

Hybrid Application

Design & Access Statement

Land at Pound Farm

Icknield Fields

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Client: Bugler Homes



Land at Pound Farm

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Land at Pound Farm

Introduction



Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of Land at Pound Farm ‘Icknield Fields’.

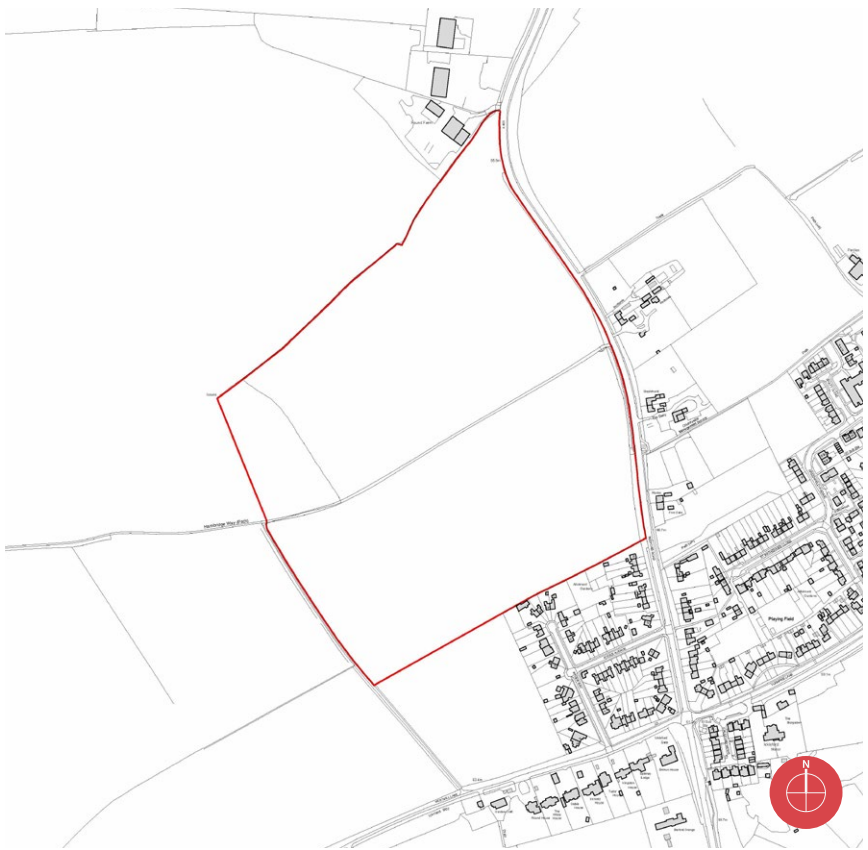
Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 – An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).

The statement explains the design principles that have shaped the masterplan. It describes how the development responds to its context, how it reflects the guidance of the adopted Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan, and how it meets the requirements of North Hertfordshire’s planning and design policies, including the Strategic Masterplan policy framework.

This document demonstrates that the proposals have been guided by a clear vision of place. It sets out how the site can grow as a natural extension of the village, in a manner that is sustainable, distinctive, and rooted in local character.

