

Access

An access for pedestrians, cycles and vehicles will be provided onto School Road. And a Ped/cycle link onto Cole Lane.

Topography

The land surface is relatively flat, with no noticeable undulations, rises, or dips. The Site rises slightly from the northeast to southwest.

Arboriculture

The site is characterised by belts of mature and semi-mature trees lining all field boundaries, with a central tree belt dividing the two main fields. The majority of the trees are native, deciduous specimens. The most commonly found species are English oak and ash. The central belt is dominated by large mature English oak trees between which there are substantial gaps in places. All tree belts feature a dense understorey of scrub, mainly comprised of native species such as hawthorn, holly and hazel.

Landscape

The Site is generally visually well-contained against the edge of Arborfield Cross and the public rights of way on higher ground around Eliss's Hill Farm to the north, due to intervening layers of dense out-grown hedgerows with mature trees (see Photo A). Views are largely confined to glimpses from School Road (see Photo B) and Wood Lane (see Photo C) to the south east.

Drainage

The Site is in Flood Zone 1 and has been assessed to have a low potential for flooding for all sources. With the ground sloping down towards the north-western and eastern corners, surface water runoff naturally flows into the ditches around the Site's perimeter.

Heritage

No designated or non-designated heritage assets lie within the Site. The Site's sylvan western boundary is a positive aspect of easterly outward views from the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area which include the relocated Grade II war memorial. By virtue of topography, no other parts of the Site can be seen within broader views. The Grade II listed building of Langleypond Farm lies to the east of the Site, the rural character of which forms a positive foreground to partial glimpse views of the former and much adapted farmhouse. These views make a minor contribution to the significance of the building of Langleypond Farm, therefore, should be respected within the design.

Ecology

The site is characterised by two agricultural fields; the eastern most one has been given over to arable crop in recent years, while the field to the west supports grass. The fields are lineated by hedgerows, some of which are mature with a moderate species richness. Surveys to date have identified a population of reptiles including grass snakes, a moderate assemblage of bats and numerous common widespread bird species.



^Photo A - Out-grown hedgerows with mature trees around site boundary



^Photo B - Limited views in to the site from School Road



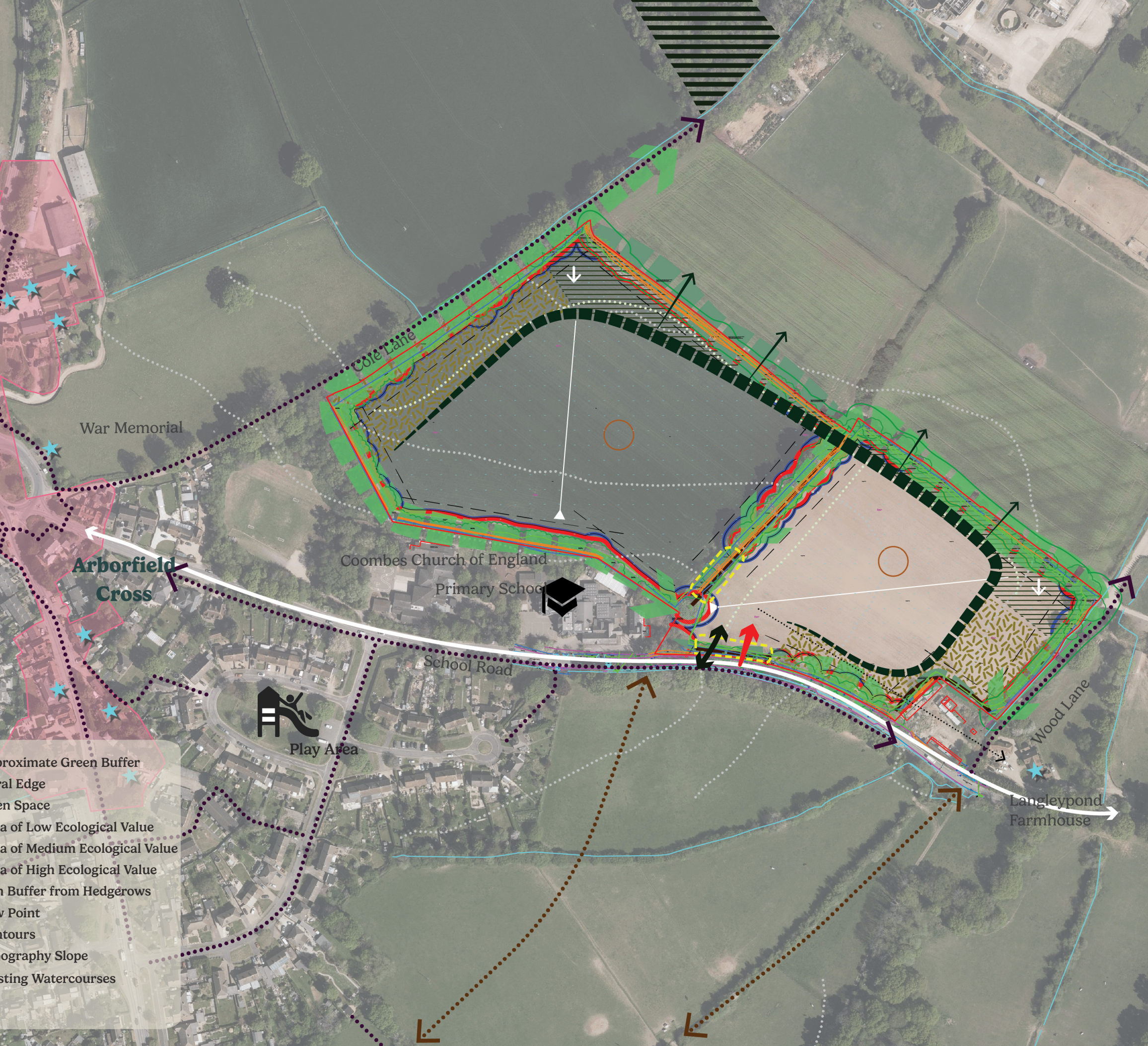
^Photo C - Limited views in to the site from Wood Lane



