
- Details of the scheme, including affordable homes, sustainability, access and open space
- Set out the timetable going forwards

Issues and subjects raised included:

- The provision of bungalows
- Importance of discussing affordable housing with the Community Land Trust
- Concerns about access from Woodgate Road

Feedback Received

We received three feedback forms from the January newsletter and 6 website submissions. We also received four phone calls from local residents, one of whom raised concerns which we were able to address by phone, two wanted additional information and another had a mixed view on the development.

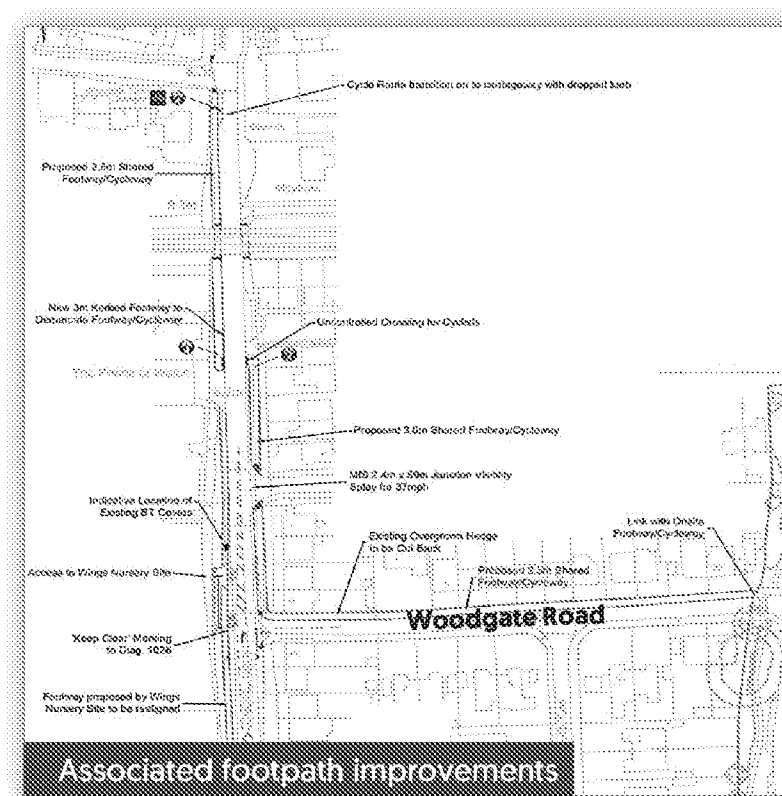
Concerns raised by residents included:

- Use brownfield land for homes
- No need for development in the local area
- Woodgate Road could become a rat run for traffic and is too narrow to accommodate large vehicles
- Congestion on A29
- Pressure on medical services
- The development will add to flooding problems

Changes we've made

Throughout the consultation we have been working with statutory consultees, West Sussex County Council, Arun District Council and neighbouring land owner the Church Commissioners. Throughout this work we have made the following changes since our consultation in January:

- Provided a more sustainable pedestrian and cycle bridge as the connection from the development to the east, which modelling has shown will reduce congestion and traffic flows on Woodgate Road compared to if the road link was provided between the old and new A29.
- Changed the mix of the scheme to provide more smaller units, creating a slightly looser development with more green space
- Reviewed the drainage strategy following additional technical work and surveys, to ensure that the drainage system robustly copes with the high water table and subsequent flooding events.
- Updated the biodiversity strategy for the linear park area being provided as part of the scheme, following additional habitat surveys, to ensure that maximum level of protection and habitat creation in this important wildlife corridor.
- Footpath widening along Woodgate Road to improve cycle and pedestrian access from Woodgate across into the new BEW development.



Responses to comments:

Building on brownfield

All local authorities are required to maintain a 'Brownfield Register' for sites for development. In the summer of 2020, Arun District Council undertook a 'call for sites' as part of its Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment and Local Plan review, which assessed all the available brownfield sites for development in the district. There are simply not enough brownfield sites to meet Arun's housing needs, which means that housing has to be built on non-brownfield land. That said, the site is currently used by a mixture of small businesses and three existing residential properties.

No need for development here

Arun District Council's Local Plan requires 20,000 homes to be built in the District by 2031 and allocates 2,300 new homes to the BEW Masterplan area, of which this application will make a contribution. Furthermore, the council can not demonstrate a 5-year land supply of housing, meaning that it is currently not delivering enough homes to meet its housing needs and opening the risk of speculative development. These new homes will help meet Arun's needs in a planned way, delivering affordable homes for local people.

Woodgate Road could become a rat run for traffic and is too narrow to accommodate large vehicles

As part of our application, we have undertaken our own analysis of access and traffic management. Furthermore, West Sussex County Council as the Highways Authority will undertake its own assessment of the proposal, looking at access. Their thorough assessment will determine if Woodgate Road is suitable for access, and any mitigation that might need to be put in place.

