

Land at Shortland Farm, Guildford, Ash

Statement of Community Involvement

Gleeson Land Limited

24 October 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI') has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Gleeson Land Limited (the applicant). It accompanies a planning application seeking outline planning permission for residential development on Land at Shortland Farm, Guildford Road, Ash, Guildford.

1.2 The proposed description of development for which outline planning permission is sought is as follows:

"Outline planning application with all matters except for the accesses from Guildford Road and Wyke Lane reserved for subsequent approval for the demolition of the existing buildings and hardstanding and the erection of:

- up to 200 residential dwellings including affordable housing and plots of self-build plots (Class C3);*
- green and blue infrastructure; and*
- associated service and utility structures."*

1.3 The application site is within the administrative authority of Guildford Borough Council ('GBC' or 'the Council') and is also within Normandy Parish.

Purpose of the statement

1.4 This statement sets out the pre-application and public consultation process undertaken by the applicant and the summary of the feedback received. This should be read in conjunction with the other reports and documentation that accompany the planning application submission.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 Engagement is a key part of the planning process and Government guidance clearly encourages consultation to be undertaken as part of development projects.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) states that Local Planning Authorities should *“work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”* (para 38).
- 2.3 The NPPF acknowledges the importance of early engagement and states that *“early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”* Paragraph 41 recognises that *“the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits.”* (para 39).
- 2.4 The NPPF highlights the importance of the engagement process in contributing to the making of well-designed places. It states that *“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”* (para 126).
- 2.5 Paragraph 132 makes it clear that *“early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.”*

Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.6 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) highlights the value of pre-application engagement. PPG 20-001 states that *“pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.”* It goes on to note that these benefits can be achieved by:
- “...- providing an understanding of the relevant planning policies and other material considerations associated with a proposed development*
 - working collaboratively and openly with interested parties at an early stage to identify, understand and seek to resolve issues associated with a proposed development, including,*

where relevant, the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing

- discussing the possible mitigation of the impact of a proposed development, including any planning conditions

- identifying the information required to accompany a formal planning application, thus reducing the likelihood of delays at the validation stage. The information requested must be reasonable

- putting in place a Planning Performance Agreement where this would help with managing the process and agreeing any dedicated resources for progressing the application.”

- 2.7 The PPG encourages pre-application engagement with the community “*where it will add value to the process and the outcome*” (PPG 20-010).

Local Policy – Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.8 GBC’s Statement of Community Involvement 2020 (‘GSCI’) includes information on how the Council will include stakeholders in decision-making relating to planning at both the pre-and post-application stages.

- 2.9 It states in relation to pre-application public and political consultation:

“3.2.1 Early engagement on general principles with the local community and relevant organisations and groups, before submitting a planning application, benefits local communities, as well as helping applicants who should see faster and more informed consideration of their proposals if they address issues early on. The more people participate early on, the more likely they are to understand and be supportive of a development.

[...] 3.2.3 In particular, the development management team expects developers to:

- set clear objectives and agree the consultation approach with the development management team*
- inform people and ward councillors about the details and scope of the scheme and be clear what can be influenced by making comments*
- present proposals for larger schemes to members of the Council*
- consider how to involve seldom heard groups and groups that will particularly be affected by the changes*
- clearly show changes made as a result of comments based on sound planning reasons*
- submit a statement outlining the community engagement that has been carried out with the planning application - stating the methods used, who was consulted and how matters raised have been addressed in the development proposal - to enable the process and outcomes to be validated*

- *give consideration as to how the community will be kept up to date on the progress of larger developments delivered over a longer time period and who they can contact with queries. This could include a dedicated website and updates via email.*

[...] 3.2.6 The applicant will need to manage pre-application engagement to ensure that the development management team remain impartial. Councillors will also have to be careful about expressing opinions during the pre-application process although they can attend discussions, seek clarification and ask questions about a proposal.

- 2.10 The GSCI also contains information in relation to the pre-application engagement that is expected with GBC prior to the submission of a planning application. This is addressed in more detail in the next section.
- 2.11 It is assumed that GBC will comply with the GSCI's requirements for planning application consultation, and it should be noted that the applicant has limited control over this matter. Notwithstanding, the applicant endeavours to support GBC in publicising the public consultation.

3.0 **Pre-application Consultation**

- 3.1 The applicant has sought to undertake pre-application engagement and consultation in line with national and local guidance requirements.

Seeking GBC Pre-application Advice

- 3.2 A request for pre-application advice was submitted to GBC on the 7 July 2025, accompanied by a fee. Despite receiving confirmation of receipt of the pre-application request and the appropriate fee on the 11 July 2025. Repeated attempts were made by the applicant to arrange a meeting in July 2025. In its auto-generated responses, the Council stated that due to a backlog in workload, it was not processing new requests. On the 9 October 2025, contact was eventually made about pre-application discussions. Due to the significant passage of time since the request was made and this contact being made so close to submission, it has been requested that the advice sought now turns into post-submission advice in the form of a Planning Performance Agreement.
- 3.3 Whilst awaiting a response from GBC, it was decided that a bespoke consultation process would be formulated for the scheme based on requirements in the SCI and approaches taken for similar schemes of this scale elsewhere. Noting the provisions within the NPPF, as well as within the SCI, that a consultation approach be agreed through pre-application discussions, a proportionate and cautious approach has been taken to the consultation approach adopted for this scheme, in the absence of the opportunity for pre-application engagement with GBC.

Screening Request

- 3.4 Under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), a submission was made on 6 August 2025¹ to provide a formal screening opinion to confirm whether there was a requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment of the site. A screening opinion, issued by GBC on 27 August 2025, confirmed that an Environmental Statement would not be required. Alongside this, the opinion raised several relevant recommendations to the application scheme which have informed the technical assessments submitted with this application, including in relation to Heritage, Flood Risk and Drainage, and Highways. The Planning Statement provided with this application provides more details in this respect, as do the individual technical reports submitted with the application.

