



Statement of Community Involvement

Land East of Pirton

June 2025

Please note that this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) contains complete copies of all correspondence received during pre-application consultation. Some of the correspondence includes personal details such as names, addresses and email addresses and have been provided in an unaltered form to ensure full transparency. A fair Processing Notice was included on the consultation leaflets and website, which made clear to members of public providing this data that it would be forwarded to the LPA as part of an application. The Council will of course need to handle this information in line with its own data protection policies.



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APPENDICES

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Statement sets out the process of community engagement that has been undertaken by Gladman Developments Ltd, referred to herein as 'Gladman', to inform an outline planning application for residential development at Land East of Pirton, Hitchin.

1.2 Policy Background

- 1.2.1 This Chapter will consider relevant National and Local guidance with regards to community consultation.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.2.2 The most recent version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The document seeks to achieve sustainable development with three overarching objectives: an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective.
- 1.2.3 Section 4 of the NPPF outlines the importance of pre-application engagement in relation to decision making. Paragraph 40 notes that *"Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties"* thus leading to *"better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."*
- 1.2.4 Paragraph 41 further states that whilst a Local Planning Authority (LPA) *"cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application"*, they should nevertheless *"encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer"*. Furthermore, and where deemed to be beneficial, the LPA should *"encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications"*. This is to ensure that any potential issues are resolved as early in the planning process as possible.
- 1.2.5 There is, therefore, a clear rationale from the Government to increase the amount of public consultation undertaken in the planning process.

North Hertfordshire Council Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.2.6 North Hertfordshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was formally adopted in September 2023 and sets out the Council's approach to stakeholder engagement for planning applications within the Authority.
- 1.2.7 The SCI provides information on the Council's approach to engaging the wider community in the process of determining planning applications, particularly those involving major development proposals.
- 1.2.8 The SCI encourages community engagement when determining major development proposals, which should be carried out at the pre-application stage.

1.3 Gladman's Approach

- 1.3.1 Having considered North Hertfordshire's SCI and national guidance on public consultation, Gladman have completed a comprehensive programme of community engagement which is considered appropriate for the proposed development of this site.
- 1.3.2 This report details the programme and the results of the consultation, meeting the requirement to submit such a document as part of a planning application. Gladman have endeavoured to undertake and complete a full and comprehensive consultation exercise that complies fully with both national and local policy guidance.

2 ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 Engagement with the Local Community

2.1.1 Gladman have previously engaged with the Local Community on the previous planning application on the site that was submitted in June 2017. Further public consultation has been undertaken with local residents as part of the submission of this planning application.

2.1.2 As part of the consultation process, Gladman hosted details of the site proposals on a dedicated website, and via physical hard copy leaflet allowing residents to give their thoughts on the site.

2.1.3 A summary of all consultation responses received is found in the next section of this statement.

2.2 Consultation Letters

2.2.1 Letters outlining the site description and location plan of the site were sent to:

- Alistair Strathern MP
- Ward Councillors; David Barnard and Claire Strong
- Pirton Parish Council

2.2.2 A copy of the letters is included at **Appendix A**.

2.3 Your-Views Website

2.3.1 As previously mentioned, Gladman launched a dedicated website containing details of the site's location and our initial development proposals at: <http://www.your-views.co.uk/pirton> and was operational from 6th May 2025.

2.3.2 A series of Consultation/Information boards were displayed on the website providing background information of the scheme and identifying the factors which impacted the Development Framework Plan of the site.

2.3.3 A feedback form is hosted on the website enabling the local community and stakeholders to provide a response the developments proposals. Details of how to write to Gladman to provide feedback are also provided on the website.

2.3.4 Copies of the boards displayed on the website are included at **Appendix B**

2.3.5 Copies of correspondence to these parties which Gladman have contacted directly are enclosed within **Appendix C.**

3 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

3.1 Consultation Outcomes

- 3.1.1 Gladman is pleased that a number of people engaged with the consultation process for the proposed site and provided comments during the pre-application process.