Through working with the county council, we have amended the scheme to replace the indicative road bridge connection identified in the BEW masterplan between the A29 and its realigned route shown in the original BEW Masterplan. Modelling has shown that this will result in a net decrease of traffic movements with the new development compared to if a road bridge was provided. It also provides a safe, easy pedestrian and cycle access to Barnham Station and the facilities being provided as part of the BEW scheme.

Congestion on A29

As part of the BEW masterplan, the A29 will be diverted, alleviating congestion along the existing A29, reducing through traffic by bypassing Woodgate. The realigned A29 will deliver roughly 65% reduction in traffic movements along the existing A29 in the peak hours. Whilst the original plan called for one of four secondary east-west link roads to run through the site, modelling showed that this increased traffic using the route to access Hook Lane (and the A27) through the proposed development and Woodgate Road.

Models showed that without the road bridge, Woodgate Road will experience less traffic by around 99 vehicle movements in the AM peak and 157 vehicle movements in the PM peak. Similarly, level crossing traffic will be less by 68 vehicle movements in the AM peak and 132 vehicle movements in the PM peak.

We will also provide substantial footpaths and cycle paths throughout the development and to Woodgate Road, to encourage the use of more sustainable transport methods. We will also be making S106 contributions towards Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council, who may choose to use this money on traffic mitigations schemes and sustainable transport initiatives.

Pressure on medical services

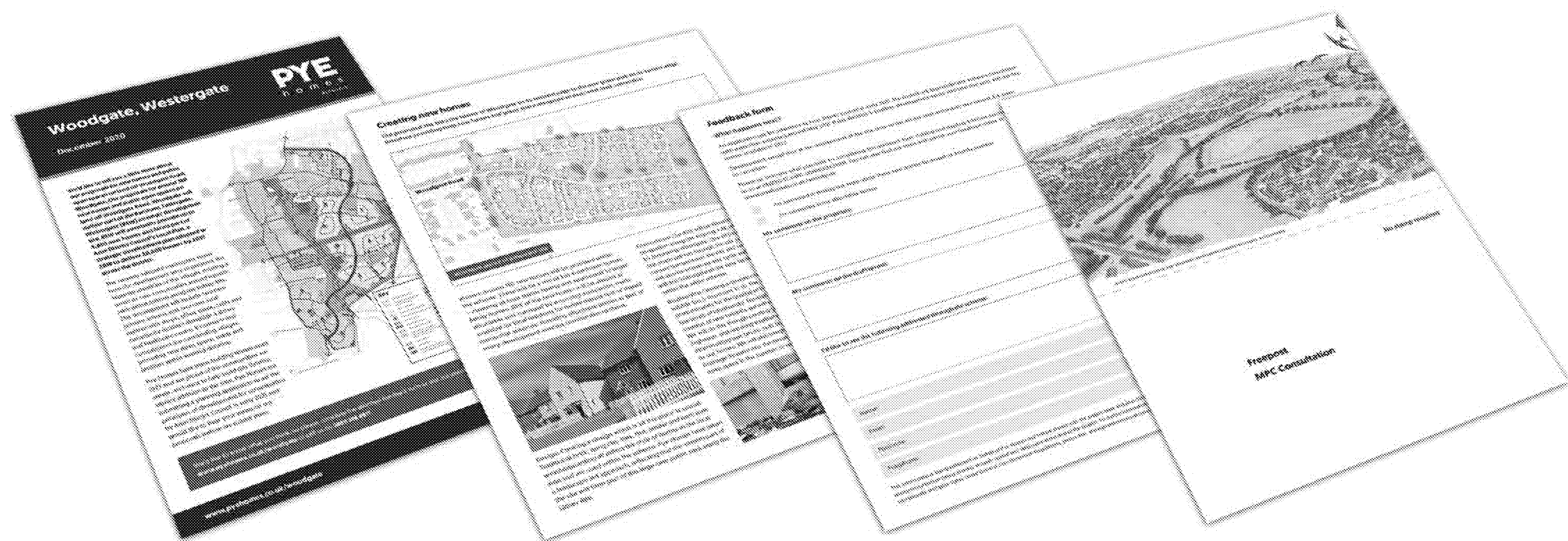
As part of our application, and the BEW masterplan sites more widely, we will work with local service providers to deliver the appropriate level of support for public services. The BEW masterplan development will include two new primary schools and two new local centres with shops, office space, cafes and community facilities alongside a library and healthcare centre.

The development will add to flooding problems

Flooding and drainage will be dealt with on site through the use of sustainable urban drainage systems. This will include drainage ponds to collect and store rainwater during periods of heavy rain, providing useable open space in the summer, and wetter ponds during the winter. This also doubles as a local habitat, enhancing biodiversity locally.

Appendix 1

January Newsletter



Appendix 2

Website



Appendix 3

July Newsletter