^Photo D - View from School Road adjacent to The Coombes Primary School

3.6 Site Opportunities

- Main Access to be taken from School Road.
- Increased permeability by linking to the existing and proposed active travel network.
- Enhance and retain existing hedgerows and trees, using existing gaps in the tree line to access the Site.
- Create green buffers to mitigate impacts on listed buildings and conservation area, preserving the rural character of the village.
- Create habitats within the Site and green buffers to help achieving 15% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Drainage features to be located at the lowest points of the Site.
- Create robust boundary between proposed development and wider countryside on northern edge of Site.

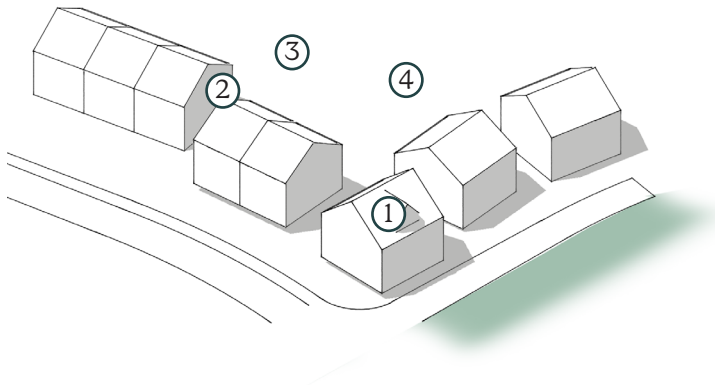


3.7 Design Cues

The analysis of the existing built environment of Arborfield Cross has provided inspiration and will help to create a locally appropriate development, making sure that the development integrates and responds to the grain of the rural village setting. Key summary of design cues are set out below.

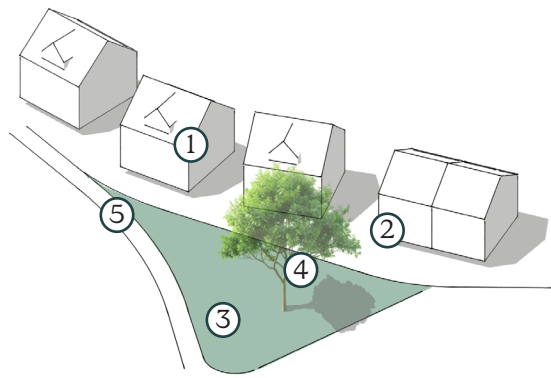
Urban Form & Built /Plot Form

- ① Variation in character from more urban to more rural in response to landscape context and street type.
- ② Subtle variations in setbacks.
- ③ Mix of short terraces, detached and semi-detached buildings, based on the variation in character from urban to rural.
- ④ Relatively low density development with building heights to be generally 2-storey.