Surrey County Council

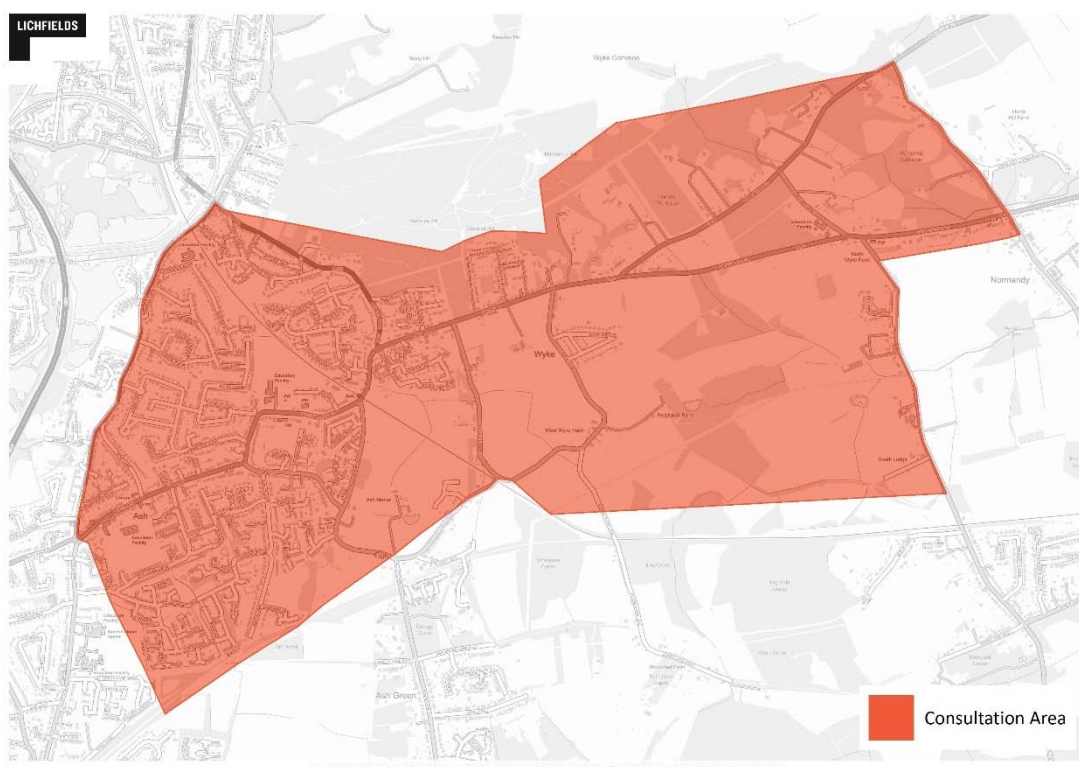
- 3.5 As set out and addressed in the Transport Assessment which accompanies this application, a pre-application Transport Technical Note dated 24th June 2025 was submitted to Surrey County Council Transport Development Planning who provided consultee comments by email on 2nd July 2025. This engagement is treated as confidential and is therefore not available publicly as part of this submission. The Transport Assessment accompanying this submission has directly responded to the feedback received from the County Council.

¹ Ref. 25/S/00002

Public consultation

- 3.6 A pre-application leaflet drop was undertaken to inform the local community and councillors (parish and ward) about the proposals. A copy of the leaflet is in Appendix 1 and the extent of the leaflet circulation area is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Leaflet drop consultation area



Source: Lichfields

- 3.7 The leaflet provided an initial summary of the proposals and directed recipients to a website containing further details of the scheme along with an online survey, which was open for comments between 26 August and 22 September 2025. An email address was also set up for those who wished to submit comments that way². Snapshots of the consultation website are at Appendix 2.
- 3.8 Since the conclusion of the pre-application period, the website has remained live throughout the application and determination process to provide updates on the scheme as it progresses through the planning system.
- 3.9 An analysis of the survey and email responses is contained within the next section of this report.

² All personal data was removed in accordance with GDPR

Engagement with Local Members

- 3.10 In conjunction with the leaflet distribution, a total of 20 local (ward and parish) councillors³ were invited, via email, to a consultation event to discuss the proposals. The list of invitees can be found in Appendix 3. The invitees were also advised of the website and invited to take part in the online survey.
- 3.11 The feedback received from the consultation event is summarised below, and an analysis of the online survey results follows in Section 4.0. Section 5.0 concludes by explaining how the feedback has been incorporated into the finalised version of the scheme.

Consultation event

- 3.12 A consultation event was held virtually on 9 September 2025 to discuss the scheme with local (ward and parish) councillors. The following members were in attendance:
- 1 Cllr Simon Schofield (Vice Chair) - Normandy Parish Council and Chair of Normandy Planning Committee
 - 2 Cllr Phillipa Mitchell - Normandy Parish Council
 - 3 Cllr Bob Hutton - Normandy Parish Council and Member of Normandy Planning Committee
 - 4 Cllr Louise McCrow - Normandy Parish Council and Member of Normandy Planning Committee
 - 5 Cllr Michael Moriarty – Ash Parish Council – Lead Member for emerging Ash Neighbourhood Plan
- 3.13 Representation from the project team was as follows:
- 1 Gleeson Land Limited (applicant)
 - 2 Lichfields (planning)
 - 3 Mayer Brown (transport and highways)
 - 4 OSP Architecture (architecture)
- 3.14 A copy of the presentation given by the project team to Councillors is at Appendix 4.
- 3.15 In the meeting, members scrutinised the proposals and raised questions on the following issues:
- 1 the level and type of infrastructure contributions that were envisaged;
 - 2 the mechanism through which planning obligations (e.g. affordable housing and off-site contributions) would be guaranteed; and
 - 3 the organisation (housebuilder) that would likely 'build out' the development.
- 3.16 Members also requested a 'follow up' meeting with the project team following the submission of the planning application, which will be arranged following the submission of the planning application.

³ It should be noted that some individuals hold dual posts as parish and ward councillors, meaning the number of 'individuals' that were contacted is fewer than this

Local Press

3.17 Articles were published on the following press to publicise publicising the proposals:

- 1 BBC News⁴
- 2 Surrey Live⁵
- 3 Farnham Herald⁶
- 4 Guildford Society⁷
- 5 Ash Parish News⁸

Campaign group

3.18 It was identified that that a campaign group, Residents Against Shortlands Housing – ‘RASH’ - has been set up with its own website⁹ setting out their objections to the scheme.

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgk7rwk53o>

⁵ <https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/developer-eyes-200-new-homes-32377240>

⁶ <https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/hundreds-of-homes-planned-for-former-farmland-near-ash-827463>

⁷ <https://www.guildfordsociety.org.uk/Shortlandfarm.html>

⁸ <https://ashparish.org/2025/09/19/land-at-shortland-farm-public-consultation/>

⁹ <https://residentsagainstshortlandshousing.co.uk/>

4.0

Online survey

4.1

This section summarises the feedback received on the online survey, which was hosted on the website. In total there were 471 responses to the online survey and a further six email responses. This level of response confirms the sense of the local community's awareness of and engagement with the consultation process.