3.2 Summary of Comments and Responses

- 3.2.1 Responses to matters which emerged from the various forms of community engagement are detailed in the table below, together with Gladman's response.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION	
Summary of Consultation Comments	Gladman's Response
Traffic and Highways Impacts	
- The site would increase traffic that would exceed the settlement's infrastructure capacity. - The roads of Drovers Way & Coopers Elm are too narrow for access, makes more sense for site access to come off Holwell Road via a roundabout.	- Gladman have instructed Icenl to undertake a Transport Assessment on the site. The report highlighted that the proposed development would not have a severe impact on the operation of the highway network both in terms of safety and capacity. The Transport Assessment assesses the impact of the proposed development alongside other committed developments (including the approved development to the west). - Pre-application discussions took place with Hertfordshire County Council prior to the application being submitted. Any further comments received by the Highway Authority will be considered during the application process. - The primary access for this planning application is proposed off Coopers Elm

	through the built out Carla scheme, where sufficient geometric dimensions allow for the safe movement of vehicles into and out of the site including those for deliveries and refuge vehicles.
Accessibility/Amenity	
The links to the existing village are poorly thought out.	- As set out within the Design and Access Statement, the proposed development aims to link the site to the existing settlement via the pedestrian link from the existing informal footpath to the south west of the scheme along Hambridge Way. - The development will provide streets, focal spaces and public open space which are well connected, vibrant attractive and easy to move through within.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES	
Summary of Consultation Comments	Gladman's Response
Schools/ GPs / Doctors / Healthcare	
Current services are struggling to cope (need School/GP Surgery)	- The NHS website indicates that nearby GP surgeries are presently accepting new patients. - New housing developments help to secure funding towards improvements in facilities such as schools and GP capacity through legal agreements which oblige the developer to make financial contributions towards specific projects if deemed necessary and CIL compliant.
Employment / Jobs	
There is not a significant growth of the local businesses like the pubs/shops.	- As set out within the Socio-Economic Statement accompanying this planning application, the new development could support around 409 FTE and apprentice construction jobs over the 3-year construction period and 521 FTE jobs in associated industries. - We would also expect some new occupants in the intended homes to be entrepreneurial and creators of new local businesses. A significant and fast increasing proportion of people now work from home, which not only creates a very sustainable lifestyle, it also increases spending locally.

DESIGN AND LAYOUT	
Summary of Consultation Comments	Gladman's Response
Size	
- The proposal is far too large for the village, the addition of 130 new dwellings represents a significant 25% increase in the size of the village. - This scheme will increase the number of 4/5 bedroom properties. - Why put the foul pumping station next to the existing property.	- The scheme is sustainability-led representing a logical extension to the existing built residential scheme. This application is proposing 32 dwellings per hectare to align with the character and appearance of the settlement - As set out within the Design and Access Statement, the proposed development aims to integrate a distinctive development within the existing built form of Pirton in terms of scale, height and massing and will protect existing and proposed residential amenity through the enclosure of rear gardens. - The dwelling size and mix will be determined in the subsequent reserved matters application. - A foul pumping station is proposed in the north east of the scheme away from residential parcels and is located in order to collect foul water by gravity from the site and pump it back to the existing foul network in Drovers Way. It is located such that there is at least the required off-set as to not cause any residential amenity issues to any properties.

Landscape and Heritage	
Pirton is a historic and cherished rural village and deep roots in the countryside. Continued building is not only changing the character of our village but also threatening the natural landscape and way of life that makes Pirton unique.	- The development and associated green infrastructure would be appropriate within this landscape context and the effects as a result of the proposed development would not give rise to any unacceptable landscape and visual effects. - The site is not subject to any landscape quality designations and lies outside of the Green Belt, AONB and any Special Landscape Area policies. - The vast majority of views of the proposed development would be filtered and screened by intervening areas of built development and tree and hedgerow cover within and surrounding the site.
Ecology	
- The site is taking away Local Green Areas and Destroying Important Natural Wildlife Habitats. - The site is an important natural habitat for all sorts of wildlife, including Barn Owls. - Access via Coopers Elms would require the removal of ancient hedgerow, disrupting the wildlife corridor and have a detrimental impact on the environment and wildlife. The ancient hedgerow has established nesting for a variety of wildlife and birds i.e. Black Squirrels and Nightingales.	- Gladman instructed CSA Environmental to undertake an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the site. - The Ecological Appraisal concluded that the proposed scheme design outlined in the Development Framework Plan demonstrates the potential to deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitats, with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures alongside new housing.

