Social

Bold Forest Garden Village Masterplan Framework

Statement of Community Involvement

December 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Social, in partnership with Avison Young and SLR Consulting, on behalf of St Helens Borough Council (the Council) to assist in the local planning authority's adoption of a Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village (the Site).

1.2 This report outlines the consultation and engagement activity that has been undertaken to support the development of a Masterplan Framework in advance of its submission to St Helens Borough Council.

1.3 In April 2025, early stakeholder and community engagement exercises took place on three masterplan approaches. To further support the overall development of a Masterplan Framework, additional consultation activity has taken place in November 2025, ahead of the final Masterplan Framework being submitted for adoption in early 2026.

Background

1.4 Avison Young and SLR Consulting have been appointed by the Council to bring forward a Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village – a new residential community north of Gorsey Lane in Bold, St Helens. The Masterplan Framework establishes a vision for the Site, incorporating design and development principles for future planning applications to adhere to.

1.5 Bold Forest Garden Village is an allocated site and referred to as Site 4HA in the St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022). The Site will provide residential development to support the Council to meet its housing targets. An indicative Site capacity of 2,988 dwellings has been identified - of which a minimum of 510 dwellings should be delivered during the Local Plan period up to 2037.

1.6 Bold Forest Garden Village is one of the largest housing allocations in the Northwest of England and a strategically important site for the region.

1.7 Alongside new homes, the Masterplan Framework outlines the delivery of social infrastructure, including strategic open space, education, health and sports provision to benefit both new and existing communities.

Scope of Community Consultation

1.8 On behalf of St Helens Borough Council, Social have been appointed to assist Avison Young and SLR Consulting with community and stakeholder engagement on the Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village, which is scheduled for adoption in early 2026.

1.9 Alongside technical assessments, the Masterplan Framework has been developed through a collaborative process with the community, landowners and key stakeholders - building on the feedback put forward during the initial masterplan approaches consultation, held in April 2025.

1.10 A comprehensive programme of engagement has been undertaken in advance of the Masterplan Framework consultation in November 2025.

1.11 Supported by Social and the wider project team, the Council has led engagement with key stakeholders. This includes landowners of the Site, local and neighbouring ward councillors, Bold Parish Council, the MP, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth and Regeneration.

1.12 Throughout the November Masterplan Framework consultation, the project team engaged with the local community in a variety of ways to provide opportunities for them to put their views forward. This included sending 12,011 leaflets to residents and businesses, hosting two community drop-in events, hosting a dedicated project website and providing a dedicated email address for direct correspondence.

2. The Masterplan Framework

2.1 Bold Forest Garden Village aims to transform 128-hectares of land into a vibrant, sustainable garden village. The Site unlocks the potential for around 3,000 new homes, comprising 30% affordable housing, alongside strategic open space and community infrastructure, including a new primary school and potential on-site health care provision.

2.2 The Masterplan Framework constitutes a single masterplan vision that will ensure future development within the Bold Forest Garden Village site allocation is in accordance with Local Plan Policies LPA04.1 and LPA11, and is brought forward in an integrated and co-ordinated manner.

2.3 The Masterplan Framework has been developed through consultation with the local community and extensive engagement with stakeholders, including regular meetings with landowners to inform strategic options and a wider programme of engagement with parish councils, third sector groups and public bodies, and key Council officers.

2.4 Three main drivers, centred around deliverability, have shaped the vision and objectives for Bold Forest Garden Village, as outlined in the Masterplan Framework:

- **Landscape-Led:** A distinctive, sustainable, attractive and healthy place to live;
- **Locally Integrated:** A new place that integrates and enhances established communities; and
- **Comprehensive:** A coordinated site-wide approach to delivery and infrastructure.

2.5 The Masterplan Framework is supported by the following key technical studies, which are available to the public on the Council's project webpage (www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage):

- Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Strategy;
- Drainage Strategy Report ;
- SuDS Design Brief;
- Ecological Impact Assessment;
- Energy and Sustainability Framework;
- Interim Transport Technical Note; and
- Heritage Statements of Significance.

2.6 The Masterplan Framework is underpinned by a comprehensive baseline analysis of the Site and its surrounding context, which gathers evidence across the following themes:

- **People:** Social infrastructure and housing need;
- **Place:** Local context and characteristics, including landscape, heritage, and transport; and
- **Environment:** Ecological considerations, flood risk and drainage, land, air and noise quality, and utilities.

2.7 A Spatial Framework Plan for Bold Forest Garden Village applies the vision and objectives for the area against constraints, opportunities and local context. The

plan outlines 'Movement' and the creation of 'Community Destinations around Green Infrastructure' as two key spatial strategies - underpinned by the following development principles:

- Driven by wider, strategic connections;
- Maximising local links 'into and through';
- Working with existing site landscape characteristics;
- Reinforcing the established 'greenway'; and
- Points of convergence.

2.8 The Masterplan Framework establishes the development principles across the Site and the key spatial strategies associated with access and movement, drainage, ecology, landscaping and public realm, community infrastructure, and residential development.

2.9 An Infrastructure Delivery Schedule has been produced to provide an assessment of both the driver of need for each piece of infrastructure, and the scale at which any benefit from its delivery would be experienced. Examples of key infrastructure to enable the effective delivery of development includes bus servicing, junction and active travel route upgrades, education, sports and leisure, and healthcare provision.

2.10 An indicative Phasing Strategy has been produced to illustrate how housing could be delivered alongside social infrastructure over time. Early stages of delivery will provide contributions to support interim community needs.

2.11 The full draft Masterplan Framework document is available to the public on the Council's webpage: www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage

3. Community Engagement activity

3.1 The below sets out the community engagement activity on the Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village.

3.2 The first public consultation in April 2025 invited stakeholders and the community to feedback on three strategic approaches to delivering a garden village in Bold Forest. The details and outcomes of this consultation can be found in the Bold Forest Garden Village Consultation Summary report published on the council web page for the project.

3.3 Following this, stakeholders and the community were invited to take part in a second public consultation, which ran for three weeks from Monday 3rd to Monday 24th November 2025. This consultation focused upon the draft Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village.

3.4 Residents and businesses surrounding the site received a hand delivered leaflet (Appendix 1) from Monday 3rd November 2025, which marked the launch of the Masterplan Framework consultation period. The leaflet invited them to take part in the consultation, with two community drop-in events taking place at well-known venues in close proximity to the masterplan site and previously used for the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025:

- Clock Face Miners Recreation Club, Tuesday 11th November 2025; and
- Clock Face Labour Club, Saturday 15th November 2025.

3.5 Following feedback from previous engagement exercises in April 2025, the leaflet distribution area was extended by around 2.75km^2 to include Burtonwood in Warrington (Appendix 2), located east of the Site.

3.6 Specialist delivery teams hand delivered 12,011 leaflets across a total distribution area of around 10.85 km^2, comprising 11,710 residents and 301 local businesses (Appendix 3).

3.7 The dedicated consultation website (www.boldforestgv.co.uk) has been a live and accessible resource for the public since April 2025 (Appendix 4). It was re-launched on Monday 3rd November, to align with the start of the Masterplan Framework consultation.

3.8 The project website included key consultation details alongside a user-friendly, visual overview of the Masterplan Framework and Spatial Framework Plans, as outlined in *Section 2: The Masterplan Framework*.

3.9 Links to the Council's webpage (www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage), which hosted the full draft Masterplan Framework document along with supporting technical reports and evidence base were clearly referenced throughout the project website and on consultation materials.

3.10 The project website hosted an online feedback form, frequently asked questions, contact information, digital copies of the exhibition banners

(Appendix 5) along with the full Masterplan Framework document for users to view and download

3.11 A dedicated project email address was advertised (boldforest@social.co.uk) along with a FREEPOST address, which enabled those without access to the internet to respond. All these communication methods were clearly referenced on all consultation materials.

3.12 A letter was emailed to local Ward councillors (including Burtonwood via Warrington officers), Parish councillors, Cabinet Members, as well as the local MP to invite them to preview the Masterplan Framework consultation ahead of the community drop-in events.

Stakeholder Engagement

3.13 As part of a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement, a series of conversations between key stakeholders were led by the Council. This provided an opportunity to discuss and inform the Masterplan Framework, prior to the public consultation period commencing.

3.14 Supported by the project team, meetings with the following stakeholders took place from April 2025 to assist the development of the Masterplan Framework, ahead of the public consultation in November:

- Cllr Anthony Burns, Leader of the Council
- Cllr Richard McCauley, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth and Regeneration
- Cllr John Hodkinson, ward member for Sutton
- Bold Parish Council
- Cllr Allen Makin, ward member for Bold and Lea Green
- Cllr David Hawley, ward member for Bold and Lea Green
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board
- NHS Property Services
- Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS)
- Mersey Forest
- North West Miners Heritage Association
- Clock Face Miners Recreation Club
- United Utilities
- Warrington Borough Council
- Homes England

- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

3.15 As part of the Councils commitment to inclusive engagement, the project team engaged with a range of third sector and public body organisations, alongside regular communication with Bold Parish Council. This approach diversified the community feedback incorporated within the Masterplan Framework.