4.2

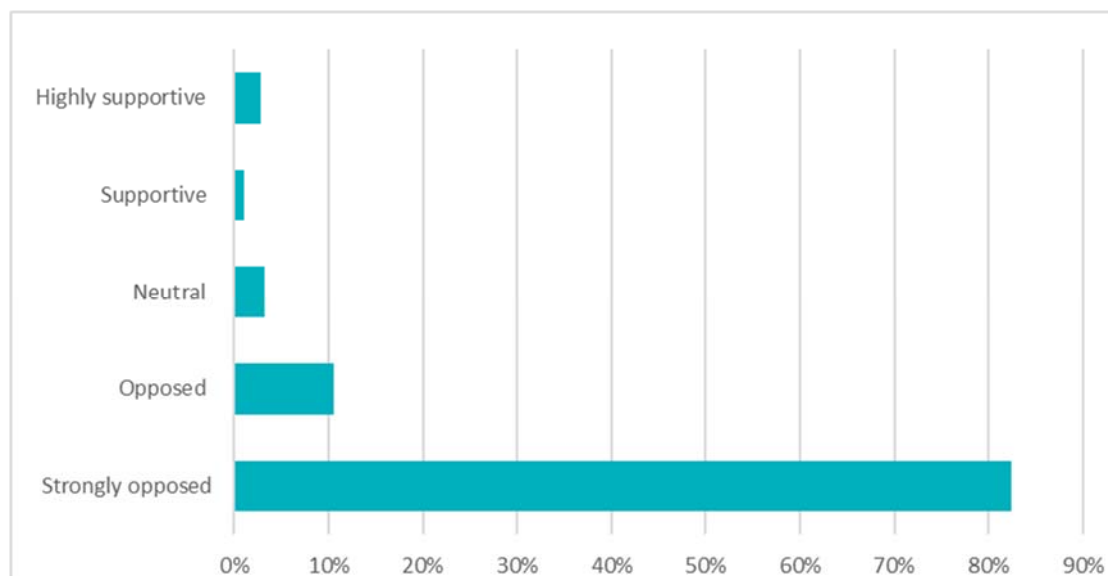
There were six main questions on the survey hosted, four of which were multiple choice and included a text box, and two of which included only a text box.

4.3

All personal information was removed from any text-based responses, in accordance with relevant data protection legislation (GDPR).

Q1: How do you feel about our initial proposals to provide housing at Shortland Farm, Ash?

Figure 4.1



Source: Lichfields

4.4

There were 471 responses to Question 1, of which 447 provided more detail in the text box. A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 Insufficient capacity in nearby schools
- 2 Congestion and highways capacity along Guildford Road
- 3 Insufficient capacity in local healthcare facilities
- 4 Quantum of development proposed, including scepticism about need
- 5 Over development of Ash, including loss of community identity
- 6 Loss of Green Belt land
- 7 Local surface water flooding and drainage issues
- 8 Effects on wildlife and biodiversity (including the SPA buffer)

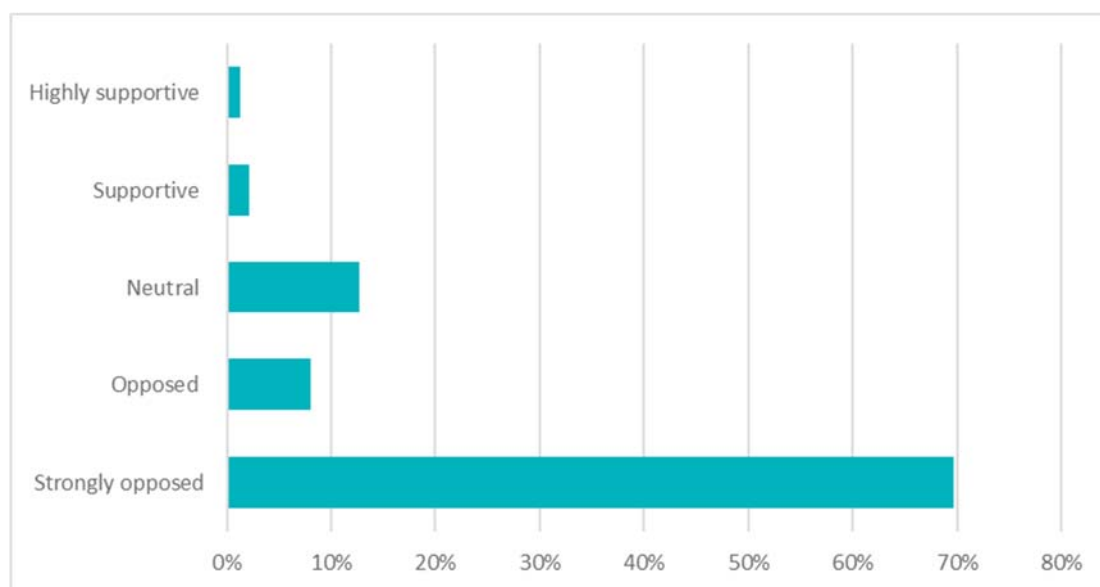
- 9 Loss of green/open space
- 10 General impact on local and community infrastructure
- 11 Insufficient train services nearby
- 12 Effects on existing trees
- 13 Sewerage capacity constraints
- 14 Insufficient car parking in Ash
- 15 Loss of equestrian facilities
- 16 Insufficient local policing

4.5 Whilst the majority of comments received were in opposition to the proposals, some comments were made in favour. Most commonly, these acknowledged the housing shortage in the area and acknowledged the need to deliver more housing.

4.6 A number of objections raised the highways disruption that had been caused by the construction of the recently opened Chester Bridge, designed to alleviate congestion along Guildford Road. This relates to an earlier concern rather than any anticipated implications of the current application.

Q2: How do you feel about our initial layout and design?

Figure 4.2



Source: Lichfields

4.7 Whilst the planning application is in outline and detailed design will be addressed at the reserved matters stage, the survey nevertheless sought feedback on the emerging layout and design of the parameter plans.

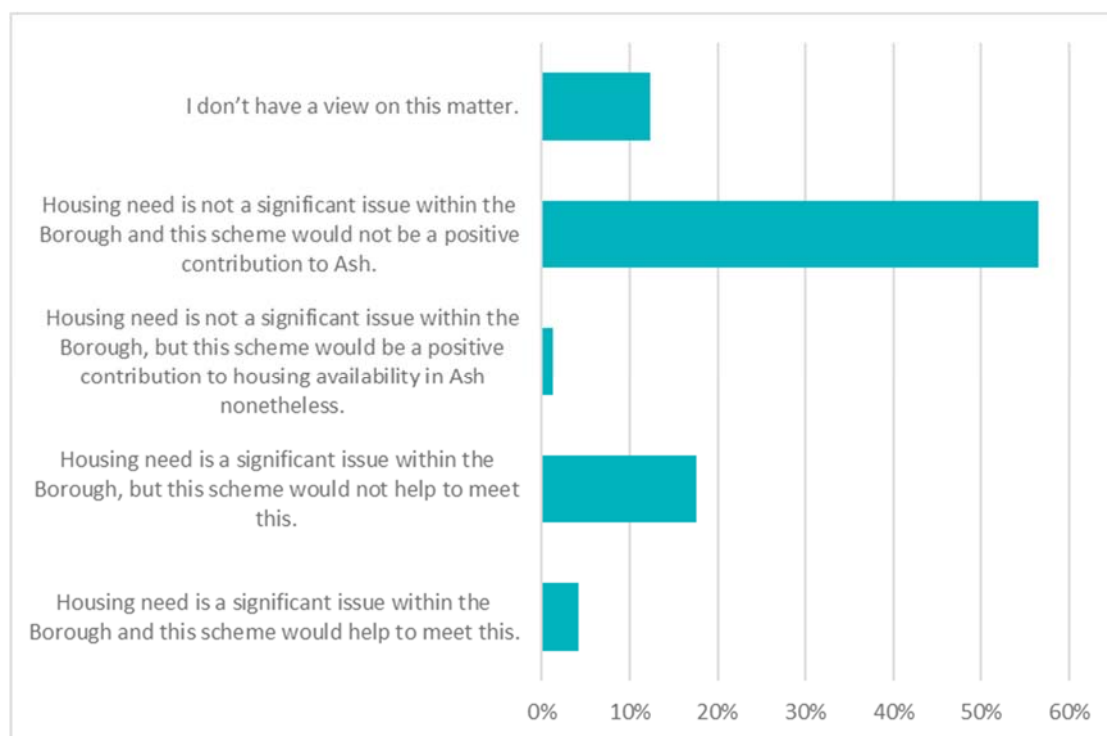
4.8 There were 442 responses to Question 2, of which 285 provided more detail in the text box. A number of the text-based responses received did not include opinions on the proposals, leaving comments such as "see previous response". A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 Lack of provision of local/community infrastructure
- 2 Objections to the quantum of development proposed, including impact on 'rural character'
- 3 Congestion and highways capacity along Guildford Road
- 4 Loss of Green Belt land
- 5 Effects on green/open space, including loss of views
- 6 Lack of provision for a doctors' surgery
- 7 Lack of provision for a school
- 8 Loss of wildlife and biodiversity
- 9 Unappealing design
- 10 Flooding issues (including surface water drainage in the surrounding area)
- 11 Over development of Ash
- 12 Effects on existing trees