	• Table 4 of the EclA lists the priority bird species recorded at the Site during the breeding bird surveys, of which Nightingales were not observed. • The Ecological appraisal further states that the impact to Birds on site would be localised and adverse. The development will provide adequate mitigation and wherever possible enhancement, to ensure these species are protected. Further information on how the environmental impacts will be mitigated during the construction phase will be outlined in a subsequent Construction Environmental Management Plan secured by a planning condition. • Provision of strong landscape framework, which would include existing retained trees and hedgerows supplemented by additional structural planting, represents an opportunity to reflect the existing characteristics of the village and create a new habitat for wildlife whilst also providing a buffer between the development and the surrounding countryside. Internal structural planning will help to assimilate the development into its surroundings.
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PLANNING POLICY

Summary of Consultation Comments

Gladman's Response

Need for Housing / Five Year Supply

• The Proposed Development is in direct contradiction to the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan, as it lies outside the established village boundary.	• National Planning Policy requires North Hertfordshire to actively manage their housing land supply, and demonstrate that they can identify a supply of specific deliverable sites for the next five years. The Council cannot meet this requirement at such time, and therefore a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. This means that the housing policies within the Local Plan and The Pirton Neighbourhood Plan (made on 27th April 2018) are considered out of date.
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3.3 Response to Community Feedback Received

3.3.1 Gladman's response to comments received is summarised in the boxes above and any changes made from consultation to submission are outlined in the next section.

3.3.2 A full copy of all consultation responses received from the local community is available at Appendix E.

4 CONSULTATION REVIEW

4.1 Community Benefits

- 4.1.1 Throughout the consultation process, Gladman encouraged suggestions as to how the local community could benefit from the proposed development.
- 4.1.2 Significant community benefits will be provided including market and affordable housing, landscaping and ecological enhancements.
- 4.1.3 Potential suggestions for community benefits must be tested against Government rules which limit what those seeking planning permission can offer (which exist to ensure development cannot 'buy' consents). However, the applicant will discuss the ideas put forward by stakeholders throughout the planning process.
- 4.1.4 Implementation of the agreed community benefits will be guaranteed through their inclusion within a Section 106 obligation.

4.2 Amendments to Proposals

- 4.2.1 Gladman have reviewed the feedback provided from consultation with local residents and key stakeholders, including the Local Highway Authority.
- 4.2.2 The Development Framework Plan has been developed to address the matters raised in a previous appeal Decision Letter by enhancing the tree belt to the South to reduce visibility of the site from distant public viewpoints
- 4.2.3 Gladman will review any commentary provided during the determination period of the planning application and amend its proposals as appropriate and discuss this with relevant stakeholders including the Local Planning Authority.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1.1 Gladman has consulted the local community prior to a planning application being submitted. It is considered that the scope of the community consultation has met with, and gone beyond, the recommendations of local and national planning policies and legislation.
- 5.1.2 Gladman has taken account of the views expressed by those who were consulted and has engaged with the local community in a variety of different ways. This is to ensure that their opinions have been considered and acknowledging different members of the community will access information and respond in different ways.
- 5.1.3 This Statement of Community Involvement provides a response to the key matters that have been raised and how these have been considered within the planning application submitted.

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Appendix A

Consultation Letters (MP, Ward and Parish Councillors)



Councillor David Barnard, Councillor Claire Strong
C/O NHDC
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

Registered Office:
Gladman House
Congleton Business Park
Alexandria Way
Congleton
Cheshire
United Kingdom
CW12 1LB

Sent by email only

06 May 2025

Dear Councillor Barnard, Councillor Strong,

Re: Proposed Residential Development at Land east of Pirton

I write to advise that Gladman is consulting on a scheme in your ward for up to 130 new homes at land east of Pirton (image location overleaf) of which 40% would be affordable properties.

The development proposals include a mix of house sizes and tenures and a design-led residential layout complementary to Pirton's existing built form and the site's context. The scheme incorporates formal and informal green infrastructure, including new tree and hedgerow planting and new recreational routes for residents to enjoy.

It is expected that connection to the Site to Holwell Road will be provided via Drovers Way and Coopers Elms. You can read more about our proposals, view our plans and leave feedback on our website www.your-views.co.uk/pirton.