Key

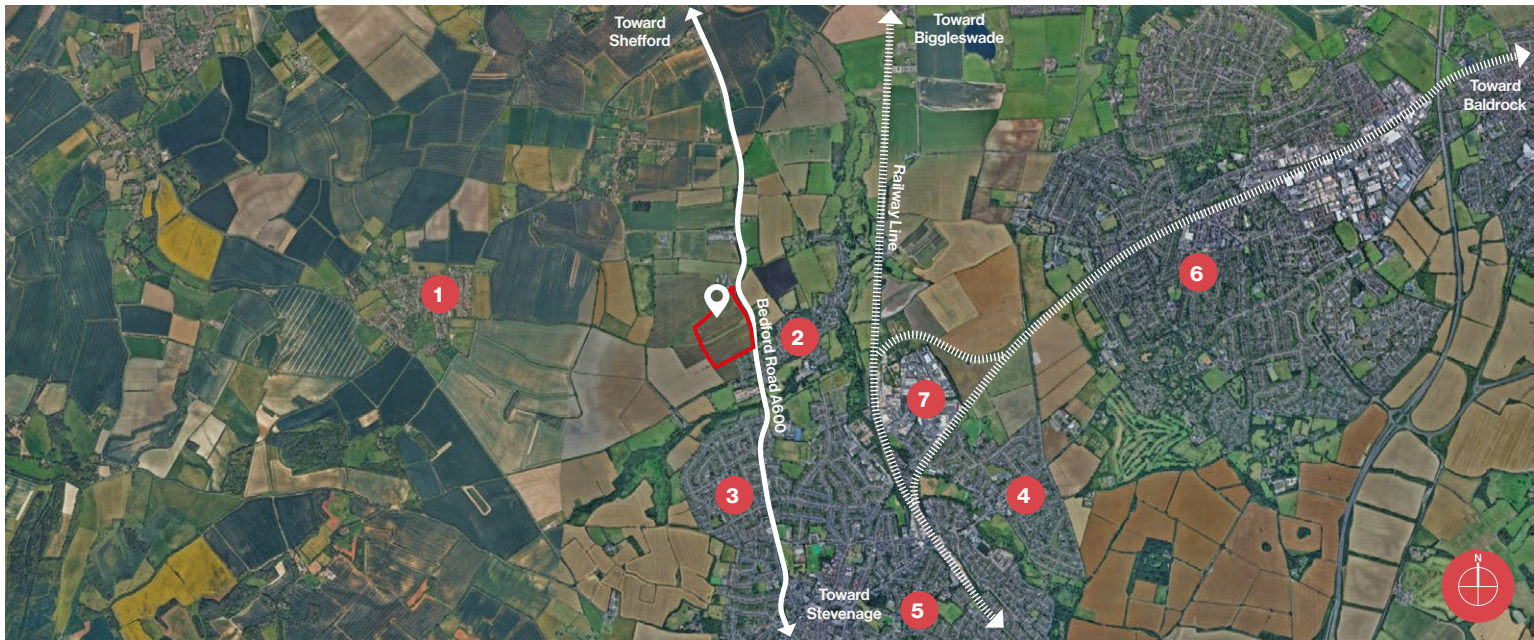
- Site boundary
- 1 Perton
- 2 Ickleford
- 3 Hitchin
- 4 Purwell
- 5 Benslow
- 6 Letchworth Garden City
- 7 Industrial Park



Site Location (not to scale)



Illustrative Overview of Proposed Development (not to scale)



Aerial View of Wider Context (not to scale)

Google Maps

Scope of Document

The Design and Access Statement is a comprehensive document that explains, illustrates, and justifies the vision, design approach, and delivery of the proposed development on Land at Pound Farm, Ickleford.

This Design and Access Statement sets out the concept, justification and detailed design approach for a hybrid planning application proposing a phased development of an SEN School, 3G sports pitch, up to 230 new homes, a 65-bed care home and associated landscape works.

The scope of the document covers:

Purpose and Vision

Explains the purpose of the planning application and the design objectives behind creating a mixed, sustainable neighbourhood.

Sets out the overarching vision, guiding principles and intended character of the development.

Site and Context Analysis

Describes the existing site conditions, landscape character, village context, heritage influences, and local architectural references.

Illustrates how the development responds sensitively to its rural surroundings and fits within the village's structure.

Policy Framework

Demonstrates how the proposals meet relevant national, local and neighbourhood planning and design policies, including the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan.

References supporting technical studies that underpin compliance.

Masterplanning Principles

Defines the structure of the masterplan, including land uses, streets, green infrastructure, community facilities, and phasing.

Explains how the layout promotes walk-ability, inclusivity, social interaction, and a strong sense of place.

Design and Character

Sets out the architectural and landscape character strategy, including building scale, materials, street hierarchy, public realm design, and character areas.

Describes how the built form reflects local vernacular while providing contemporary, durable design.

Movement and Access

Provides the access strategy for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Includes parking, servicing and inclusive design considerations to ensure permeability and accessibility.

Landscape and Open Space Strategy

Defines the landscape vision, green corridors, play spaces, sports facilities, SuDS, ecological enhancements, and long-term stewardship of open space. Emphasises biodiversity, amenity, and visual connectivity to the countryside

Sustainability and Energy

Describes the sustainability approach embedded in layout, building fabric, energy efficiency, water use, materials, waste and future adaptability. Aligns with modern low-carbon and resilience standards.