4.9 Some comments were made in support of the emerging proposals. Support was given towards the on-site provision of open space, the proposed retention of existing trees, and the site's location near to transport facilities.

Q3: We consider that this scheme will help people who would otherwise struggle to access housing in the Borough. This includes access to affordable housing. Please tick which box you agree with most below:

Figure 4.3



Source: Lichfields

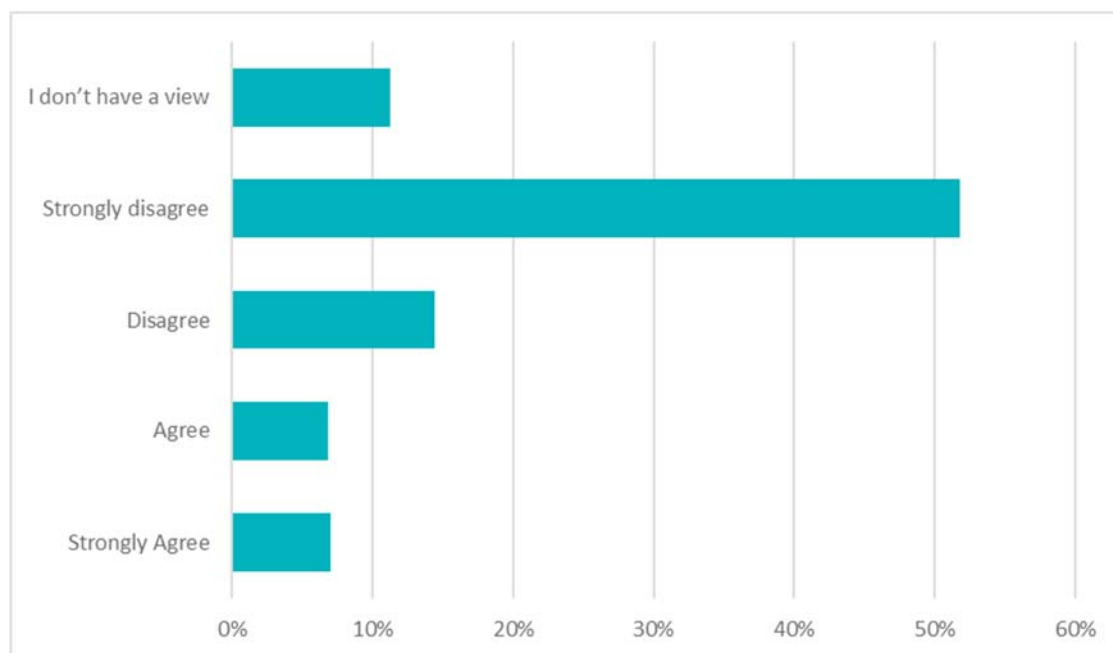
4.10 There were 433 responses to Question 3, of which 243 provided more detail in the text box. A number of the text-based responses received did not include views, leaving comments such as "see previous response". A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 Over development of Ash, including the argument that new build housing is not needed
- 2 Perception that housing will not be affordable to local/young people
- 3 Pressure on existing infrastructure
- 4 Insufficient capacity in nearby schools
- 5 Insufficient capacity in local healthcare facilities
- 6 Need for greater provision of social housing
- 7 Loss of Green Belt land does not justify housing provision
- 8 Concerns around increases in traffic

4.11 There were a number of calls for the proposals to be affordable to local residents who wished to stay in Ash, particularly young people. Some comments called for higher density housing to meet needs. Some respondents acknowledged housing needs nationally and within the Borough but opined that these should not be met in Ash.

Q4: The site has a public footpath running through it, is nearby to two bus stops, and is a short walk away from Ash train station. On this basis, we believe the site is in sustainable location. To what extent do you agree?

Figure 4.4



Source: Lichfields

4.12 There were 433 responses to Question 4, of which 251 provided more detail in the text box. A number of the text-based responses received did not include views, leaving comments

such as "*see previous response*". A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 Perceived "*inevitable*" reliance on cars leading to increased congestion and car parking overflows
- 2 Buses, including lack of take-up of the service owing to high costs and infrequent services
- 3 Trains, including low existing capacity and destination options; issues around high ticket costs were also raised
- 4 Quality and accessibility of pedestrian routes, including the public footpath running through the application site
- 5 Insufficient capacity in nearby schools
- 6 Arguments that impact on local/community infrastructure will be unsustainable
- 7 Flooding and drainage issues (including on the public footpath running through the application site)
- 8 Insufficient capacity in local healthcare facilities
- 9 Loss of Green Belt land
- 10 Loss of green/open space and views from the existing footpath
- 11 Over development of Ash
- 12 Effects on wildlife and biodiversity perceived to make the development unsustainable
- 13 General argument that the location is not sustainable
- 14 Negative effects on the environment
- 15 Effects on existing trees
- 16 Inappropriate quantum of development proposed
- 17 Objection to the loss of equestrian facilities

4.13 Whilst a number of the comments contested the sustainability credentials of the application site and the proposals, some comments did acknowledge that the application site's proximity to Ash train station in particular, and cited the opportunity for connection to it through an enhanced public footpath crossing the application site, which played strongly into its sustainability credentials.

4.14 Some comments highlighted that the proposed footbridge to Ash station (expected to be delivered using contributions secured through development coming forward under Policy A31 of the Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015 - 2034)) has not yet been delivered, being of the view that this may dissuade some from using the train service until it has been.

Q5: We welcome your views on how we can deliver enhancements to local infrastructure. Please give details of the kind of enhancements you would like to see in the text box below.