Attached to the email accompanying this letter is a Development Framework Plan which forms the basis for our consultation and a final version will be submitted as part of a planning application.

The Government has outlined its target to build 1.5 million homes within this parliamentary term. To facilitate this the Government amended the National Planning Policy Framework and there is currently a real need for development which provides a range of homes and additional local benefits in a sustainable location such as this natural extension to the village of Pirton. The site will deliver 40% affordable housing for real people in real need.



www.gladman.co.uk



01260 288800



land@gladman.co.uk

We will be consulting with nearby residents and other local stakeholders ahead of submitting a planning application to North Herts Council.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Carvel
Planning Director
Gladman Developments Ltd
s.carvel@gladman.co.uk

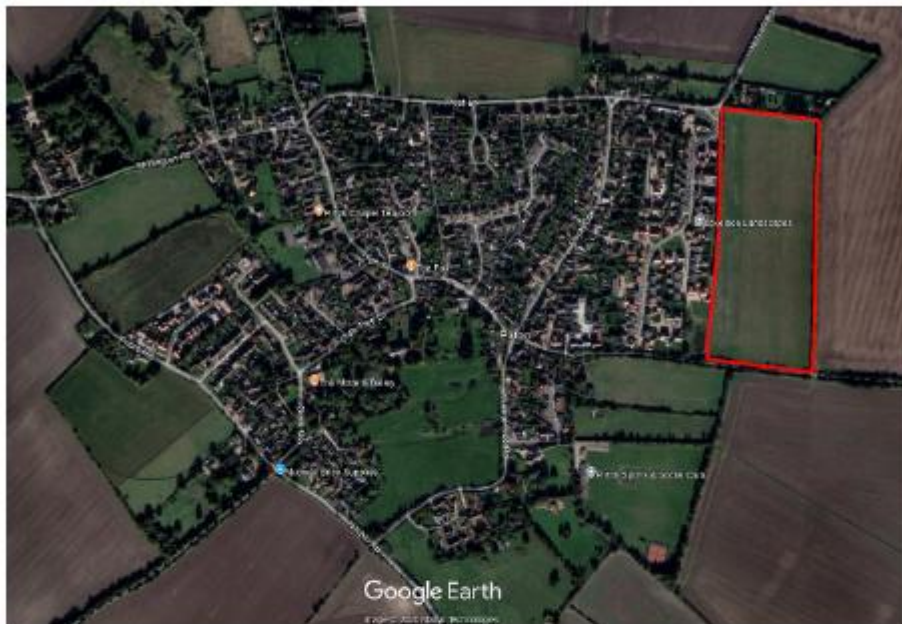


Figure 1 - Land east of Pirton

Gladman consider all correspondence received and our response to the issues raised will be set out in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). As part of a planning application, Gladman submit to the Local Planning Authority a complete copy of all correspondence received (including any details such as your name, address and email where you have provided them). This ensures all your comments are available to the Council during the consideration of an application and shows who we have consulted. As the SCI forms part of the formal application documents, the Council may publish it online, subject to their own Data Protection policies. Should the application be the subject of an appeal, the same information will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate. If further consultation is carried out as part of the planning process, Gladman may use your details to make you aware of this and to ask for your views, but will not use this information for any other purpose.



Pirton Parish Council
c/o Parish Clerk Edward Roberts
36 Heathfield Road
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG5 1TB

Registered Office:
Gladman House
Congleton Business Park
Alexandria Way
Congleton
Cheshire
United Kingdom
CW12 1LB

Sent by email only: pirtonparishclerk@gmail.com

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The Labour party has outlined its target to build 1.5 million homes within this parliamentary term. To facilitate this, the Government amended the Framework and there is currently a real need for development which provides a range of homes and additional local benefits in a sustainable location such as this natural extension to the village of Pirton.