SEN School

Outlines the role, setting, design concept and delivery strategy for the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities school.

Shows how the school integrates with the neighbourhood and shared community/ sports facilities.

Phasing and Delivery

Explains how the development will be implemented in coordinated phases, starting with the first 100 homes, SEN school and 3G pitch.

Covers infrastructure delivery, construction management and long-term maintenance arrangements.

Supporting Technical Documentation

Summarises all supporting reports, assessments and plans that accompany the planning application, such as transport, ecology, drainage, heritage, sustainability and noise.

Summary and Justification

Concludes by demonstrating how the scheme creates a well-designed, sustainable and locally rooted extension to the village, delivering social value, and meeting policy expectations . Demonstrates how the scheme provides an SEN School , sports facilities and care home to the area.

Consultation Undertaken

Pre-application consultation and engagement has been undertaken as set out in the North Hertfordshire District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Early and Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Early and ongoing engagement was undertaken from July 2025 onwards with a range of key stakeholders, including local ward councillors, parish councils, Hertfordshire County Council officers (including education and SEND), local schools, community organisations and sports clubs. This engagement helped to identify key local sensitivities and priorities at an early stage, including highways and road safety, public rights of way, landscape setting, sports provision and the proposed SEN school offer. Feedback from this stage informed both the emerging masterplan principles and the wider public consultation approach.

SEN School Awareness Campaign

Ahead of the main public consultation, a targeted SEN school awareness campaign was undertaken between 12 September and 7 October 2025. This campaign was designed to explain the identified need for additional specialist SEND provision, set out the proposed school offer and provide a clear route for people to register support and interest. The campaign was delivered through a dedicated website and targeted social media promotion and generated a significant level of engagement, helping to inform the FAQs and consultation materials used during the subsequent masterplan consultation.

Public Consultation

A public consultation on the emerging hybrid proposals was undertaken between 21 November and 12 December 2025, using a multi-channel approach to ensure accessibility and reach, in line with the SCI. This included:

- A dedicated consultation website presenting the emerging proposals and supporting information, alongside an online feedback form
- Distribution of 1,000 consultation leaflets to local properties in Ickleford and north Hitchin

- A targeted social media campaign to promote awareness of the consultation
- A community workshop held on 26 November 2025, providing an opportunity for in-person discussion, questions and feedback
- Residents were able to respond via the online feedback form, email or telephone, providing flexibility in how people chose to engage.

Community Workshop

A community workshop was held on Wednesday 26 November 2025 at the Priory School Hitchin, to introduce and discuss emerging proposals. The event provided an opportunity for attendees to ask questions, discuss key issues directly with the Applicant's project team, and provide feedback. Around 50 people attended the workshop, including eight members of the Applicant's project team. The event followed a structured agenda featuring presentations, a Q&A session, roundtable discussions and table feedback.

Bugler Homes are consulting on plans for a new landscape-led neighbourhood in Ickleford.

The proposals include a new SEN School, sports facilities, 50% affordable housing and 40% green space.

New green spaces, walking and cycling routes and road crossings will create a safe, green and connected neighbourhood.

Click the link to view the plans and share your feedback.