4.15 There were 295 text-based responses to this question. A number of the text-based responses received did not include views, leaving comments such as "*see previous response*". Several responses to this question also contained expressions of general objection to the proposals, simply replying "*don't build*" or similar. A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of the constructive points raised:

- 1 Need for greater number of local healthcare services, including GPs and dentist surgeries in Ash
- 2 Need for greater school provision in Ash
- 3 Traffic calming measures, including speed cameras and new road layouts
- 4 Request for greater number of local shops/services to serve new and existing development
- 5 General need for enhanced/ greater number of community facilities
- 6 Need for local habitat enhancement, including wildlife (green) corridors, hedgerows, and preserving existing trees.
- 7 Increased capacity and destination choice on the train line
- 8 Flooding and drainage enhancements
- 9 Sewage capacity enhancements
- 10 Need for more parking locally
- 11 Cycle facilities, including new cycle paths
- 12 Increased, more reliable bus services
- 13 Need for greater parks and play areas

4.16 Some respondents raised concerns about how infrastructure commitments would be secured, highlighting a perception that commitments may not be delivered.

Q6: Please leave any comments here

4.17 There were 157 text-based responses to this question. A number of the text-based responses received did not include views, leaving comments such as "*see previous response*". A summary of the feedback received in the text box is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 General opposition to the development, stating housing is not needed and citing perceived overdevelopment in Ash
- 2 Loss of Green Belt and green areas, including that Shortland Farm is in an inappropriate location, with some desires expressed to "*protect the countryside*"
- 3 Additional strain on the road network
- 4 Need for greater school provision in Ash

- 5 Belief that development would worsen some surface water drainage issues and increase flood risk elsewhere
- 6 Belief that the homes delivered would not be affordable
- 7 Need for greater number of local healthcare services, including GPs and dentist surgeries in Ash

4.18 Some respondents supported the provision of housing, particularly if it was considered truly affordable and sustainable. Some respondents also raised concerns about the extent to which representations will be addressed in the submitted proposals.

Email responses

4.19 Seven respondents submitted views on the proposals via email, six of which were submitted in opposition to the proposed development. A summary of the themes of opposition received is below, ordered by frequency of issues raised:

- 1 Strain on local infrastructure
- 2 Traffic, including congestion along Guildford Road and parking shortages.
- 3 Overdevelopment of Ash and loss of community/rural feel
- 4 Perception that housing will not be truly affordable (including to young people)
- 5 Effects on surface water drainage/flooding elsewhere
- 6 Environmental effects

4.20 One email response was received in support of the proposals, where the individual pointed to the role that the development could play in delivering housing for younger people and ameliorating affordability struggles faced in the area, as well as in the UK more generally.

5.0 Response to key points of feedback

- 5.1 Following the public consultation, and whilst the planning application is in outline, further work has taken place on the proposed design of the scheme and to seek to address some of the matters raised by respondents of the public consultation in particular. Having regard to the findings set out in section 3, the key matters, ordered by the number of comments made relating to each, can be summarised as follows:
- 1 Increased car traffic and impact on local highways, including on Guildford Road;
 - 2 Pressure on local services, particularly education, healthcare, public transport, and surface water drainage;
 - 3 Loss of Green Belt, open space and equestrian land;
 - 4 Perceived lack of local need for housing and overdevelopment of Ash; and
 - 5 Impacts on wildlife and biodiversity.
- 5.2 Having considered the responses received through the various forms of consultation, this section considers the planning issues raised and sets out how the proposals have been, or are anticipated to be, incorporated into the finalised scheme.
- 5.3 ‘Other’ matters raised as part of the pre-application consultation exercise are addressed within the planning application submission (or will be addressed subsequently in response to statutory consultation responses or, further down the line, when a reserved matters application is submitted).

Increased car traffic and impact on local highways

- 5.4 As is set out in the Transport Assessment (‘TA’) which accompanies this submission, the Site is highly sustainable and will offer a genuine choice of transport modes, not least by the ability to walk along the PROW within the site straight to Ash train station in 8-9 minutes or cycle in 3 minutes, but also along Guildford Road to services and facilities.
- 5.5 There are also bus stops on Guildford Road abutting the site offering sustainable options to travel between Aldershot and Guildford. The proposals for the scheme include a range of improvements to encourage sustainable travel as set out in the TA. The TA also demonstrates that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, the parameters of the scheme allow for design of streets, parking areas, etc. to reflect current national guidance and it has been demonstrated that impacts on the highway network can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 5.6 The applicants are committed to delivering a scheme that has genuine potential to achieve a modal shift away from car use. The accompanying Travel Plan includes information (at an appropriate level of detail, noting that matters not relating to access are reserved) on the pedestrian/cycle arrangements of the scheme, and the anticipated effect this will have on car dependency.
- 5.7 The Travel Plan also sets out how future residents could be incentivised to travel sustainably from the application site. As set out in the Planning Statement, the following improvements are currently proposed to encourage sustainable travel around the application site:

- Utilising the onsite PROW (and providing surface improvements) to create an exceptionally well connected and sustainable new development which can reach the train station on foot in 8 minutes or cycle in only 3 minutes.
- Improvements to the pedestrian network, public transport infrastructure (including improvements to facilities at nearby bus stops), and strategic cycle network to encourage sustainable travel.
- Enhancements to both the Guildford Road / Wyke Lane and Guildford Road / Harpers Road junctions in the form of pedestrian facilities, dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Delivery of a new access junction providing vehicular and pedestrian facilities.

5.8 It is anticipated that the exact nature of these contributions will be agreed with GBC and Surrey County Council over the course of the determination of the planning application.

5.9 The above notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that the application scheme is likely to generate additional car journeys. To this end, the proposed site access has been tested for capacity to understand whether the proposed development is likely to generate unacceptable harms to the road network and identify areas where mitigation may be necessary. As set out in the Transport Assessment for this scheme conducted by Mayer Brown:

- The trip generation analysis identifies the proposed residential development is estimated to generate 104 vehicle movements in the morning peak hour and 91 in the evening peak hour. A junction capacity assessment indicates that this form of access would be able to accommodate this level of vehicle movements and operate well within its design capacity.
- The proposed development access onto Guildford Road is predicted to operate well within design capacity in both the weekday AM and PM peak hours in 2030 (applying a 5-year post application year of assessment).

5.10 Based on the findings of this TA, it is considered that the proposed access and the impact of the development on the local transport network is acceptable.

Pressure on local services

Education and Healthcare

5.11 We note the views expressed in the public consultation relating to the additional resource that will be required to support education and healthcare services once the development is occupied. As set out in the Planning Statement submitted with this application, whilst GBC is not a CIL collecting authority, the applicant is committed to working with the relevant statutory consultees, GBC, and the local community in order to secure an appropriate level of contribution towards expanding and/or improving provision in the area. This will ensure that incoming residents to Shortland Farm would not have a detrimental impact on services in the local area.