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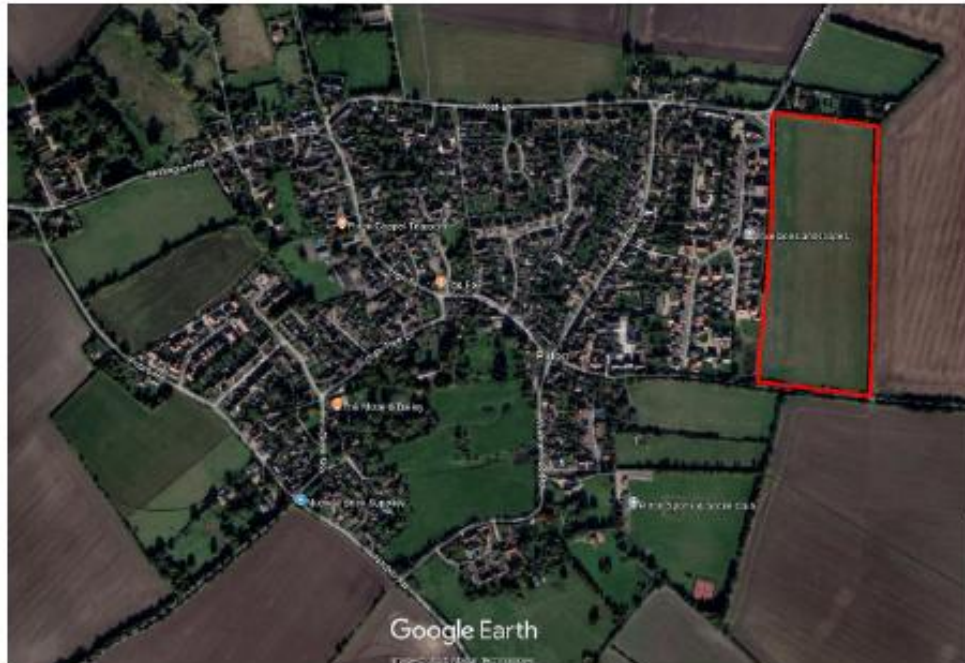


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Alistair Strathern MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Registered Office:
Gladman House
Congleton Business Park
Alexandria Way
Congleton
Cheshire
United Kingdom
CW12 1LB

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Attached to the email accompanying this letter is a Development Framework Plan which forms the basis for our consultation and final version will be submitted as part of a planning application.

Following the publication of the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024, we are bringing forward this development in line with the Government's strengthened presumption in favour of sustainable development.



www.gladman.co.uk



01260 288800



land@gladman.co.uk

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Yours sincerely,



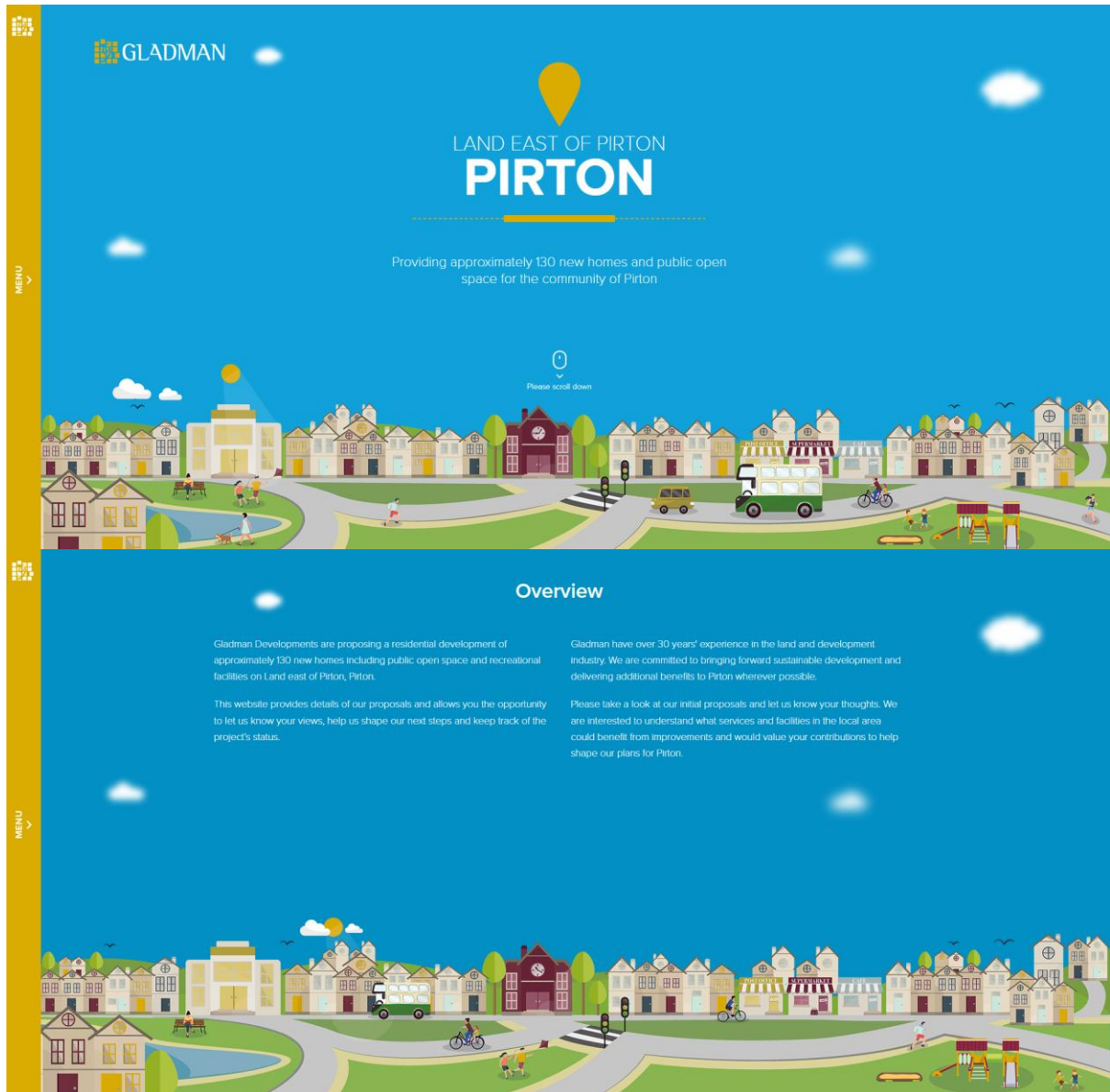
Stuart Carvel
Planning Director
Gladman Developments Ltd
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Appendix B