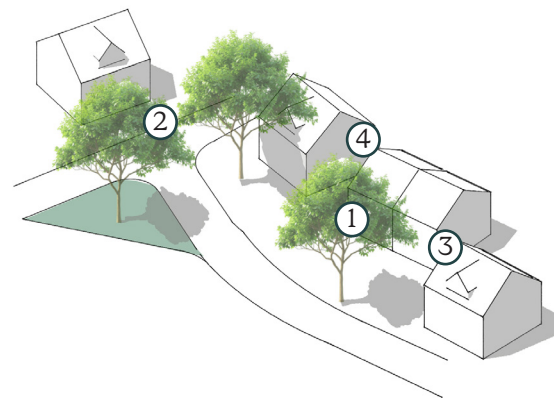
Public Realm and Open Space

- ① Development shaped by the landscape rural context.
- ② Areas of open space overlooked by dwellings.
- ③ Incidental green spaces within the built form.
- ④ Street trees within the built form to create attractive and healthy places.
- ⑤ Accessible public open spaces to enhance sense of community and well-being of residents.



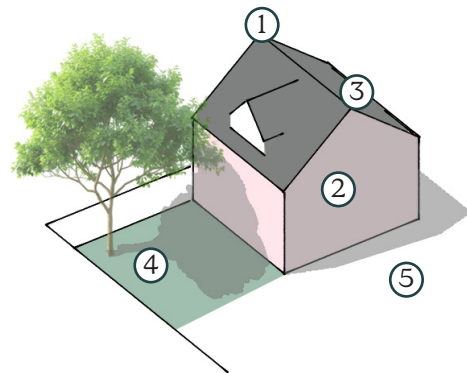
Streets and Parking

- ① Street trees along main streets supporting biodiversity, climate resilience and creating a green and attractive setting for homes.
- ② Key spaces / nodal points along streets to create interest in the street scene. Key spaces to be overlooked.
- ③ Varied setbacks to add variety to the street scene.
- ④ On-plot parking mainly located to the side and front of dwellings.



Details and Materials

- ① Simple, traditional building form.
- ② Predominately red brick with some use of buff brick and white/cream render on key buildings in response to the local built form.
- ③ Roof materials are a mix of dark clay plain tile.
- ④ Green boundary treatments aid to the creation of a green neighborhood that is sympathetic to its surrounding landscape context.
- ⑤ In general, details and materials to respond to the granularity of Arborfield Cross.





4. Engagement



The public engagement process involved the community and stakeholders in several different ways. First, a consultation website was launched on 1 June 2024, providing detailed information about the proposed development. This included plans for landscaping, sustainability measures, and housing options. The website also featured a feedback form, allowing the public to submit their comments and suggestions.

Additionally, a social media campaign was conducted on Facebook and Instagram from 27 June to 18 July 2024. These advertisements targeted local residents and successfully reached 5,091 users, resulting in 316 unique clicks to the consultation website. This initiative helped to increase awareness and participation in the consultation process.

A drop-in consultation and exhibition event took place on 9 July 2024, at the Royal British Legion Club. To promote this event, 500 fliers were distributed to households in Arborfield Cross and neighbouring areas. The distribution was planned based on the estimated number of households from the 2021 census. The event allowed residents to view the plans, ask questions, and provide feedback in person.

Ongoing engagement with elected representatives, including Ward councillors and relevant members of the Council, was also maintained throughout the process. This ensured that local political figures were well-informed about the development and

could provide input, reflecting the interests and concerns of their constituents. This comprehensive engagement strategy aimed to align the development proposal with community needs and expectations.