Public transport

5.12 We also note the feedback received regarding a need for greater capacity, choice, and accessibility of public transport locally. Whilst a number of these factors (e.g. choice and

frequency of bus/routes) are outside of the applicant's control, and subject to the consultation responses from the relevant that may be scope to improve the quality and accessibility of public transport facilities through either financial or in-kind contributions. Further, we note the proposed footbridge that is anticipated to be delivered using contributions from development coming forward under allocation Policy A31 of the Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015 - 2034).

- 5.13 As set out in the Planning Statement accompanying this submission, it is considered that there is scope to contribute to improving facilities at the most appropriate eastbound and westbound bus stops nearby to the application site.

Surface Water Drainage

- 5.14 Surface Water Drainage has formed a key design consideration in the evolution of the proposed development. As shown in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy submitted with this application, the proposed design of the proposals means that the development would not increase flood risk elsewhere and would itself be safe from flooding for its lifetime.
- 5.15 From a strategic level, it is notable that GBC has been undertaking a Surface Water Management Plan Study for Ash which, alongside mitigation measures proposed in nearby developments, is expected to ease purported surface water drainage issues in the area.

Impact on the Green Belt, open space and loss of equestrian land

- 5.16 The application proposal proposes a residential development Green Belt land which is currently in use as a livery for horses. As expanded upon in the Planning Statement (and the Green Belt and Openness analysis) accompanying this submission, it is considered that the application site and proposals would meet the definition of 'Grey Belt' development and can therefore be considered appropriate development in the Green Belt. This is in accordance with the NPPF.
- 5.17 As set out in the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application, as well as the Landscape Masterplan, the scheme has been sensitively designed to limit effects on openness, in particular by incorporating a viewing corridor towards the Surrey Hills National Landscape in the development.
- 5.18 With regards to the effects of the proposals on openness, including loss of open space, the applicant has commissioned a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, included within this submission, to consider the effects that the proposed scheme will have on these matters. The LVIA concludes the value of the application site is in the low to mid-range of the spectrum. Furthermore, it finds that any significant adverse effects (both landscape and visual) are associated with the construction phase and will persist in the short-term only and are localised to the application site and its immediate environs. Meanwhile, it finds beneficial effects, such as an increase in vegetative cover and an increased accessible space and connected routes, will persist in the long-term, with the positive effects increasing over time.
- 5.19 Having regard to the above, it should be noted that aside from the public footpath running through the application site, the land is largely inaccessible to the public owing to the privately run equestrian uses on it. By delivering enhancements to the public footpath and

providing on-site open space, the proposed development will open up the land for the benefit of existing and new residents.

- 5.20 In respect of the current livery use on the site this is not afforded any protection by planning policy as a “community facility” or similar and there is therefore planning objection to it ceasing to operate (which could happen in a number of circumstances).

Perceived lack of local need for housing and overdevelopment of Ash

- 5.21 This planning application has been submitted in the context of national and local plan policy relating to housing need within GBC. The Planning Statement accompanying this submission identifies a significant housing deficit which is likely at least c.2,500 homes across Guildford over the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2029. Meeting this shortfall is required in a position where GBC are not planning to adopt a new local plan which contains strategic policies (i.e. ones that allocate land for development) until at least mid-2029. The demonstrable unmet need for housing within the borough, demonstrable in accordance with national planning policy, is irrefutable.
- 5.22 With regards to affordable housing, it is notable that the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Guildford Addendum Report 2017 identifies an affordable housing need for GBC of 517 households per annum over the 19-year period from 2015 to 2034. However, over the period 2015/16 to 2023/24 the GBC Authority Monitoring Report 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 states delivery of only 768 homes¹⁰, or an undersupply of 3,885 units in the past nine years.
- 5.23 Having regard to the above, the proposals to deliver 200 homes with 50% affordable housing at the application will make a significant contribution to meeting unmet, objectively assessed housing needs within the Borough.
- 5.24 With regard to concerns raised contending the overdevelopment of Ash, the application is submitted in the context of the application site’s sustainability credentials (as expanded upon with the accompanying Transport Statement) and suitability for development in accordance with national and local planning policy.
- 5.25 The siting of this development on the boundary of Ash is consistent with the context of relevant planning policy which encourages:
- 1 Residential development to be directed towards sustainable locations, in particular those which are nearby to train stations¹¹;
 - 2 The granting of planning permission in the Green Belt where it can be demonstrated that the development would be not inappropriate development, in particular where it could be considered ‘Grey Belt’; and
 - 3 The granting of planning permission where there is significant demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed and where strategic are more than five years old.

¹⁰ See Table 6 of the GBC Authority Monitoring Report 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. Affordable homes completed in Guildford borough 2015/16 = 125, 2016/17 = 32, 2017/18 = 111, 2018/19 = 89, 2019/20 = 62, 2020/21 = 78, 2021/22 = 110, 2022/23 = 40 and 2023/24 = 121.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-goes-further-and-faster-on-planning-reform-in-bid-for-growth>

- 5.26 Detailed analysis of the proposals against the national and local policies summarised above, along with other relevant policies, can be found in the Planning Statement accompanying this submission.

Impacts on wildlife and biodiversity

Trees

- 5.27 The submission is supported by an Arboricultural Report (prepared by Aspect), which confirms there is no ancient woodland either within or directly adjacent to the application site (albeit there are pockets nearby). There are also no ancient, veteran, or potentially veteran trees within the application site. Considering the proposed development, the proposed green infrastructure strategy is landscape led and takes account of existing trees and hedgerows as shown on the submitted Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan supporting this submission. To deliver a future scheme, it is accepted that there will be a loss of existing trees and hedgerows including one covered by a TPO. These losses are required to deliver on-site infrastructure, the housing elements, but also to remove trees that are either hazardous or have limited potential. The design has sought to limit any potential losses; however, it will be for detailed design proposals to consider which trees/hedgerows will need to be removed. That being said, any loss of trees is outweighed by the quantum of proposed new planting, including a significant increase in canopy cover across the Site, enhancing its capacity to provide ecosystem services.

Ecology

- 5.28 An Ecological Impact Assessment and SANG statement is included in this planning application submission which considers the proposed development against the key ecology and BNG issues. Together, the reports demonstrate how the proposals will deliver a combination of on-site and off-site gains which can add up to a 20% net gain to biodiversity with no impacts to irreplaceable habitats, in accordance with the statutory gain hierarchy (albeit it should be noted that the precise biodiversity net gain that can be achieved on-site can only be calculated based on a detailed proposal).

Thames Basin Heaths SPA

- 5.29 Some concerns were raised in the response about the relationship of the proposals with the nearby Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the potential negative effects that the proposals may have on area.
- 5.30 The development site is partly located within both the 400m 'exclusion zone' and the 'zone of influence' around the SPA. The 400m exclusion zone extends into the northern part of the application site. In line with paragraph 2.4 of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy (2017) SPD, there is no net increase in residential units within this zone as a result of the proposal, rather it is retained as landscaping (as per the Parameter Plans submitted for approval). All residential development is proposed within the 400m – 5km 'zone of influence' and as such it is acknowledged that suitable avoidance and mitigation measures will be secured via a legal agreement. Further details of the measures proposed can be found in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report which supports this application, as well as in the Planning Statement.

