**Collated Design Guide Consultation Comments Summary**

**Q 2  Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats**

Most people thought it was very important (91%) and a few (6%) fairly important that new developments conserve and enhance local biodiversity and wildlife habitats. The insignificant remainder (3%) either regarded it as not very important or did not answer the question.

The most cited comment of the 23 comments received was for the protection of hedgerows and trees, verges and corridors for wildlife to remain. Traffic, speed restrictions, minimising houses to be built and better parking were other common issues raised. There was only one comment on warning of the effects on future health and wellbeing and another on the effects of light pollution. There were two comments about farmers, one asking what are farmers doing to conserve biodiversity, and the other on the dislike of pesticides and human slurry being put on fields. In summary, there was an overall feeling of retaining the woods and hedgerows whilst gently permitting some development so long as it looked after wildlife in the face of everyday clutter from humans.

**Q 4  Sustainability**

Only 25 people answered the question. Replies varied from not understanding what sustainability was, to complaints about noise pollution and the need for greater water conservation.  There was a nod to climate change and managing carbon; three wanted solar panels, and heat pumps should be put into older properties. One person was opposed to concrete, and one who did not want any generic housing blocks. Whatever was built should all be sustainable with no external effects on the locality and habitats, Crowhurst should lead the way.  There were comments about the costly installations for what is really needed, and of means testing the most needy. In summary, replies generally addressed the issue of sustainability, clearly appreciated the availability of various alternative measures, understood the costliness of moving over to new technologies and were keen to see all new developments integrated into the community without visually degrading the parish.

**Q6 Siting of developments in the landscape**

Of the 22 comments made, 7 were about flood risk and the need to mitigate. Three people highlighted the value of ponds in achieving this. Four people emphasised the need for development to blend in with the landscape, follow existing contours and respect the existing scattered development groupings, avoiding “built-up areas.” While one person felt houses should be unobtrusively sited, another proposed due consideration to the appearance of new properties from footpaths and the countryside. One person was anxious to ensure the view from their existing property would not be impaired, while another saw development as “a chance to enhance our environment.” Two other specific comments related to ensuring the continued security of existing properties and the safety of the entrance to the site below Forewood Rise.

One person identified the need for occupants of new-built dwellings to be given support and advice about biodiversity

**Q9 - Physical and Social Cohesion**

20 people made relevant comments

Quite varied but:

Anything that encourages community spirit good or allows people to naturally come across each other- shop, hub, benches, play area, communal orchard (2 answers amalgamated)

Better walking possibilities including:

* Improving access to footpaths/bridleways, cycle paths and links around village (particularly to school ,pub, church) would be beneficial. (4)
* Safer walking along roads/on verges including no parking on verges and reducing speed to 20mph and extending 30mph further out(4)

No street lighting and concerns about increased foot/cycle traffic affecting tranquility and wildlife (5)

More than enough footpaths already, Crowhurst should not become too urban with lots of connections (3)

Too many "focal points" in developments might detract from a "one community" feel and who would look after them (2)

Other points made:

Don't build in Station Rd - put near Link Rd

There should be a diverse mix of ethnicity and ages in affordable housing and residents should respect/look after properties/gardens to stay maintained.

**Q14 Layout, scale, character and density of new developments.**

30 comments were made, with a majority of comments emphasising the need for a variety of design, appropriate to its context within both site and village.

Design and density

12 people emphasised the need for a **variety of design,** in keeping with existing housing in Crowhurst, with a mix of housing appropriate and specific to their location. 1 person felt that bright colours should be avoided in keeping with the village. 1 person felt that a variety of design would reflect the range of architecture and styles of housing in the village. 1 person felt that each house should be of individual design. Another that it should “not be ‘a blot on the landscape’ and be as easy as possible on the eye”.