The consultation gathered public feedback on various topics related to the proposed development. Regarding housing preferences, respondents expressed a significant desire for starter homes suitable for first-time buyers, with family-sized homes also being popular. There was a notable interest in smaller homes, including bungalows, to cater to downsizers and individuals with accessibility needs. The community showed a preference for affordable housing options, particularly for key workers, as a means to enhance diversity and inclusivity in Arborfield Cross.

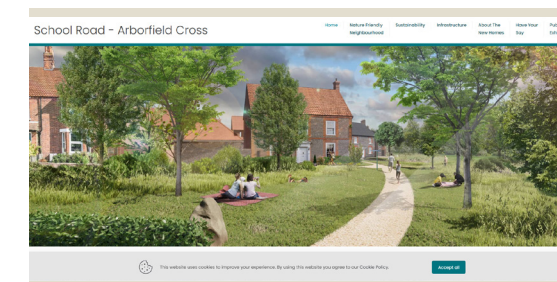
Concerns were raised about infrastructure, particularly the need for improved bus services and traffic management. Some respondents suggested reopening School Road to alleviate traffic congestion. There was also a call for more community facilities, such as a community centre, a hub for scouts, and amenities for older children and young adults, like a skate park. The inclusion of healthcare services was highlighted as an important aspect of the development.

Environmental considerations were also a priority for the community, with a focus on maintaining green spaces and integrating sustainable practices within the development. Overall, the feedback indicated strong support

for a development that caters to various housing needs, enhances public services, and integrates well with the existing community and environment.

The Community Communications Partnership (CCP) made concerted efforts to engage Coombes CE Primary School and the local Scouts in the proposed development, offering opportunities such as land for sports pitches and a dedicated Scout hut. While the school took time to consider the proposals, the engagement opened a dialogue about the potential benefits of the development for the school community. The local Scouts, though ultimately content with their current arrangements, appreciated the offer and considered the possibilities it presented. These interactions reflect a proactive approach to involving key stakeholders and exploring how the development could enhance local facilities.

Overall, the consultation demonstrated a proactive approach to involving the public and key stakeholders in the planning process, contributing to a more informed and potentially more acceptable development outcome.



^Consultation Website

Welcome from Croudace Homes

The Croudace team welcomes you to this public exhibition, where we seek your views on our draft proposals for the delivery of new quality homes on land in Arborfield Cross (the Site).

Croudace Homes takes immense pride in creating homes of the highest quality for all our customers. We take great care in the design of each property, as well as the layout of our developments. From entry-level starter homes to opulent family estates, we cater to all with a diverse range of offerings.

Croudace is a well-established regional residential developer, proudly operating as a family-owned business since our inception in 1946.

Croudace is known for the attention given to internal and external design, as well as the high specification of fixtures and fittings. We are very proud of our previous projects and look forward to collaborating with the Arborfield Cross community on this upcoming project.

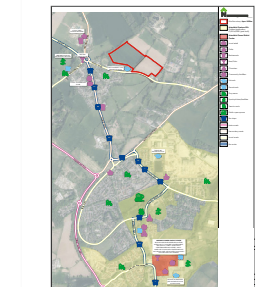


Sustainability Benefits

Parking provisions will meet current standards for both cycles and vehicles. The development will also include electric vehicle charging points, supporting sustainable transportation options.

Our proposals aim to foster a sustainable community by integrating extensive green spaces and improving local biodiversity, adhering to the Neighbourhood Plan. Enhanced transportation links and pedestrian pathways will promote healthier, active lifestyles, and connect the Site to the wider community.

The new development in Arborfield Cross prioritises both design and safety considerations to create a secure and pleasant living environment. Croudace will ensure the safety of routes with proper surveillance, clear sight lines, and adequate lighting, enhancing the overall safety of the area.



Our Vision for Arborfield Cross

Approximately 95 homes are proposed on the Site, including a significant number of affordable dwellings. This includes a mix of 2, 3, and 4 bedroom with appropriately sized gardens.

A policy compliant scheme will be provided, seeking to include public benefits and overall environmental enhancements. Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan has been considered to understand local aspirations for future development.



Community and Social Benefits

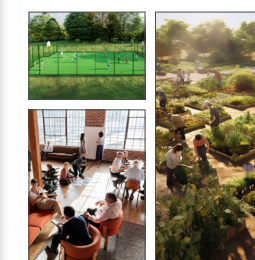
The Neighbourhood Plan notes a local requirement for affordable homes for key workers. Croudace will provide housing to support those who are essential to the community, ensuring they have access to affordable housing options within the area.