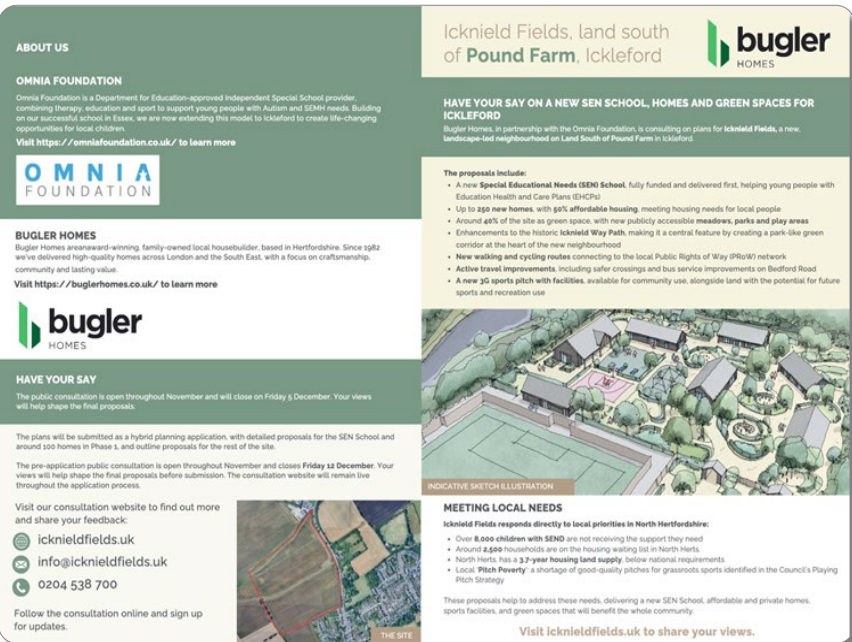


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Leaflet Side 1



Leaflet Side 2

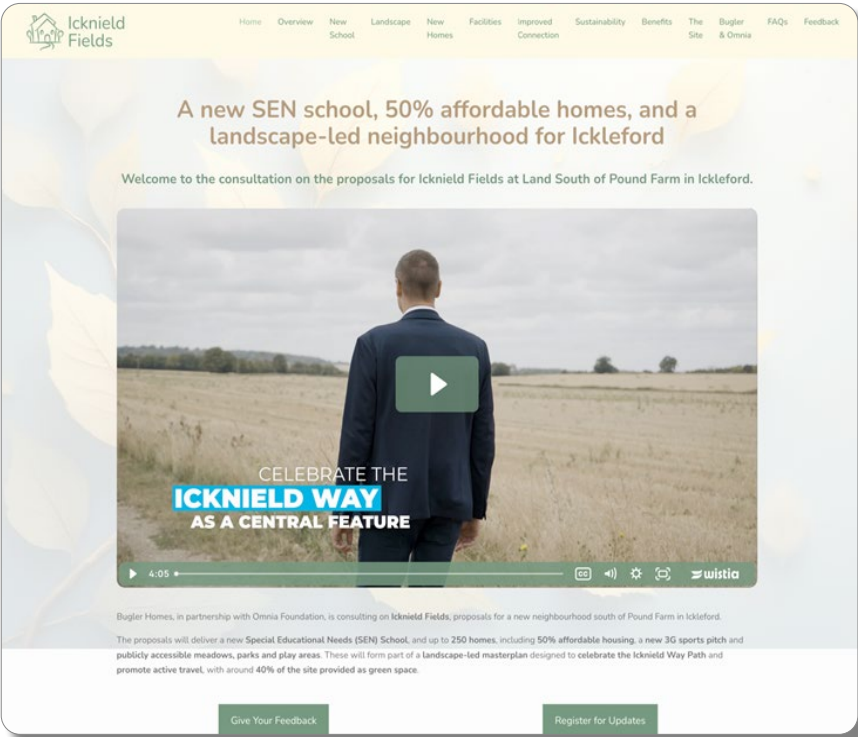
Public Consultation Website

A dedicated consultation website hosted all information in one place, including plans, visual material and a user-friendly online feedback form.

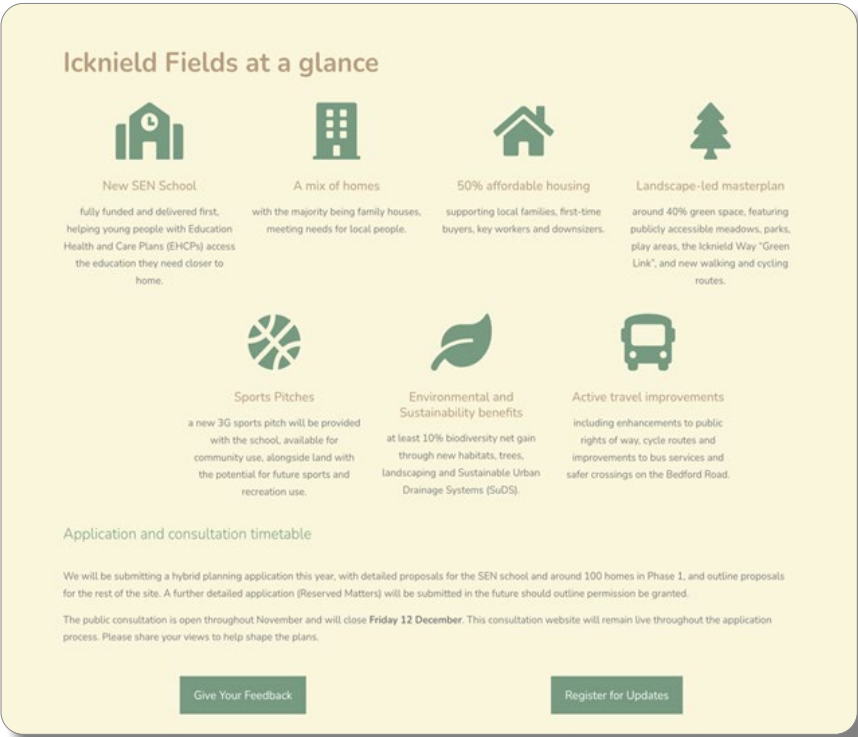
This allowed residents to view information and respond at any time, including evenings and weekends. Website traffic was measured for one month, from 21 November to 21 December 2025. During this period, the website received 2,303 visits/visitors, with a peak of 298 on 24 November 2025.