Appendix 1 – Consultation leaflet

Land at Shortland Farm, Ash

Proposed residential development



SCAN ME



Our emerging proposals

Gleeson Land would like to invite you to share your views on our emerging proposals for the development of Land at Shortland Farm, Ash for up to 200 homes, landscaping, footpath enhancements, and associated infrastructure.

Prior to submitting a planning application to Guildford Borough Council, we would like to present the proposals to you, the local community, to help us progress our vision.

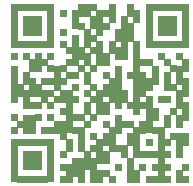
We have set up a website (including a questionnaire) where you can share your views on the proposals. We have also set up a direct email where you can provide comments further to the questionnaire.

Promoting Land.
Unlocking Value.

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SCAN ME



Have your say

See further details and answer the questionnaire by scanning the QR code above, or visiting our website: **www.shortlandfarm.com**

If you would like to leave feedback via email, you can contact:
shortlandfarm@lichfields.uk

Website opening date: **26 August 2025**

Last day for responses: **22 September 2025**

After the closing date, we will review all feedback received before finalising our submission in Autumn 2025. This process will be summarised within a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will accompany the planning application. You will also have the opportunity to comment on the planning application when it is submitted to Guildford Borough Council.

LICHFIELDS

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Limited ('Lichfields') is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (registration number Z6193122). Any correspondence will be received by Lichfields on behalf of our client, Gleeson Land. In the event that any personal data is supplied, it will be disregarded and deleted without undue delay. Responses to this consultation will be anonymised and may be made publicly available.

Appendix 2 – Consultation website

Land at Shortland Farm, Ash

Public Consultation

Welcome

The pre-application consultation period for this scheme has now closed. We are analysing your feedback and using it to inform our finalised proposals. Once we have submitted the planning application, we will update this webpage with information on how to share your views with the Guildford Borough Council.

We intend to submit an outline planning application for up to 200 high-quality homes, including affordable homes, with a range of new open space, and landscaping. As part of this engagement process, we welcome your views on how we can deliver enhancements to local infrastructure.

You can view our emerging proposals below, which follow our recent technical work and considerations around the site’s potential.



Policy Context

In December 2024, the Government introduced new policies which allow for the release of low-quality Green Belt land, now defined as ‘Grey Belt’. We consider that the site and our proposals meet the definition of this. In addition to this, Guildford Borough Council has accepted as of April 2025 that it can no longer meet its requirement to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

At present, Guildford Borough Council’s local plan is out of date and the sites allocated within it are not sufficient to meet the Borough’s housing requirements. Since a new local plan is not anticipated to be adopted until mid-2029, a significantly greater number of homes will need to be approved within the Borough in the short term to meet housing needs.

Shortland Farm is being actively promoted by Gleeson Land as a location capable of making a valuable contribution towards addressing the significant housing shortfall in the Borough. We intend to submit an outline planning application with the access arrangements fixed. If outline planning permission is granted, a ‘reserved matters’ application will then be submitted which addresses the exact layout, scale, appearance, and landscaping.

For the avoidance of doubt, this application has no relation to the proposals at Normandy and Flexford being brought forward by Taylor Wimpey.



Interactive Site Location Plan
Click or hover over the location markers to view

The Site

The Site comprises just over 11 hectares of both greenfield and previously developed ('brownfield') land, situated outside the Ash settlement boundary, within Normandy. Harpers Recreational Ground and Ash Playground sit to the west of the site, which are recognised open spaces. A public right of way (footpath) runs across the site and connects through to Ash train station (c. 800 metres). Guildford Road (A323) is the main road near to the site, running along the northern boundary.

The site is located wholly within the Green Belt, the boundary for which is very close to the edge of the site. We consider that the site meets the definition of Grey Belt, and that the scheme proposed would be categorised in national policy as acceptable development within the Green Belt, subject to meeting the relevant requirements.



Site Photos
Click on the above image to view a larger version



Development Context

The Site is located near to a number of new residential developments to the west of the site, including a strategic allocation, thereby demonstrating its sustainability credentials and precedent of development in this location. The strategic allocation is known as Land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham (referred to in the [Guildford Local Plan](#) as Allocation A31), and is allocated for approximately 1,750 dwellings to extend Ash eastwards, largely along the Green Belt boundary. There are now several planning applications and permissions within the boundary of the allocation. The northern and southern parts of the allocation have now been delivered.

These developments and their relationship with the Shortland Farm site are shown in this Development Context Plan:



Development Context Plan
Click on the above image to view a larger version

Given the surrounding context, residential development on the Site would connect and work with its surroundings to deliver a sustainable development to Ash, contributing to meeting housing needs in the area.

Technical Work

We have already undertaken a range of technical work at Shortlands Farm to inform how we design the scheme and raise any constrains we need to take into account. These have been assessed through a series of initial surveys and other assessments.

Our technical work will be expanded upon within the forthcoming planning application submission, which will include the following:

1. Landscape and visual impact assessment
2. Transport assessment
3. Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain analysis, and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space assessment
4. Flood risk assessment
5. Heritage assessment
6. Tree survey



Transport and Access

Vehicular access to the site is proposed from Guildford Road (A323) to the north. Planning obligations secured from the nearby schemes, particularly allocation A31, have facilitated the delivery of a bridge over the railway leading towards Ash station. This has made a significant contribution to alleviating historic congestion on the A323 and has enabled the closure of the level crossing near to Ash train station. Ongoing discussions with Surrey County Council around our proposals are proving positive.

With regards to pedestrian access, the existing footpath running across the site will be retained and enhanced under the proposals, providing traffic free connectivity to the Harpers Recreational Ground and Ash Playground, as well as to Ash Train station. We are also keen to explore the potentials to enhance the pedestrian and public transport facilities along Guildford Road.

Plans



Interactive Parameter Plan
Click or hover over the location markers to view

Scheme Benefits

These plans are being brought forward by Gleeson Land, a specialist land promotion business which creates much needed new homes and community facilities for local people. At Shortland Farm, Gleeson Land is working with the landowner to facilitate the delivery of a publicly beneficial, high-quality scheme on the Site. The Scheme's benefits are set out below.



Significant contribution to housing supply by delivering a mix of different house types to meet a range of needs:



Footpath Enhancements



High quality design



Sustainable Location



Delivery of much needed affordable homes



Have Your Say

If you would like to leave feedback please fill out the questionnaire by clicking the button below, or via email: shortlandfarm@lichfields.uk

Survey

Last day for responses: 22 September 2025

After the closing date, we will review all feedback received before finalising our submission in Autumn 2025. This process will be summarised within a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will accompany the planning application.

You will also have the opportunity to comment on the planning application when it is submitted to Guildford Borough Council.