3.16 The Council led a wider outreach to several organisations inclusive of those catering to different age groups, SEND needs and faiths. Those who wished to participate in the engagement activities were contacted and dates for discussions were arranged.

Willow Tree Primary School – 06.06.2025

- The Council, Avison Young and SLR Consulting delivered a range of workshop activities for young people at Willow Tree Primary School, less than 1km west of the Site. Students contributed their ideas on what successful public and community spaces could look like across Bold Forest Garden Village.

Net zero school workshops – Various dates

- As part of social value commitments relating to the BFGV project, the Council, Avison Young and the North West Miners Heritage Association have been leading a series of workshops (ongoing) with local schools including Sutton Oak Primary School and Robins Lane Primary School to discuss the local coal mining history of the area, the uses of coal including within housing development, and to consider the net zero priorities in relation to delivering large housing schemes.

Royal National Institute of Planning and **Pocklington Trust** – 20.06.2025

- Terri Balon from the Royal National Institute of Planning and Kelly Baton from the Pocklington Trust, a national charity that supports blind and partially sighted people, alongside two members of the public that are involved in these groups raised the importance of accessible transport, navigating and accessing green spaces and an inclusive communications approach.

Guide Dogs – 10.07.2025

- Adam Marsh from The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, a leading sight loss charity in the UK, raised the importance of spatial considerations within community hubs, the importance of location-specific language and accessibility in public spaces, nature and street design.

Bold Parish Council

3.17 Following the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025, the project team met with representatives of Bold Parish Council three times throughout the period June – October 2025, ahead of the Masterplan Framework consultation. The frequency of this engagement led to a range of insights for the document to consider, including:

- **Communications:** members noted signposting to background documents and policy relating to the Masterplan Framework is imperative, as well as clear explanations as to how critical issues, such as flooding and social infrastructure, are being addressed.

- **Wider Engagement:** members encouraged the project team to explore how the NHS National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme could be used in the local centre. In addition, the importance of engaging with the British Horse Society was raised to further outline the requirements for equestrian routes across the Site.

- **Education:** further points were raised by members regarding the location and funding of school provision, reinforcing greater clarity is required on how SEND provision will be delivered.

3.18 A broad range of additional themes were raised in conversations throughout the period June – October 2025 with Bold Parish Council, including securing community benefits across education, health, sports and leisure, community spaces, road improvements; local heritage; land ownership; and the phased delivery of housing.

3.19 The project team received five formal stakeholder responses from statutory bodies and local organisations during the Masterplan Framework consultation period. This includes comments from Mersey Forest, Warrington Borough Council, National Highways, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB and NHS Property Services, and United Utilities. Summaries of these responses can be found in the Autumn Consultation Stakeholder response tracker included as an appendix to this report.

Landowner Engagement

3.20 A series of online and in-person meetings with landowners that hold Planning Performance Agreements / Memorandum of Uunderstanding agreements formed a comprehensive engagement plan, designed to inform discussions and ensure landowners were able to put their views forward on the Masterplan

Framework.

3.21 Between April 2025 and November 2025, 13 meetings were held with these landowners, comprising 6 group meetings and 7 one-to-one meetings. This follows the monthly sessions held with landowners prior to the April consultation.

3.22 Following the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025, engagement with landowners gathered a range of feedback and discussion points on the Masterplan Framework. Key themes from these meetings are outlined below:

- Viability and delivery of blue and green infrastructure (GBI) ;
- Social infrastructure;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in relation to the Local Wildlife Site (LWS);
- Drainage strategies;
- Access and Movement; and
- Equalisation processes.

3.23 All landowners across the BFGV site were invited to attend an in-person Masterplan Framework consultation preview event on Tuesday 28th October 2025 at St Helens Town Hall. Social and Avison Young presented an overview of upcoming consultation activity to outline how this fed into the wider Masterplan Framework process. The presentation covered an inclusive approach to communicating the Masterplan Framework, stakeholder engagement and the project timeline.

3.24 Printed Spatial Framework Plans, as outlined in *Section 2: The Masterplan Framework*, were presented to landowners to support a Q&A session, before breaking into smaller groups for focused table discussions with members of the project team.

3.25 Social, alongside Avison Young and officers from the Council were in attendance to answer the landowners' questions and to support any concerns or queries raised ahead of the Masterplan Framework consultation.

3.26 The project team received four formal responses from three different landowners during the Masterplan Framework consultation period. This includes two entries from Wain Estates via email and the online feedback form, as well as responses from Harworth and Taylor Wimpey via the dedicated project email address. Summaries of these responses can be found in the Autumn Consultation Stakeholder response tracker included as an appendix to this

report.

Press and Social Media Activity

3.27 A press release was issued by the Council to announce the launch of the Masterplan Framework consultation and inviting residents to the community drop-in events. This was sent to local, regional and sector-specific news outlets.

3.28 The press release secured coverage with St Helens Star in both print and online formats (Appendix 6), with an estimated combined audience reach of 220,000. The news item generated 2,730 estimated views and received 4 comments online.

3.29 Press coverage can be found on the following link: https://glassfuturesq1.coveragebook.com/b/8b454abaa03c9baa

3.30 The announcement of the consultation was placed on the Council's social media channels (Appendix 7). Two posts, on Facebook and LinkedIn respectively, received 54 reactions, 22 reposts and 1 comment combined.

3.31 The St Helens Star also circulated the item on their Facebook account. This accounted for an additional 405 comments, 23 reposts and 160 reactions.

Public Drop-in Events

3.32 In November 2025, the Council hosted two community drop-in events at accessible venues, within close proximity to the allocated Site and used previously for the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025:

- Clock Face Miners Recreation – Tuesday, 11th November 2025, 12pm – 7pm; and
- Clock Face Labour Club - Saturday 15th November 2025, 11am – 4pm.

3.33 The events provided an opportunity for the community to meet the project team and learn more about the Masterplan Framework in detail.

3.34 Invitations to both events were sent to stakeholders, incorporating a preview session for the first hour, 12pm-1pm, on Tuesday 11th November at Clock Face Miners Recreation.

3.35 Stakeholders who attended the drop-in events are listed below:

- Cllr Richard McCauley, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth and Regeneration;
- Cllr David Hawley, ward member for Bold and Lea Green;
- Cllr John Hodkinson, ward member for Sutton North West;
- Cllr Stephen Bennett, Bold Parish Council; and
- Cllr Paul Gerrard, Bold Parish Council.

3.36 Following the stakeholder preview, both events were considerately planned to allow residents to attend outside typical working hours or care responsibilities. The midweek event was held until 7pm, with a second session on Saturday to provide an alternative opportunity to meet with the project team.

3.37 In total, the drop-in events welcomed 96 attendees, comprising stakeholders, residents and local business owners. Of the total attendees, 55 people attended on Tuesday 11th and 41 people attended on Saturday 15th November (Appendix 9).

3.38 Project team members in attendance included St Helens Borough Council's Masterplanning and Development Plans teams, a transport representative from the Council and Avison Young. Social were also in attendance to answer questions about the Masterplan Framework consultation, facilitate conversation and record feedback.

3.39 Clear, branded wayfinding signage was placed internally and externally around both venues to allow attendees to navigate the space safely and confidently (Appendix 8).

3.40 The events were supported by several 800mm information banners and a single 1500mm (double width) masterplan banner. The display banners were distributed evenly and orderly around the rooms (Appendix 10).

3.41 Printed copies of the Spatial Framework Plans were distributed on tables alongside a dedicated *'Ideas Table'* (Appendix 11), which asked for creative input on community spaces. The table activity was supported by a range of precedent images to prompt attendees to share preferences and ideas for how community spaces could be shaped.

3.42 Three copies of the draft Masterplan Framework document were available for attendees to view, alongside copies of the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (BF AAP) (Appendix 12). Principles from the AAP, including sustainable

development, the positive use of green space and enhancing the natural environment are all key considerations within the development of the Masterplan Framework.

3.43 Printed feedback forms (Appendix 13) were made available for attendees at both events. FREEPOST envelopes were also provided to give residents the opportunity to consider their feedback and return the form at a later date.

3.44 Most attendees were residents from the local area or neighbouring communities, including Burtonwood in Warrington. Overall, comments generally focused on the following aspects:

- Much of the positive feedback focused on the delivery of social infrastructure, specifically on-site education facilities, sports pitches and health care provision. Green connections into and around the site, including Clock Face Country Park and the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) were also welcomed.

- Concerns remained on the loss of green space generally, with some attendees expressing frustration towards the cumulative impact of other nearby developments. Although the allocation of 30% affordable housing received positive feedback, residents still felt 'overwhelmed' by the scale of the site.

- Current issues regarding infrastructure - specifically highways congestion, road safety, pressure on local services and flooding were raised by several residents, with some who put forward doubts that the development would mitigate against these and instead create its own challenges.