A social media campaign ran between 21 November 2025 and 12 December 2025, to promote the consultation and direct residents to the website. The campaign targeted people aged 18 years old and older in North Hertfordshire, with a focus around Ickleford, Pirton, Hitchin and the surrounding area.

Samples from the website are shown adjacent:



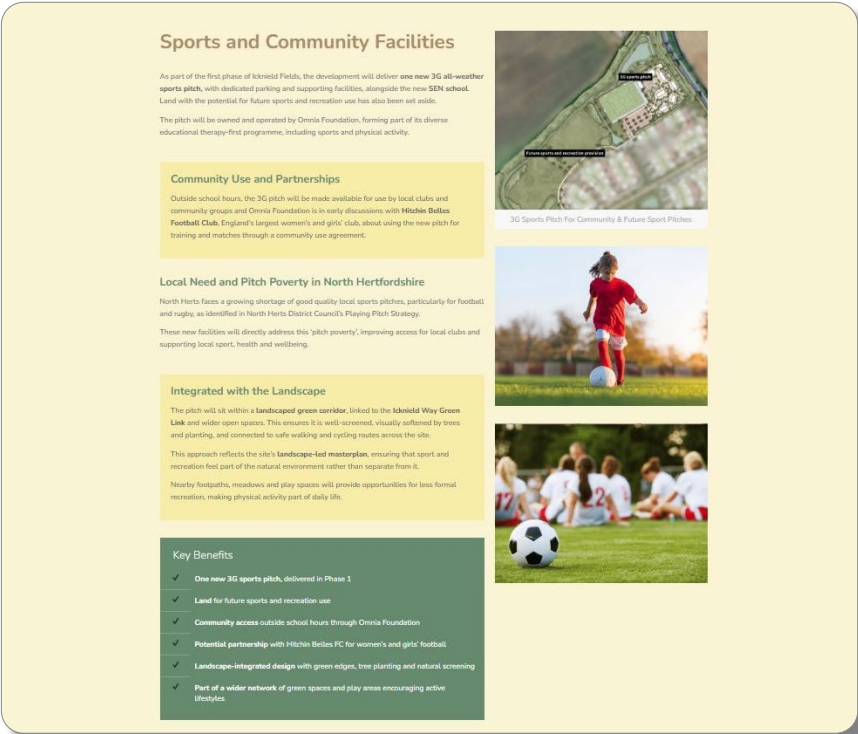
Homepage & Header