Your Views Website



Planning Application And Project Status

We are currently at the stage of preparing an outline planning application to support the residential development of this site. An outline planning application seeks permission for the principle of development on the site. More detailed considerations such as the appearance of the dwellings or landscaping planting plans will be subject to a further planning application known as 'Reserved Matters'.

We will consider all comments submitted as part of this public consultation, which will influence our proposals. A summary of the feedback received through this consultation will be provided in a Statement of Community Involvement, which will form part of our planning application to North Hertfordshire.

The local planning authority will then consider the submitted evidence and plans and determine the application.

You can check back here for further updates. A link to the application and supporting documents will be provided once an application has been submitted.

FAQs

What kind of houses will be provided?

What impact will it have on our environment?

Will our local services and infrastructure be able to cope?

The development will achieve a net gain in the biodiversity of the site. This will be achieved by a number of initiatives including new native planting, introduction of a sustainable drainage pond and the active management of all areas of open space. Our proposals can provide sustained benefits to new and existing residents through the provision of new public green spaces that are accessible for everyone to connect with and benefit from.

A specialist consultant team has been appointed to survey the proposed site's sensitivity to development, ensuring that we have comprehensively evaluated the site for ecology and wildlife and have guarded the habitats of protected species.

Have Your Say

You can let us know your thoughts by submitting the form below. Alternatively, you can write to us at YourViews Pirton, Gladman House, Alexandra Way, Congleton, CW12 1LB

Your name:

Your postcode:

Are you, or anyone you know, looking for a new home in Pirton?

Y ☐ N ☐

Have you, or someone you know, struggled to find an affordable home to either rent or buy in Pirton?

Y ☐ N ☐

Is there the need for more homes for first time buyers or young professionals in Pirton?

Y ☐ N ☐

Which of the following do you consider important to take into account as we finalise our proposals?

☐ Range of types and sizes of housing

☐ Access to public open space and new planting

☐ Provision of footpaths & cycleways

☐ New/improved community facilities

☐ Provision of children's play areas

☐ Access to public transport

☐ Space for older children/teenagers

☐ Homes for local people

☐ New/improved natural habitats

What changes could be made to the Development Framework Plan to improve our proposals?

Submit

Appendix C

Copy of Consultation Responses Received

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Land East of Pirton, Hitchin

Statement of Community Involvement