- Following requests for more detail during the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025, several attendees felt their concerns had been addressed and/or acknowledged - specifically in relation to social infrastructure and the inclusion of education and health care provision on-site.

3.45 When individuals posed specific questions, visual display boards and background documents were supported by experts from the project team, who guided them through the Masterplan Framework information.

3.46 Any questions were answered by the project team directly, helping to resolve concerns. Generally, conversations were varied and resulted in a more informed and comprehensive understanding of the Masterplan Framework.

4. Consultation Responses

Website Analytics

4.1 The following information covers analytical data captured on the dedicated project website (www.boldforestgv.co.uk) throughout the Masterplan Framework consultation period, Monday 3rd to Monday 24th November 2025.

4.2 The dedicated website has been publicly available since April 2025, following the masterplan approaches consultation. To coincide with the launch of the Masterplan Framework consultation, website content was updated and relaunched on Monday 3rd November 2025.

4.3 Visitors could access key information regarding the Masterplan Framework, including the Spatial Framework plans, supporting precedent imagery and consultation details. The website, along with all consultation materials, clearly signposted to the draft Masterplan Framework document, alongside background evidence documentation on the Council's webpage: www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage.

4.4 Digital copies of the exhibition banners, on display at both community drop-in events, were available for website visitors to view and download (Appendix 5).

4.5 The website consists of five pages for visitors to interact with:

- **Home –** project background, consultation details, community feedback and project team biographies.
- **Our Plans –** an introduction to the Masterplan Framework, Site Framework plans and overviews on movement, green and blue infrastructure, community hubs, wider community benefits including heritage, education, community spaces and sport.
- **Consultation –** consultation details including community events, ways to share feedback including the online feedback form and contact details.

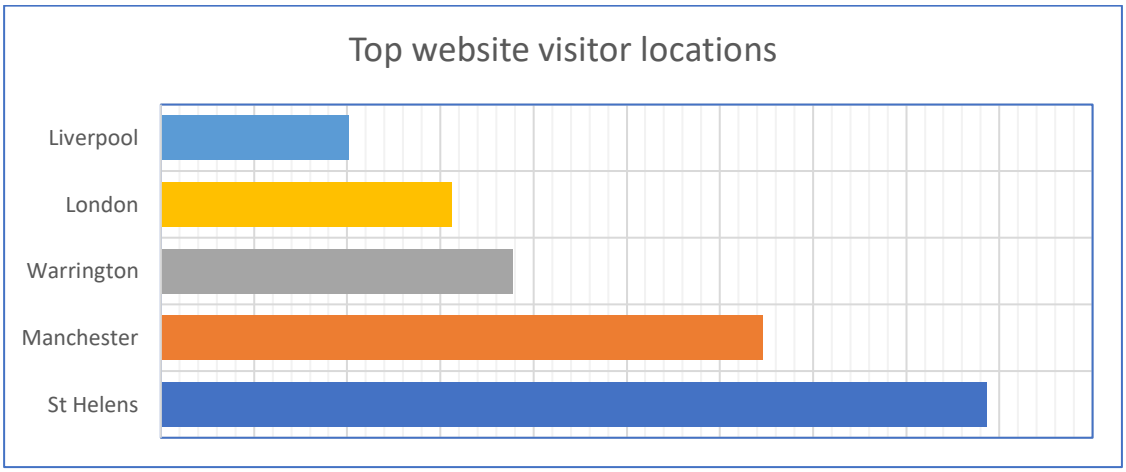
- **FAQs-** non-technical answers in relation to the proposals, project timeline, community hubs, social Infrastructure, housing, movement and access, phasing, environment and consultation.

- **Contact** – contact form, privacy policy and accessibility options.

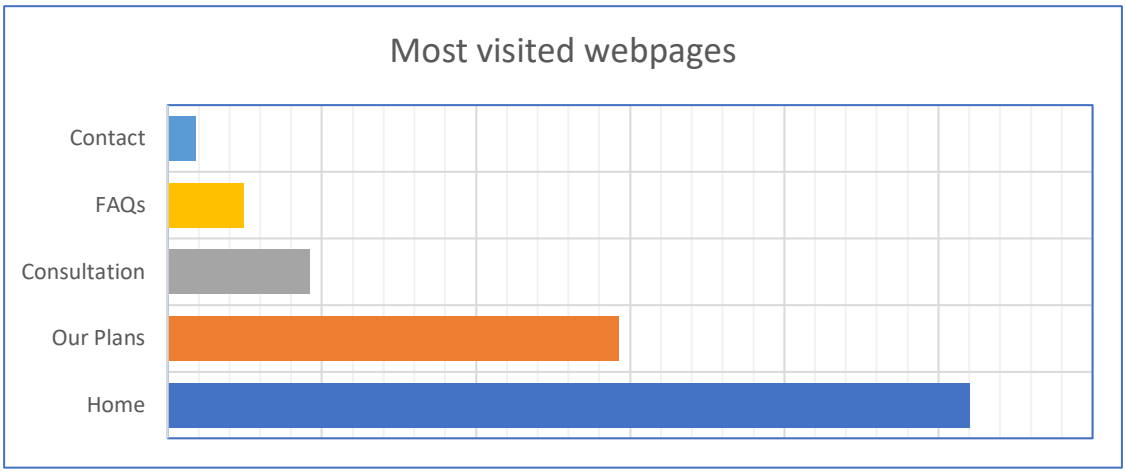
4.6 The website received 496 individual visitors during the Masterplan Framework consultation period. This is a reduction in engagement from April 2025, which received 1,799 individual visits.

4.7 Once returning visitors had been accounted for, the website received a total of 2,032 unique interactions during the Masterplan Framework consultation period (3rd – 24th November 2025).

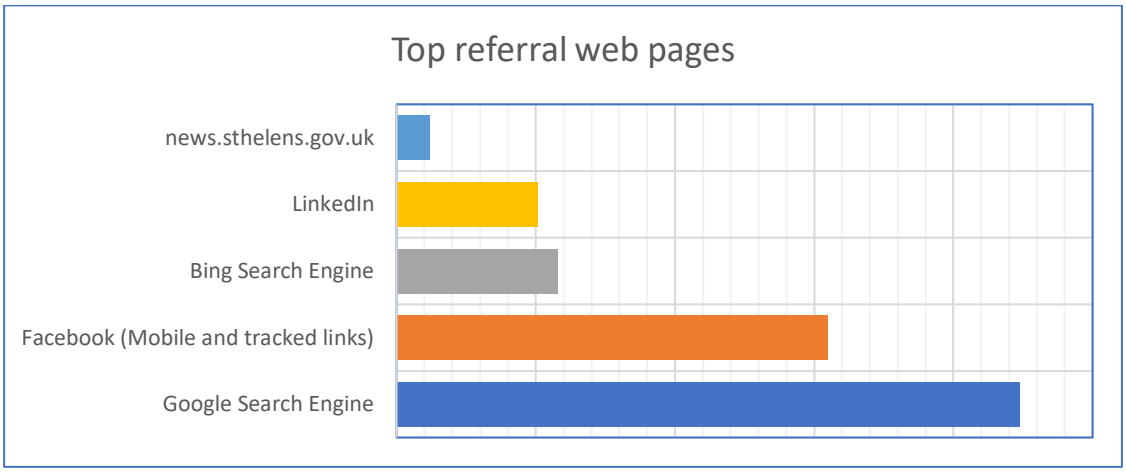
4.8 Of the top website visitor locations, St Helens accounted for 443 visits (21.8%) during the Masterplan Framework consultation.



4.9 Of the pages on the website, '*Home'* was visited 1,041 times (51.2%), *'Our Plans'* was visited 585 times (28.8%) and *'Consultation'* was visited 184 times (9.1%) during the Masterplan Framework consultation.



4.10 The top channel for referrals to the project website was via Google Search Engine, which accounted for 224 referrals. The chart below details the top five referral channels to the project website during the Masterplan Framework consultation.



4.11 Separately, referrals from the Council's website accounted for 12 visits during the Masterplan Framework consultation.

4.12 Respondents with limited access to the internet were able to put their views forward by returning a paper copy of the feedback form, with FREEPOST address envelopes on offer at the community drop-in events.

4.13 The digital feedback form on the website mirrored the paper feedback forms used on the day of the exhibitions. The questions were designed to better understand sentiment towards the Masterplan Framework following the masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025, alongside opportunities to provide specific feedback on elements of the latest plans.

4.14 Throughout the masterplan process, consultation periods in April 2025 and November 2025 collectively captured 8,912 visits to the project website. Since the website went live, 12,740 visits have been captured in total.

Feedback from the Survey Questions

4.15 During the November Masterplan Framework consultation period, 22 feedback forms were received, alongside 12 emails, totalling 34 individual responses. This is a reduction of 192 from April 2025.

4.16 Of the feedback forms received, 15 were completed online (68.2%), while 7 were submitted via printed forms at the community drop-in events or returned via the FREEPOST address (31.8%).