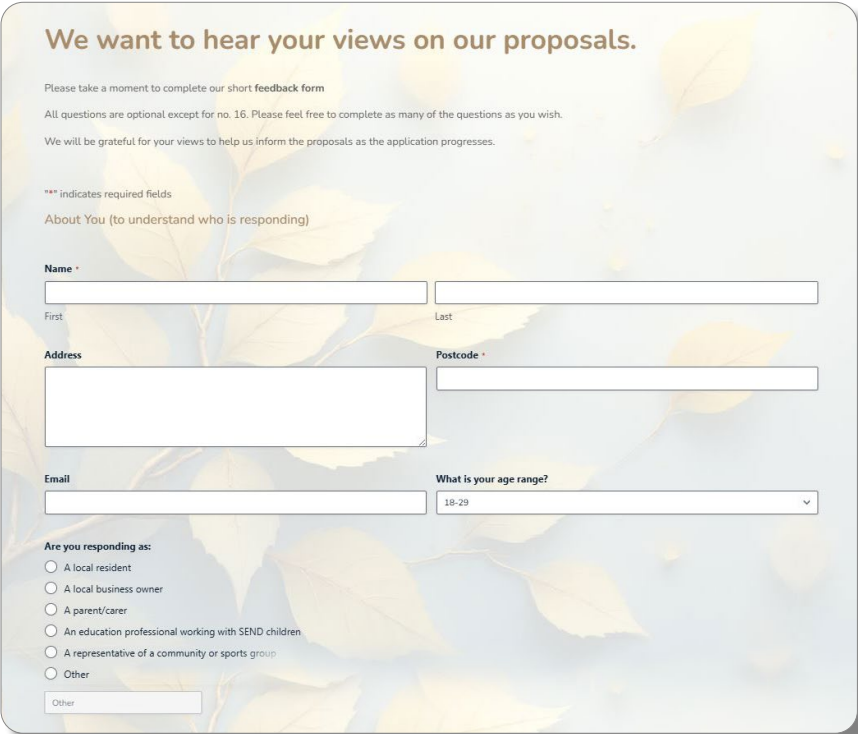
Overview



New Homes



Sports and Community Facilities



Feedback Form

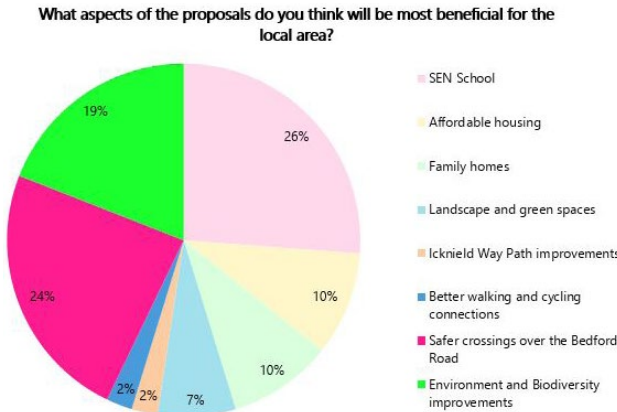
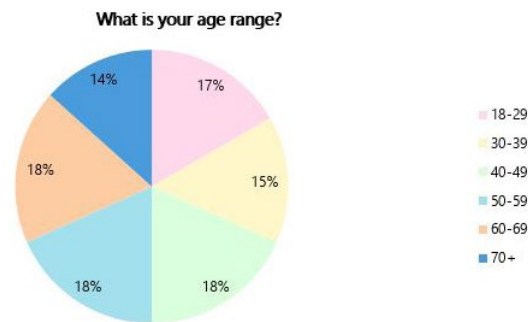
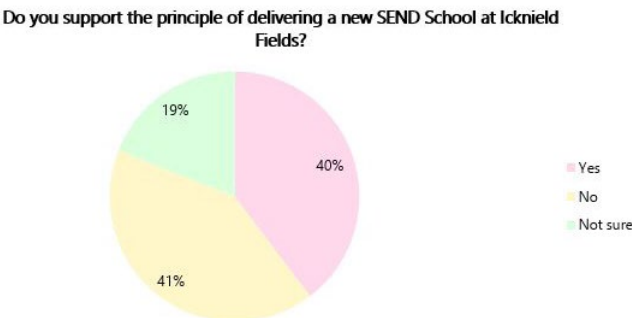
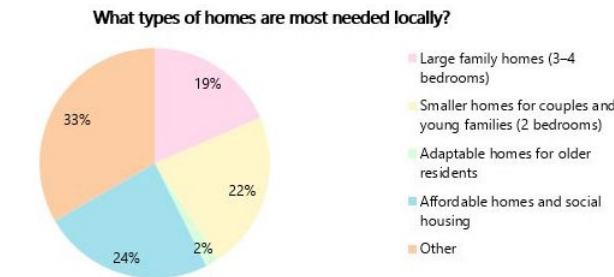
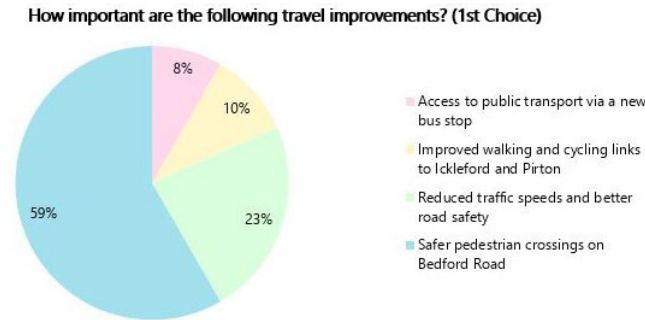
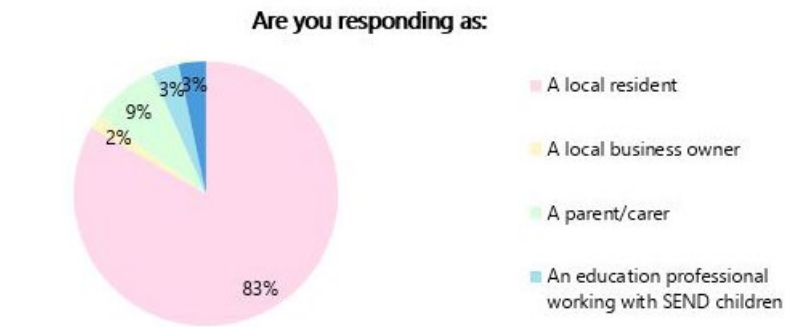
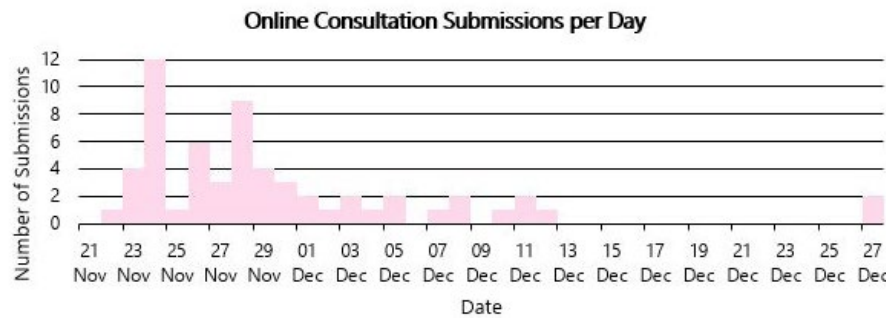
Feedback and Ongoing Engagement