1 person was in favour of **“high quality modern, architecturally innovative buildings** set in appropriate surroundings” and not wishing to live in a “theme park version of rural olde England”

1 person thought it important that design and developments should be “**sustainable, eco-friendly, accessible and community minded**, rather than how high the roofline is or what material it is”

2 people were **concerned about suburbanisation** - 1 of which related to avoiding the use of raised pavements and in favour of grass verges or paving set back behind a grass verge. 1 related to avoiding ultra modern buildings and materials.

3 people stressed the need to **avoid high density developments** with a comment on the need for good sized gardens. Another to avoid back land development.

Parking

3 people expressed concern about the **need for off-road, rather than on road parking** with 1 person pointing out the need to include parking solutions for existing estates where parking is an issue. 1 person was concerned about the value of walking routes and road safety in relation to the hazards presented by current on road parking.

Other comments were:

* That the development could “increase the cohesion between the church/school and pub/rec, e.g. via footpaths/cycle ways, that would be beneficial”.
* To incorporate lots of trees
* To scrub CH2 and concentrate those 12 units into CH3 (Court Lodge site).
* Questioning whether developers would adhere to the Design Guide.
* The difficulty in designing with remaining farm buildings despite the barn portals being removed.
* Incorporating car ports rather than garages, which are little used.
* Houses should be small and “NOT contain any houses with more than three bedrooms or two reception rooms, and that owners be instructed to only have a MAXIMUM of 2 cars per household.”
* “Why don’t you just build a block of flats or better still a Brazilian type slum that makes us all feel like we’re living in a city rather than the countryside”

**Q16 Architectural details**

There were 21 respondents to this question with 102 choosing to skip. Of the 21 responses, three gave no further details on the responders’ views.

From the remaining 18 answers three themes emerge. The most consistent theme is sumurised as ‘Not aware Crowhurst has a distinctive character’. The lack of a distinct character for Crowhurst is directly picked up in 7 of the comments.

Three responders talk about the importance of planting and tree screening as part of any future developments.

There is no clear message on architectural style in the responses. Key terms that come out are ‘design’, ‘quality’ and ‘style’. The responders make the point that sustainable development can have strong architectural merits and that some very modern styles of built architecture might not suit the village.

Concerns are also raised in two responses about the impact of cost of the homes built if too much focus is put on architectural details.

**Q18 Use of local building materials**

There were 22 responders to this question with 101 choosing to skip. 1 response gave no further information of the responders view

The most common theme (7 responses) from the 21 responses was a sense that what is local is not clearly understood or defined and that the costs of providing local materials outweigh the benefits in final build costs and the difference in appearance is not apparent from using local rather that international materials.

Six responses express a preference for using materials that could be considered local to the High Weald, i.e. hanging tiles and red brick.

Three responses highlight the issue of using more ecologically sound building materials. The comments particularly emphasise the carbon footprint of any development and aiming for carbon neutrality

Two responses make a link between using local materials having an impact on provision of affordable housing

**Q20 The proposed Village centre**

Of the 40 people, who made comments or suggestions, 32 were positive regarding the concept of a Village hub. Three people thought it was undesirable or unnecessary.

Proposals to make the centre work well:

* Careful attention to layout, to ensure not a “dead end” used only by the new residents
* Notices and action to minimise light, car and noise pollution
* Improve the walking link from the southern part of the Village, to discourage driving to the centre
* Provide parking, (incl. an electric charging point) – 5 comments
* The new features should exclude buildings, to avoid loss of green space
* Restrict heavy lorries passing by and introduce speed checks
* A play area that complements the one at the Rec. incorporating more climbing / adventure components, a scooter or skateboard park
* Involve children and teenagers in caring for it
* CCTV to discourage flytipping

Suggested other features to incorporate:

* Space for classes or groups (eg yoga, pottery classes, talks by local organisations)
* Chemist
* Post Office – 2 comments
* Information wallboard (paths, sites of special interest, etc
* Tea garden / coffee shop/ pop-up snack bar – 2 comments
* Community veg. patch / allotments
* Seating – 3 comments
* Trees with blossom – 2 comments
* Adult gym equipment / outdoor fitness centre – 3 comments
* Nature walk
* Play area for adults (chess, quoits)
* Laptops for residents without computers
* Orchard

Other comments:

* Crowhurst lacks a “true heart”. This proposal provides an opportunity to rectify this.