4.17 57.1% of individuals who completed a feedback form during the Masterplan Framework consultation also took part in the Masterplan approaches consultation in April 2025.

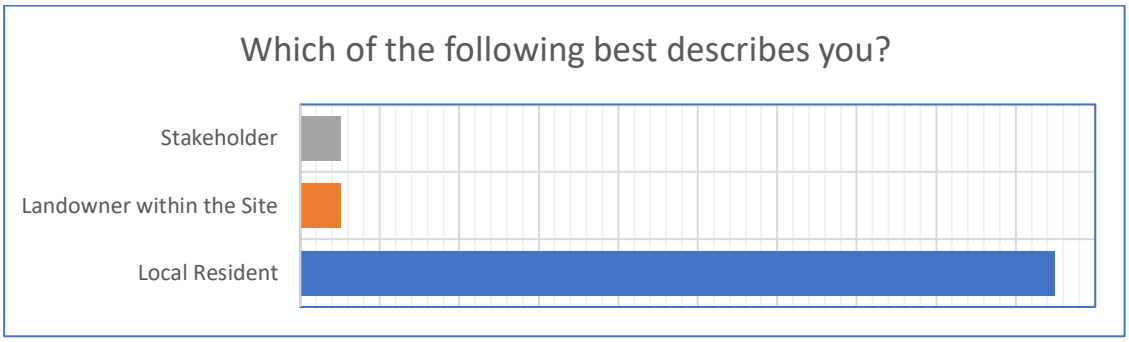
4.18 15 responses received during the Masterplan Framework reflected positive sentiment (44.1%), while 8 were neutral (23.5%) and 11 indicated negative sentiment (32.4%).

4.19 7 of the 12 email queries (58.3%) received by the project team during the consultation period were either from landowners or stakeholders.

Question 1 - *'Which of the following best describes you?'*

4.20 21 individuals (95.5%) responded to Question 1.

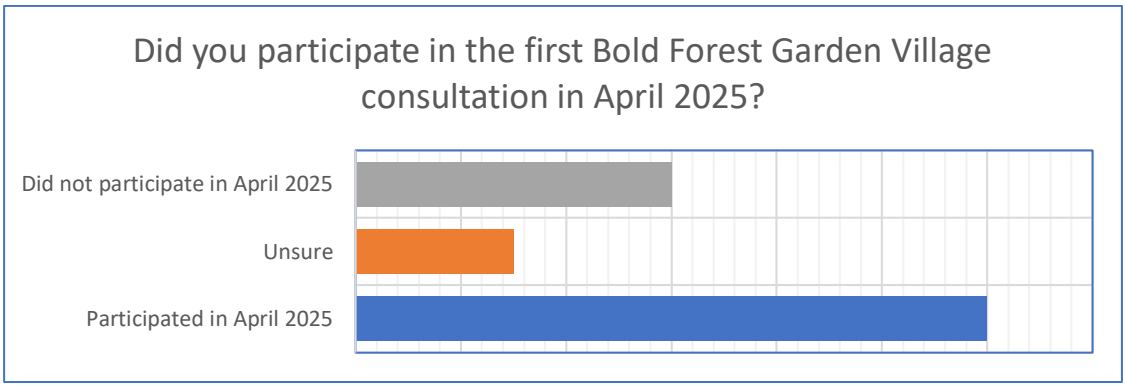
4.21 Of those who completed question 1, 19 identified as a 'Local resident' (90.5%), 1 as a 'Landowner within the site' (4.8%) and 1 as a Stakeholder (4.8%).



Question 2 - '*Did you participate in the first Bold Forest Garden Village consultation in April 2025?*'

4.22 21 individuals (95.5%) responded to Question 2.

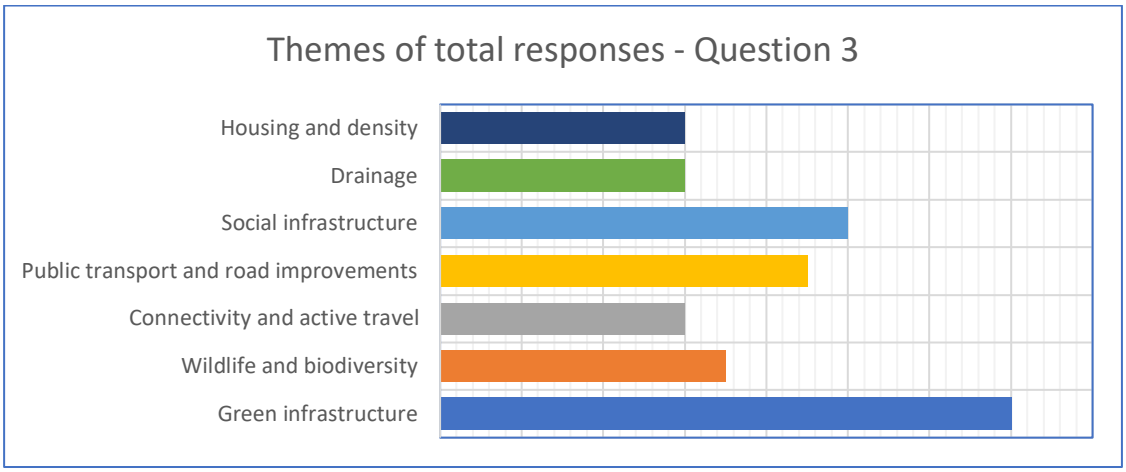
4.23 Of the total responses, 12 responded yes (57.1%) – they did participate in the first consultation in April 2025. 6 respondents did not (28.6%) and 3 were unsure (14.3%).



Question 3 - *'Which parts of the Masterplan Framework do you think work well?'*

4.24 17 individuals (77.3%) responded to Question 3.

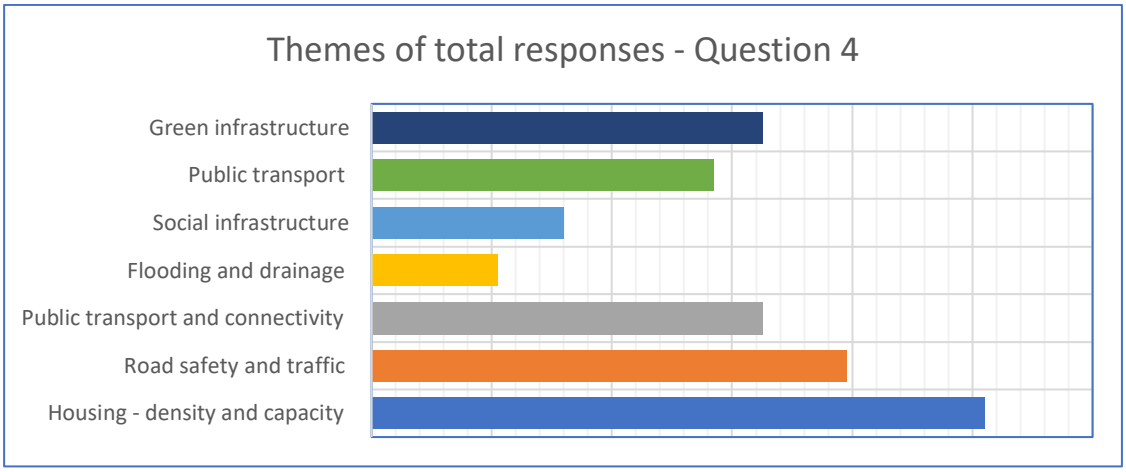
4.25 12 of these responses (70.6%) expressed positive sentiment towards the proposals, referring to the key role of green infrastructure and wildlife across the Site. Other responses refer to either social infrastructure, notably the inclusion of a healthcare, or better connectivity as positive factors.



Question 4 - *'Which parts of the Masterplan Framework do you feel could be improved?'*

4.26 19 individuals (86.4%) responded to Question 4.

4.27 4 of these responses (21.1%) expressed positive sentiment towards the proposals. 9 responses were analysed as negative (47.4%) and refer to the wider impact on surrounding communities including loss of greenspace, limited 'day to day' amenities and increased congestion and flooding.