Feedback received through the consultation process covered a range of topics.

Including the principle of development, landscape and open space, highways and road safety, sports facilities and SEN provision. The consultation responses have been reviewed and have informed the evolution of the proposals submitted as part of this hybrid application.

In line with the SCI, engagement is recognised as an ongoing process and will continue through the determination of the application and, where relevant, through subsequent reserved matters stages.

A total of 60 individuals submitted feedback responses on the consultation website during the consultation period. A selection of results from these responses are shown below:



Reviewing the feedback shows that most objections focus on the principle of developing the site, particularly concerns about building on green belt/ open countryside, the scale and density of the proposals, and cumulative development pressure in the area. Many respondents view the stated benefits as mitigation for the negative impacts of development rather than genuine gains. However, opposition was not universal: several respondents supported specific elements such as safer crossings on Bedford Road, additional SEND provision, a landscape-led approach, biodiversity and habitat creation, and energy-efficient homes—provided these are delivered clearly and to a high standard. Overall, individual components of the scheme received more support than the scheme as a whole.

Following the Community workshop attendees expressed positive views on aspects of the proposals, particularly the recognition of the need for additional SEND provision, support in principle for affordable housing and green space, and improvements to walking, cycling and equestrian routes.

Attendees raised questions about traffic impacts and mitigation, road and access improvements, drainage and utilities capacity, the location and operation of the SEN school, protection of bridleways and the Icknield Field Path, the proposed housing mix and management of affordable housing, and how impacts on local health and education services would be addressed through contributions.

All Issues and questions raised from the feedback have informed the detailed design of the hybrid planning application for Icknield Fields and will continue to guide future design development, including the preparation of a reserved matters application.

Land at Pound Farm

Site & Local Context