**Q23 Development CH2: Suggestions of how to make this social space work well, such as other features to incorporate**

27 comments were made

Play area and green space

* It should have benches
* Lots of trees and hedges which would also provide shade
* Be in a high visibility area for safety and to safeguard against anti-social behaviour
* Be sited near the entrance to be accessible to others to encourage social integration. “It is also a principle to have green space central to a development. Both these factors should be considered in the site layout, possibly resulting in two separate - or linked areas.”
* Combining it with an orchard with benches
* 2 people suggested a Cafeoffering coffee/cake etc run by volunteers or pop up retailers
* Be designed for a variety of age groups with a fenced off area for young children.
* Include facilities for teenagers. “A BMX track, a zip wire, benches, wooden equipment with places for children to sit and chat. A basketball/games area”.
* Be a dog free area.
* 2 people suggested dog poo bins and waste bins
* 4 people were against including a play area/ facilities for the following reasons:
* We have enough facilities already, are surrounded by fields and woodland, it will result in “broken bottles, beer cans, cigarette ends and graffiti”.

Orchard and wildflower meadow

* 3 people were in favour of an orchard, one with benches, one to combine it with a play area, orchard and green area.
* 1 person was in favour of a wildflower meadow.

Parking area

* 3 people suggested a parking area for others to access facilities including the mobile library, limited street/verge parking with traffic calming measures,
* Other comments were:
* 2 people were in favour of an adult/older person’s outdoor gym (or in the Rec), plus a basket ball hoop somewhere in the village.
* Include allotments
* Make it self-contained with its own services
* Include a sculpture

**Q 24 - Other comments or suggestions about applying our design criteria to the Crowhurst NP allocated sites**  (*unfortunately quite varied so difficult to bring into themes*)

Against car park next to Church as would ruin one of best views in village and could become overspill parking like rec and too far from new facilities at Station Rd site. Put extra parking at CH1 (3)

A benefit of dual access to Ch1 is improved pedestrian access to Station

If designed correctly, Ch1 should not need additional access which would be an accident waiting to happen/ development could cause extra parking issues for the school.(2)

Use CH1 development as a chance to fix the drainage issues in the road (*there is more detail to this comment*)

There is already recreational space in village -development doesn't need any.

Craig Close is a private road so not an option for access to CH3

Design houses to attract young families

Its the people, not the look of buildings, that make a community work.

This site (below Forewood Rise) has bats roosting

Don't build any new houses

**Q25 Other comments on the Design Guide**

Shop

* There is a detailed offer from Alice Fauth to run a shop on a “green / plastic free” basis

Public transport

* Needs to be improved, including up and down Station Rd and between Crowhurst and Battle / Hastings – 3 comments

Footpaths

* Need to be extended, where missing, including up Station Rd – 2 comments

Heritage

* The old Coach Road from Crowhurst Park to the Church should be restored
* The field between the bottom of Station Rd and Dennis’ workshop used to be the head water lake for the old forge. Establishing a pond in part of this area would be historically significant and would assist with drainage from the Station Rd area.

Village Centre

* Must not detract from the overall village community feel

Environment

* Dog poo and litter bins needed

Implementation

* Everything possible should be done to ensure the Guide is followed by developers, including its incorporation in the Neighbourhood Plan
* There should be due consideration of the residents of Forewood Rise in considering establishment of a play area and in progressing the CH2 development generally. Avoid creating what feels like a housing estate
* Preservation of the bats colony adjacent to the CH2 development needs to be assured

Other comments

Several other comments were made, e.g need for a new pavilion on the Rec, choice of NP sites, capacity of the School, social cohesion which are not specifically relevant to the Design Guide