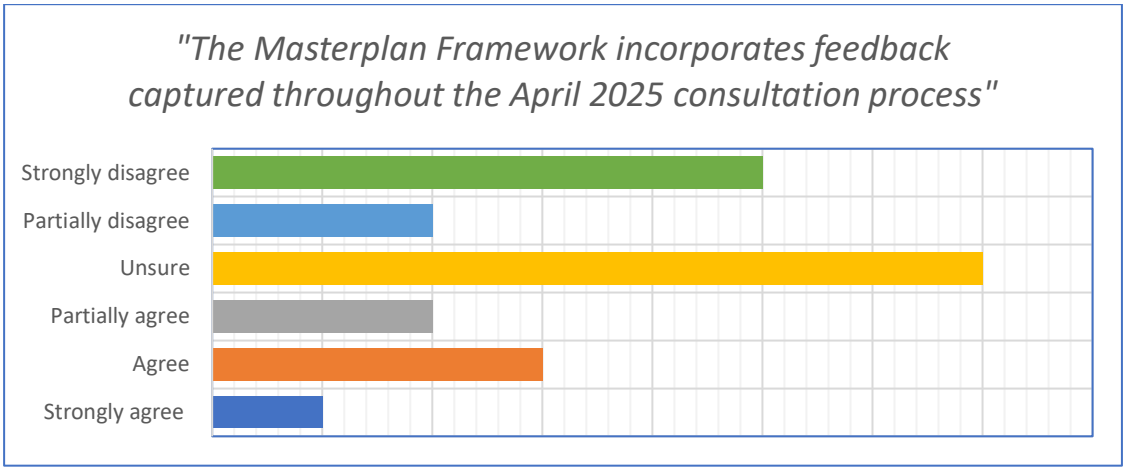


Question 5 - '*Do you agree with the following statement?*

"The Masterplan Framework incorporates feedback captured throughout the April 2025 consultation process."

4.28 Question 5 was a multiple-choice question and received 22 responses (100%).

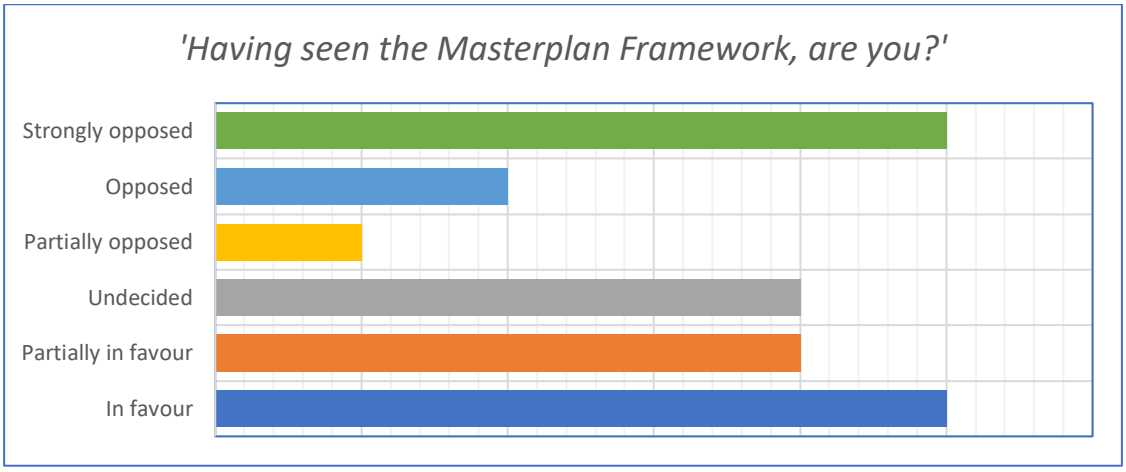
4.29 1 respondent strongly agreed (4.5%), 3 agreed (13.6%), 2 partially agreed (9.1%), 7 were unsure (31.8%), 2 partially disagreed (9.1%) and 5 strongly disagreed (22.7%).



Question 6 - *'Having seen the Masterplan Framework, are you?'*

4.30 Question 6 was a multiple-choice question and received 22 responses (100%).

4.31 5 respondents were in favour of the Masterplan Framework (22.7%), 4 partially in favour (18.2%), 4 undecided (18.2%), 1 partially opposed (4.5%), 2 opposed (9.1%) and 5 strongly opposed (22.7%).



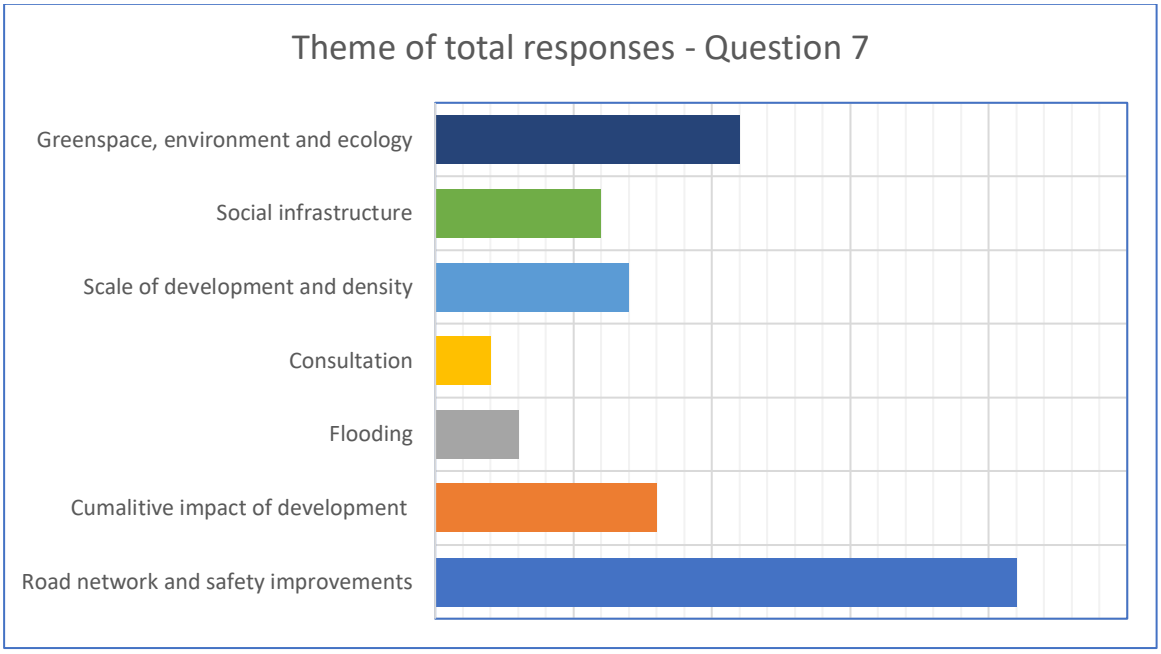
Question 7 - *'Do you have any further comments in relation to the Masterplan Framework?'*

4.32 19 individuals (86.36%) responded to question 7.

4.33 Across the responses for question 7, the cumulative impact of surrounding developments and the scale of Bold Forest Garden Village were analysed as

frequent concerns. In addition, frustrations towards the local road network, notably Gorsey Lane, Clay Lane and congestion at the M62, in addition to the loss of farmland, were analysed as concerns for respondents.

4.34 Question 7 was in the format of an open text box that enabled respondents to provide long-form answers. The themes highlighted within these responses are categorised below:



Key themes

4.35 An array of comments included below are an extension of themes raised throughout the Masterplan Framework consultation, as highlighted earlier in this report. These have been carefully categorised and summarised from all channels made available to the community, including the project website, printed feedback forms, email and social media.

4.36.1. **Green Spaces and Ecology**

Despite frustrations towards the loss of farmland, a large portion of the positive sentiment towards the Masterplan Framework is aimed at the key role green infrastructure plays across the Site. Despite this, there is a genuine appetite to go 'above and beyond' to maximise the value of all green areas - for residents, wildlife and commuters.

Sample verbatim comments:

"The incorporating of green spaces and not infringing too heavily on Clock Face Country Park or other natural sites in the local area seems to be ok - this is vitally important as the area is home to a wide variety of wildlife and walking routes for local residents"

"We welcome the inclusion of green infrastructure, and trees in particular, throughout the Masterplan Framework. We welcome the greenways connectivity throughout the site and links to the wider green infrastructure network beyond the site boundaries."

"Climate change adaptation, and specifically managing extreme summer temperatures is not given any consideration"

"A bigger focus on biodiversity, grass is pretty but it doesn't do much for the nature in the area. Hedges make a large impact on the local wildlife."

"Yes this is green belt land and fresh air, if this ever goes ahead pollution levels will go up, increased traffic noise etc. What's wrong with brown belt."

4.36.2. **Social Infrastructure and Community Hubs**

The inclusion of health care and education provision on-site has acknowledged feedback put forward by the community in April 2025 - but feel this has placed a greater reliance on the delivery of Community Hubs. Comparably, concerns about viability and the delivery of appropriate infrastructure was raised, and clarity on the process around demand and capacity modelling would add further reassurance. Residents feel community hubs should address the lack of amenities for surrounding residents, notably New Bold estate - within proximity to the proposed Local Centre.

Sample verbatim comments:

"The plan to offer a Health Centre is ESSENTIAL and is good to see reflected in the plan. The plan to offer a 2 form Primary School is ESSENTIAL and is good to see in the plans."

"there still seem little extra facilities being proposed for residents, with little information around the areas like the 'hubs', which tends to mean they'll never actually get developed."

"Increasing one of the local schools by a single form will only add 30 spaces....the plan is to build a significant number of 3 and 4 bedroom houses. Where are these children going to go to school?"

“I'd like to see further commitments from the council and the masterplan to addressing the infrastructure needs in the vicinity of the development. At the moment it seems to be a "housing development first, infrastructure improvement later" approach.”