A key element of our proposals are the benefits to the community, with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding community facilities, roads, parks, and play areas. Notably up to 25% of the CIL will go to Parish Councils, and there is a myriad of ways in which this funding can be used.

We are looking to provide new community infrastructure and are considering a range of options, including:

- Multi-use games area
- Allotments
- Community orchard
- Community hall

Which of these options is your favourite? We would love to hear your thoughts!



5. Design Proposals

Local Placemaking



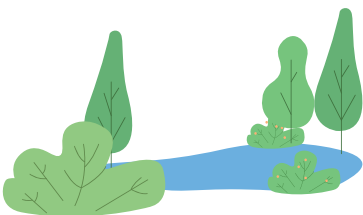
- Good quality homes and buildings that provide an attractive and comfortable place for people to live, work and play.
- The creation of a new neighbourhood that responds to the local character and feels rural.
- A permeable network of interconnected and attractive streets that make it easy to move around.
- Recognisable streets and spaces including vibrant squares and high-quality green space.
- A variety of public open space to serve the needs of all.
- Beautiful and safe streets that encourage neighbourliness making it easy for social encounters.



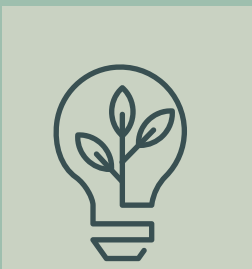
Nature



- A network of open spaces, woodland, play areas and green corridors permeating the development provide amenity space for residents, habitats for wildlife and places for biodiversity net gain.
- Views of trees from homes helps to benefit mental health and sense of wellbeing.
- A comprehensive blue infrastructure network will further support wildlife and biodiversity whilst helping to mitigate the impact of climate change through the incorporation of attenuation ponds, swales and other sustainable urban drainage systems.
- Well-maintained green links through the neighbourhood based on the retention of existing hedgerows and wooded areas contribute towards a distinctive, green rural character.



Sustainability



- The vision and proposed illustrative masterplan has made allowances for the energy infrastructure required for a development of this size.
- Well-designed and oriented buildings make the most of passive design strategies to minimise overheating, aid solar gain and achieve internal comfort.
- Reducing water consumption is important for people, nature and the economy. Water efficient homes comprising water efficient shower heads, taps, toilets and appliances contribute towards climate change adaptation.
- Design elements to encourage urban cooling. Vegetation and green spaces will permeate every part of the new settlement, providing shade and helping cool the surrounding air temperature.



Active Travel



- Convenient, comfortable and accessible walking and cycling routes throughout the site, including existing PRoWs, will support active travel choices, making car-free journeys the first choice for residents. These routes will provide direct links to public transport connections.
- Proposed footpaths and cycleways will connect with the existing public rights of way network and linking the scheme with facilities available within Arborfield Cross and the surrounding area including links to the countryside and areas of public open space.



5.1 Concept Masterplan

- ① Main Access to be taken from School Road.
- ② Improve the permeability of the Site through a well defined hierarchy of pedestrian and cycle routes able to link to the existing and proposed active travel network.
- ③ Enhance and retain existing hedgerows and trees.
- ④ Green buffers to mitigate impacts on listed building and preserve the rural character of the village.
- ⑤ Create habitats within the Site and green buffers to help achieving 50% Biodiversity Net Gain. A brief was provided by Croudace Homes noting their own target of achieving a minimum of 15% BNG where possible. In relation to this Site, careful and sensitive design has enabled a BNG of 50%, providing a significant ecological enhancement post development, as evidenced in the supporting Ecological Assessment.
- ⑥ Drainage features to be located at the lowest points of the Site.
- ⑦ Locate open space on northern edge of Site to form robust boundary between proposed development and wider countryside.
- ⑧ Tree planting to mitigate the loss of existing trees and hedgerows to support the access and retain the rural character of the village.
- ⑨ Key building to be located at the entrance of Site to function as a gateway feature.
- ⑩ Ped/cycle link onto Cole Lane. 3.7m width for potential emergency access point.