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LICHFIELDS

Privacy Statement

Welcome

Policy Context

The Site

Development Context

Technical Work

Scheme Benefits

Have Your Say

Appendix 3 – Schedule of councillors invited to the consultation event

Normandy & Pirbright Ward

Keith Witham: keith.witham@guildford.gov.uk

David Bilbe: david.bilbe@guildford.gov.uk

Ash Wharf Ward

Fiona White (Lead Councillor for Planning): fiona.white@guildford.gov.uk

Phil Bellamy: phil.bellamy@guildford.gov.uk

Ash South Ward

Sue Wyeth-Price: sue.wyeth-price@guildford.gov.uk

David Shaw: david.shaw@guildford.gov.uk

Ash parish

Fiona White (Ash Wharf) (also Parish Chair): fiona.white@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Michael Moriarty (Ash Wharf): michael.moriarty@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Philip Bellamy (Ash Wharf): philip.bellamy@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

John Tonks (Ash Wharf): John.Tonks@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Paul Golding (Ash South) paul.golding@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Mohammad Faisal (Ash South): mohammad.faisal@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Sue Wyeth-Price (Ash South): [no parish email, but has GBC email]

Carl Cookston (Ash South): carl.cookson@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk

Normandy parish

Paul Chillman: Paul.chillman@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Simon Schofield: Simon.schofield@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Isa Nagle-Taylor: isa.nagle-taylor@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Philippa Mitchell: philippa.mitchell@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Jeremy Ward: Jeremy.ward@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Pat Tugwell: pat.tugwell@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Louise McCrow: louise.mccrow@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Bob Hutton: bob.hutton@normandyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Appendix 4 – Presentation given to local councillors

gleeson

Shortland Farm

Meeting with Parish Councillors

Presentation by Gleeson Land

24 October, 2025

1

gleeson

Introductions

gleeson

- Promoter and applicant (Nick Keeley)

LICHFIELDS

- Planning consultant (Daniel Lampard)

OSP

- Architects (Paul Dallain)

M3

- Transport Consultants (Alec Philpott)

2

gleeson

Headlines

- Just over 11 hectares of both greenfield and previously developed ('brownfield') land situated outside the Ash settlement boundary, in Normandy.
- Outline planning application for up to 200 high-quality homes, including affordable homes, open space and landscaping, at Shortland Farm.
- We consider that the Site and our proposals meet the definition of Grey Belt.
- The scheme has the potential to meet local needs, in particular addressing housing shortfall in Guildford Borough

3

gleeson

Policy Context

- In December 2024, the Government introduced new policies which allow for the release of low-quality Green Belt land, now defined as 'Grey Belt'.
- Guildford Borough Council has accepted as of April 2025 that it can no longer meet its requirement to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- Since a new local plan is not anticipated to be adopted until mid-2029, a significant number of homes will need to be approved within the short term to meet housing needs.
- Shortland Farm would meet the definition of Grey Belt and make valuable contribution towards addressing housing shortfall in the Borough in a sustainable location.

4

Shortland Farm

- Comprises just over 11 hectares of both greenfield and previously developed ("brownfield") land, situated on the edge of Ash.
- Harpers Recreational Ground and Ash Playground sit to the west of the site - both recognised open spaces.
- A public right of way (footpath) runs across the site and connects through to Ash train station (c. 750 metres).
- Guildford Road (A323) is the main road near to the site, running along the northern boundary.
- Located wholly within the Green Belt, the boundary for which is very close to the edge of the site.



5

Development Context

- The Site is located near to a number of new residential developments to the west of the site, including a strategic allocation.
- The strategic allocation (Allocation A31) and is allocated for approximately 1,750 dwellings to extend Ash eastwards, largely along the Green Belt boundary.
- A bridge (now completed) over the railway leading towards Ash station has alleviated historic congestion on the A323 and has enabled the closure of the level crossing near to Ash train station.
- For the avoidance of doubt, this application has no relation to the proposals at Normandy and Flexford being brought forward by Taylor Wimpey.

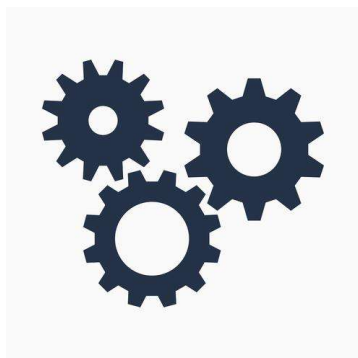


Development Context Plan

6

Technical Work

- We have already undertaken a range of technical work at Shortlands Farm to inform how we design the scheme and raise any constraints we need to take into account.
- Our planning application will include the following :
 - Landscape and visual impact assessment
 - Transport assessment
 - Ecology, Biodiversity Net Gain analysis, and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space assessment
 - Flood risk assessment
 - Heritage assessment
 - Tree survey



<https://www.vecteezy.com/vector-art/265976-cogs-symbol-on-white-background-setting-icon-illustration>

7

Technical Work: Transport and Access

- The Site is in a highly sustainable location
- Vehicular access to the site is proposed from Guildford Road (A323) to the north.
- Historic congestion on the A323 and has enabled the closure of the level crossing near to Ash train station. Ongoing discussions are underway with Surrey County Council.
- The existing PROW footpath will be retained and enhanced under the proposals, providing connectivity to the Harpers Recreational Ground and Ash Playground, as well as to Ash Train station.
- We are keen to explore the potential to enhance the pedestrian and public transport facilities along Guildford Road.



Land use parameter plan (OSP)

8

Technical work: Ecology and SANG

- A small part of the site sits within the 0 to 400m 'exclusion zone' from development near to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the remainder of the site sits wholly within 400m to 5km 'zone of influence'.
- No residential development is proposed within the exclusion zone.
- Arrangements for suitable [SANG] access would be secured as part of the scheme, which both existing and new residents would be encouraged to use.



SPA buffer (400m)

Technical work: Flood Risk/Drainage

- The planning application will address all relevant flood risk and drainage matters.
- Our proposals limit the amount of built development within areas of surface water flooding and, where necessary, mitigation will be provided to avoid increasing flood risk elsewhere in line with the national planning policy.
- Sustainable Drainage Solutions will be proposed as part of the scheme.



<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/geology-projects/india/>

Technical work: Trees

- Only a limited amount of works affecting trees and hedgerows is proposed as part of the development.
- There is a selection of Tree Protection Orders and Veteran Trees located within the site boundary, none of which are proposed to be removed.



Green Infrastructure Plan

Our Emerging Proposals



Development Framework Plan
Shortlands Farm, Guildford Road, Ash
25019 / 1420A
Scale 1:1000 @ A1 - August 2024

Scheme Benefits

- The proposals are being brought forward by Gleeson Land, a specialist land promotion business which creates much needed new homes and community facilities for local people.
- Gleeson Land is working with the landowner to facilitate the delivery of a, high-quality scheme on the Site.
- These scheme benefits help to qualify the Site as Grey Belt.



Next Steps

- Our public consultation exercise runs until 22 September 2025.
- We will review and consider all feedback received before the planning application is submitted.
- This process will be summarised within a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will accompany the planning application.
- Planning application submission anticipated in late Autumn 2025



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