“I look forward to seeing the development bring revenue to our town.”

“Hopefully improve issues of niggling concerns of schools, NHS providers”

“A lot more detail is required around the residential facility improvements, especially given that the building of this development will affect the quality of life for current residents for a long time.”

4.36.3 **Transport and Movement**

The inclusion of an integrated bus network and easy to navigate pedestrian routes were welcomed by respondents, but felt clarity on existing off-site road and safety improvements is required for the development to come forward suitably. Concerns were raised over litter, congestion and the impact of increased traffic on Gorsey Lane and Clay Lane - which connect local communities to Clock Face, Sutton, Burtonwood in Warrington and the M62. Parking on Reginald Road and the frequency of HGV’s were also concerns.

Sample verbatim comments:

“The commitment to active travel feasibility for both walking, cycling and bus transport. Public transport via bus is poor in this area and needs investment.”

“due to the street parking on Reginald Road and other junctions traffic on this road could become a significant bottleneck and would also not be linked to any proposed active travel networks.”

“Bus route provided to Warrington centre also connecting with bus route to St Helens. No bus service into Warrington at the moment.”

“There needs to be a focus on considering disabled people, yes it's good to have a lot of walking space but it needs to be safe, simple and easy for those who struggle.”

“I am concerned about the extra traffic on Gorsey Lane as I use it most days. Cyclists are at risk riding along there frequently heading towards Burtonwood as it is, often with no lights in the dark, there is no room for them.”

4.36.4 **Drainage**

Many of the drainage concerns raised throughout the Masterplan Framework consultation relate to flooding on specific road networks, notably Gorsey Lane to the South and Travers Entry and New Bold estate to the North. Residents wanted reassurance that the drainage strategy would alleviate current challenges. Negative sentiment was identified towards new developments relying on existing Victorian drainage networks, rather than modern infrastructure.

Sample verbatim comments:

"The plan for dealing with the flooding in the area. Keeping existing pond will sustain a good amount of natural wildlife."

"Gorsey Lane does not currently have capacity to become a heavily used road - it is already prone to flooding and regular closures. Increasing the volume of commuters in the local area will make this route completely impassable at rush hour."

*"This part of the development already has the worst drainage on the site, and the addition of a denser proportion of homes is not likely to improve this" [*In reference to housing towards New Bold Estate]

4.36.5.**Housing and Density**

Whilst the number of homes continues to feel overwhelming, positive sentiment towards the allocation of affordable housing for first time buyers and elderly living been captured, as well as the positive impact this will have on local businesses and community organisations.

Sample verbatim comments:

"I am not a fan of the style of "New build" housing estates. I oppose to large developments with houses boxed in as many as they can fit."

"The plans for more affordable homes seems to be a decent part of the plan"

"The plan to build some of the more dense housing at the New Bold Edge means that there will be a disproportionate number of new homes and demand on facilities at this end of the development, where there is already a lack of suitable facilities - bus routes etc."

"I understand there is a need to build new homes, but 3,000 homes is excessive for this area of St Helens. Building closer to Clock Face only with better roads,

access to the newly improved Lea Green station and less populated areas currently in terms of existing housing to block views of the green land seems more sensible to me"

"have just 2 or 3 smaller developments if you insist green field farmland has to be sacrificed - let the farm continue to exist in some form"

5. Response to Comments

5.1 This section provides responses from the Council on the key themes, questions and concerns raised by the community during the Masterplan Framework consultation period. It reflects the project team's commitment to listening to the local community and acknowledging the importance of their feedback in developing a final Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village.

5.2 The project team has reviewed all submissions, including written feedback, survey responses, and input received during stakeholder meetings and the public drop-in events.

5.3 The responses below outline how the Masterplan Framework has taken account of the issues raised, the rationale behind decisions made, and any resulting changes or clarifications that have been incorporated.

Topic raised	Project team's response
1. Green spaces and ecology	Bold Forest Garden Village will provide a range of on-site green infrastructure that responds to the Site's landscape while integrating existing features. This approach is consistent with the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Bold Forest Park AAP. To be granted planning permission, each plot that comes forward will be required to demonstrate it can achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on its own merit. Additionally, retention of and improving existing green assets will contribute towards BNG across the site, while minimising harm to wildlife and ecology. Opportunities for controlled public access within the Local Wildlife Site will be reviewed as this asset shall be retained.

	Comparably, new green spaces will maximise wildlife value and link habitats, creating wildlife corridors that connect, support and sustain existing and new populations.
2. **Social infrastructure -** wider benefits and integration	The Masterplan Framework proposes to form a key part of the wider St Helens community, connecting to Bold, Clock Face, Sutton, Bold Forest Park and more widely onto the town centre. Bold Forest Garden Village will integrate new and existing facilities including a new primary school and health provision - creating destinations that serve daily needs. Development will minimise the need to travel by car and support sustainable live-work lifestyles. Bold Forest Garden Village will support the Bold Forest Area Action Plan objectives, including enhanced connectivity between the urban area and the Forest Park. This will be delivered through new economic opportunities, linked open spaces and quality outdoor space for physical activities which will also provide mental health and wellbeing improvements. An Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS) will support the Masterplan Framework to identify the type of key infrastructure needed and when it should be delivered to unlock wider delivery. This considers where the full range of benefits of that infrastructure will be experienced, and how items could be funded as part of a coordinated delivery approach.

3. **Transport and movement -** wider improvements	The Masterplan Framework production process has included the identification of infrastructure needs, which captures new and improved routes for walking, wheeling and cycling, public transport enhancements and highway improvements. The Council are continuing engagement with transport providers and undertaking reviews of wider off-site transport infrastructure. This will identify a more refined requirement, which future development is expected to contribute to as it comes forward across the Site. Conversations with the community and key stakeholders have helped to identify these improvements, which include roads with current safety risks, active travel routes that connect the site to local facilities, as well as strategic locations linked with the M62 and bus network.
4. **Drainage -** water management and SuDS	As part of the project team's frequent engagement with United Utilities, regular opportunities to consult on the development of a Drainage Strategy were put in place, ensuring follow up actions were communicated with drainage consultants in a timely manner. An indicative SuDS network has since been developed as part of the Masterplan Framework process. This shows SuDS features within a network of catchment areas, in locations considered practical relative to the proposed development areas. The SuDS network illustrated at this stage remains conceptual and will be subject to more detailed drainage design on a plot-by-plot basis as development comes forward (e.g. as part of future planning applications).
5. **Housing –** density and capacity	Bold Forest Garden Village is allocated in the St Helens Borough Local Plan to provide residential development that supports the Council in meeting

	its housing targets. The Local Plan states an average of 486 new homes per annum should be delivered across the borough over the Local Plan period up to 2037. The Site identifies an indicative site capacity of 2,988 dwellings, of which a minimum of 510 dwellings should be delivered during the plan period. The Masterplan Framework considers how and where different development types might come forward. The approach to density seeks to balance the need to enable sustainable development through efficient use of land, creating character areas that respond to local context and considers deliverability and viability.
6. Communications: Masterplan Framework consultation	Following community feedback in April 2025, the leaflet distribution was extended by around 2.75km^2 to include Burtonwood (2,151 additional leaflets) and Burtonwood ward members were invited to a stakeholder preview event on Tuesday 11th November 2025. As part of the project teams conversations with Bold Parish Council, stronger links were established between the project website (www.boldforestgv.co.uk) and the Council's webpage (www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage). This comprised increased signposting to background documentation and policy relating to consultation. Detailed Framework Plans were also uploaded to the project website and included on the visual display banners, both print and online formats, to outline how critical issues, such as flooding and social infrastructure, are being addressed.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Social, on behalf of St Helens Borough Council, has carried out a detailed and extensive piece of engagement work with residents, businesses and stakeholders on the Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Garden Village.

6.2 In total, the webpage received 2,032 visits during the Masterplan Framework consultation which indicates a significant level of interest in the proposals.

6.3 Public exhibitions were held at two local, accessible venues, within proximity to the site. The consultation was well publicised, with leaflets distributed around 10.85 km^2, comprising 12,011 residents and businesses. In addition, the consultation received 2 pieces of local press coverage and gained significant interest on social media.

6.4 There has been steady engagement overall, with 34 total responses throughout the November consultation period. However, this is 192 less than April 2025 (226).

6.5 A correlation has been identified between the decline in total engagements and the public drop in events, which welcomed 96 attendees compared to 246 in April.

6.6 57.1% of respondents also took part in April 2025, when only 4% of all feedback was analysed as positive, compared to 42.1% in November 2025. This highlights a shift towards more favourable perceptions of Bold Forest Garden Village, with feedback being incorporated into the Masterplan Framework to ensure it is better aligned with residents' expectations.

6.7 Existing transport and highway challenges, alongside losing large portions of farmland remain a primary concern for residents. Latterly, this has resulted in constructive comments towards the key role green spaces will continue to play across the landscape and their integration with wider communities.

6.8 The delivery of social infrastructure is another priority for respondents, who feel it should address current challenges in the area in the same way it supports new communities as they develop. Respondents felt Community Hubs are integral to the Masterplan Framework, which raised initial doubts about their delivery, how they would meet local need and general viability.

6.9 While the demand for housing is generally acknowledged, residents expressed concern regarding the quantity of homes proposed. The cumulative impact of surrounding developments has been acknowledged within these responses.

6.10 All feedback received throughout the Masterplan Framework consultation has been evaluated by the project team, with key themes being carefully considered, prior to the finalised Masterplan Framework being submitted to St Helens Borough Council in Winter 2026.

7. Acknowledgements

About Social

7.1 Social has been commissioned by Avison Young as part of the masterplan team, to assist with designing and delivering a comprehensive community consultation and stakeholder engagement programme for the Bold Forest Garden Village Masterplan Framework.

7.2 Social has significant experience of delivering community and stakeholder engagement exercises. We make sure that communities have a real chance to participate in discussions around development proposals before planning applications are submitted.

7.3 Our experience includes work with both private and public sector bodies and has involved communicating around a variety of planning applications – including on healthcare, retail, infrastructure, energy, housing, and major mixed-use schemes.

7.4 Social always aims not just to match, but to exceed minimum consultation requirements.

8. Meeting the Requirements to Consult

8.1 This section outlines the planning policy context relating to consultation at both a national and local level.

8.2 Consideration of National Policy and Guidance is set out below.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

8.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (NPPF) (December 2024) acknowledges that early engagement has significant potential to improve the planning application process for all parties involved, in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness.

8.4 The government makes clear that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take advantage of the pre-application stage. Where they think it would be beneficial, applicants should be encouraged to engage with the local community before submitting their applications

(paragraph 41).

8.5 Furthermore, statutory planning consultees are also encouraged to engage in early pre-application discussions by adopting a proactive approach and providing advice in a timely manner. In doing so, this will help the developer to avoid unnecessary delays and costs (paragraph 42).

8.6 Planning Practice Guidance (27 March 2023) (PPG) provides further information on the process, and expectations on the consultation of planning applications. The consultation and pre-decision matters guidance of the PPG focuses on the requirements and good practice of the Local Planning Authority rather than that of the applicant.

8.7 The NPPF recognises that this approach can result in improved outcomes for the community (paragraph 40).

8.8 However, the PPG notes that the pre-application process is collaborative and involves the prospective applicant and other parties. This may include the LPA, statutory and non-statutory consultees, elected members and local people.

8.9 Paragraph ref. 010 Reference ID: 20-010-20150326 of the PPG states that although pre-application engagement with the community is not mandatory, it is encouraged where it will add value to the process and outcome.

8.10 The applicant has considered this guidance when structuring its consultation strategy, specifically by:

- Enabling the community to put forward ideas and discuss their opinions.
- Ensuring that the engagement strategy took place prior to the submission of the planning application.

The Localism Act

8.11 The aim of the Act is to increase public participation in the decision-making process and has an emphasis on the planning process. The Act under Chapter 4 61W states:

> *The person must publicise the proposed application in such manner as the person reasonably considers is likely to bring the proposed application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land.*

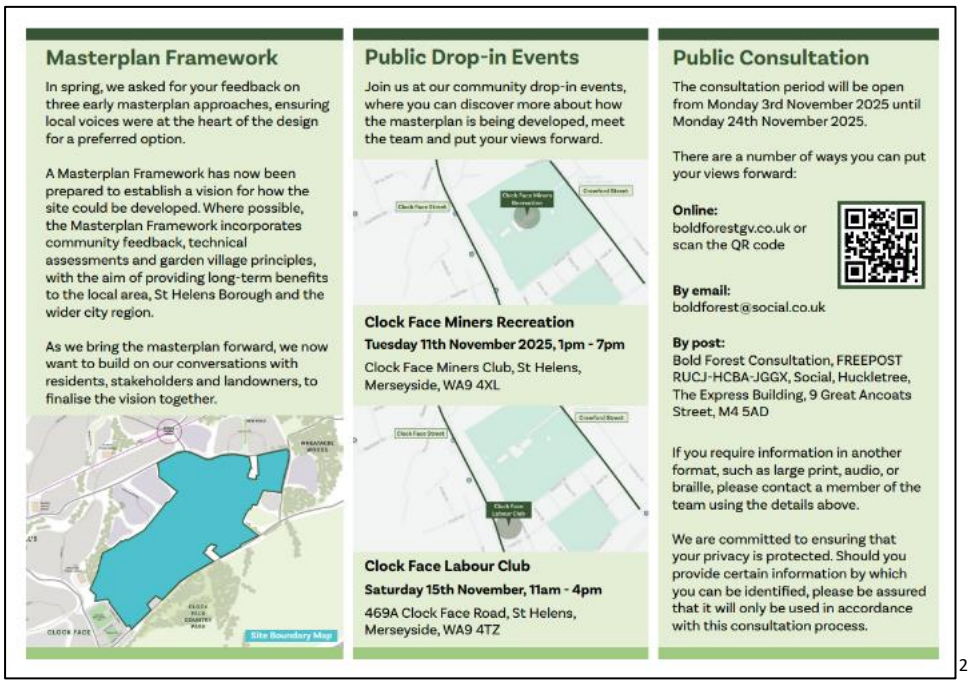
8.12 It goes on to indicate in 61X (duty to take account of responses to consultation) that the applicant must take into consideration responses made during the community consultation process.

8.13 Section 61X of the Act applies where a person has been required by s.61W(1) to carry out consultation on a proposed application for planning permission and proposes to go ahead with making an application for planning permission (whether or not in the same terms as the proposed application).

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Leaflet

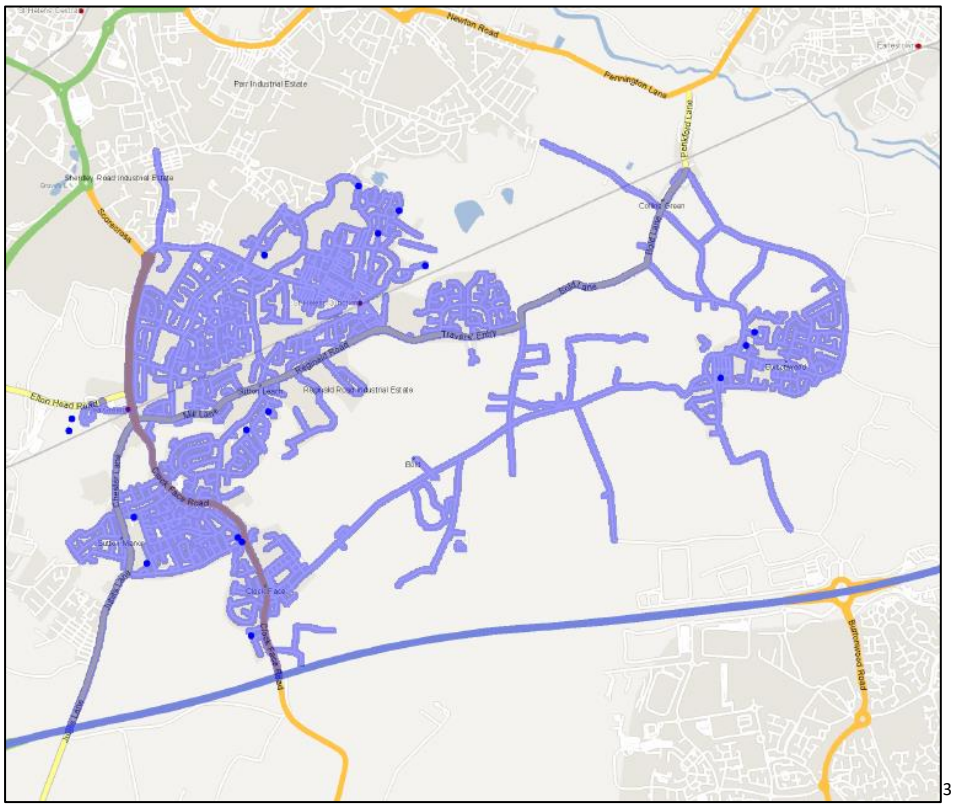
[1]



[2]

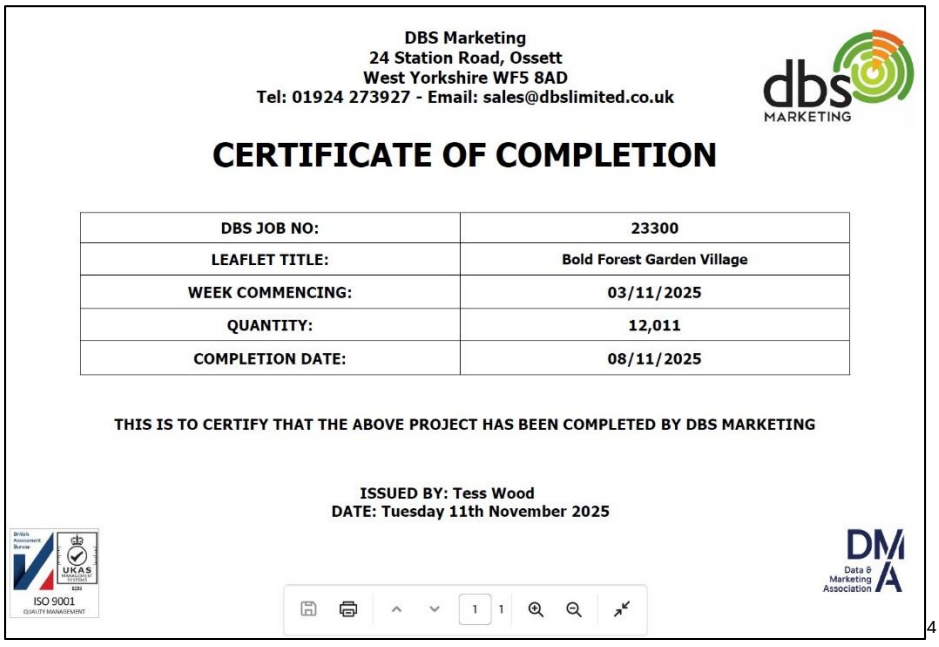
Appendix 2 – Leaflet distribution area

[1] Leaflet (front)
[2] Leaflet (back)



[3]

Appendix 3 – Certificate of completion



DBS Marketing
24 Station Road, Ossett
West Yorkshire WF5 8AD
Tel: 01924 273927 - Email: sales@dbslimited.co.uk

dbs MARKETING

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

DBS JOB NO:	23300
LEAFLET TITLE:	Bold Forest Garden Village
WEEK COMMENCING:	03/11/2025
QUANTITY:	12,011
COMPLETION DATE:	08/11/2025

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE PROJECT HAS BEEN COMPLETED BY DBS MARKETING

ISSUED BY: Tess Wood
DATE: Tuesday 11th November 2025

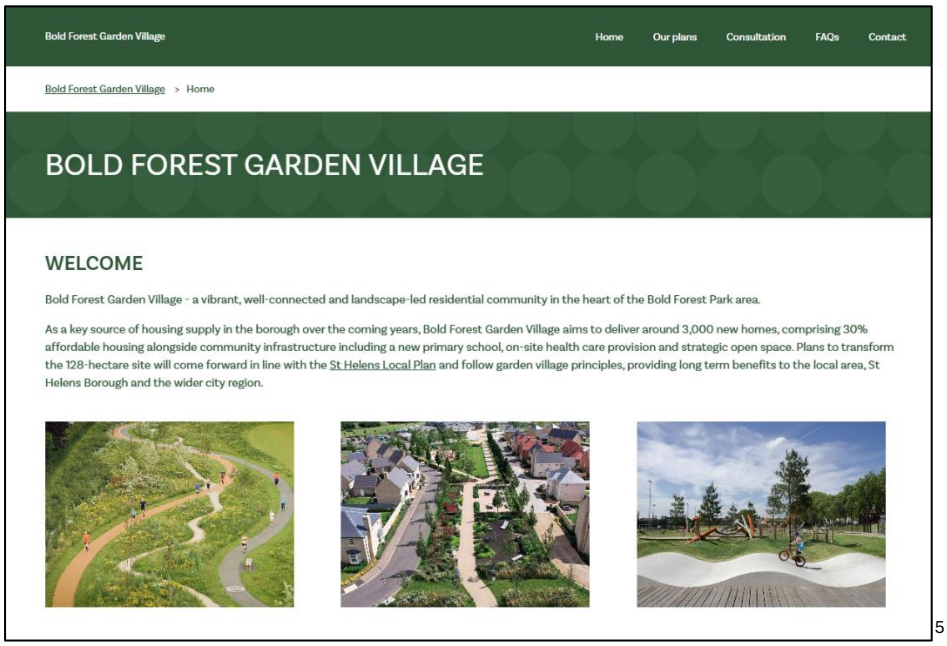
ISO 9001

DMA Data & Marketing Association

[4]

[3] Leaflet distribution area
[4] Certificate of completion

Appendix 4 – Bold Forest Garden Village website



[5]

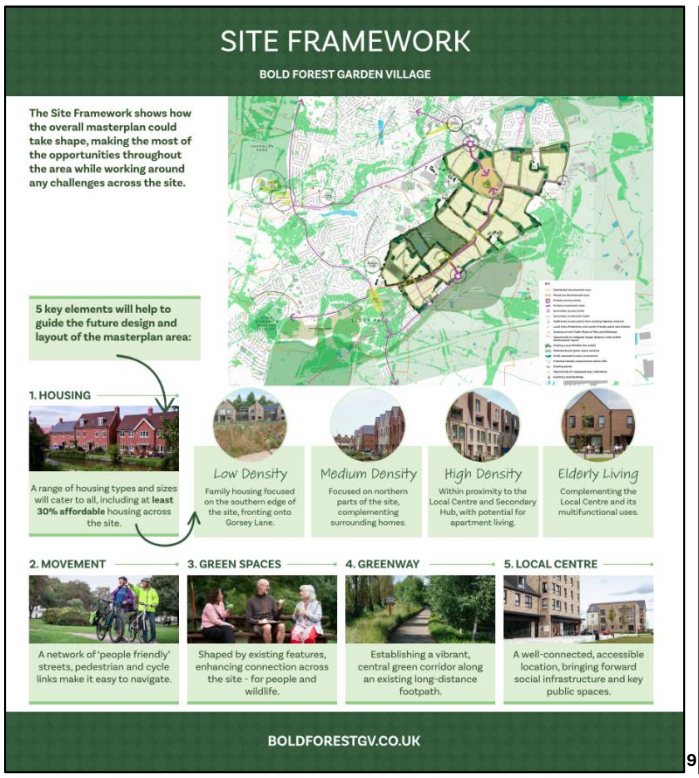
Appendix 5 – Digital community drop-in banners

[6]

[7]

[8]

[5] www.boldforestgv.co.uk homepage
[6] Welcome Banner
[7] Insights and Findings banner
[8] Movement banner



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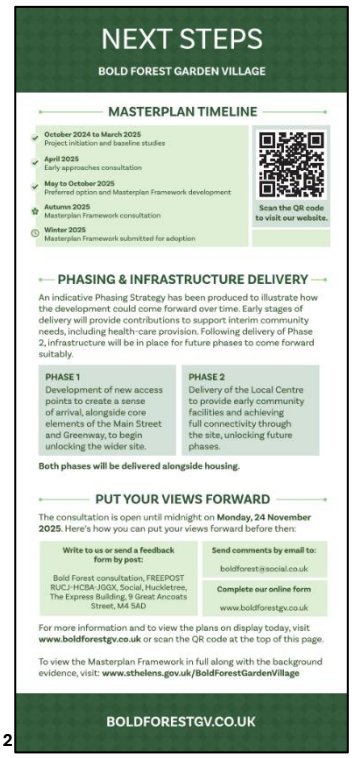
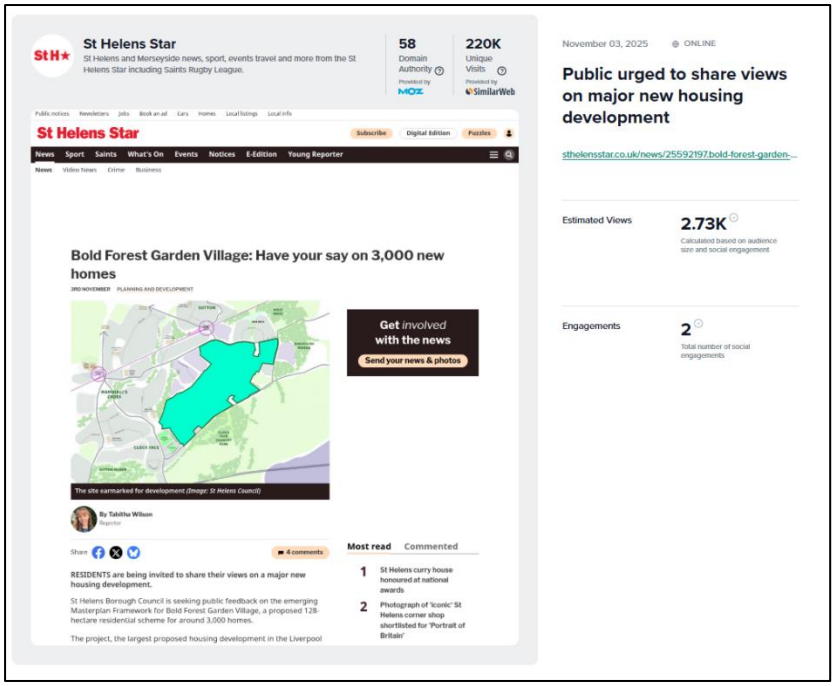


13

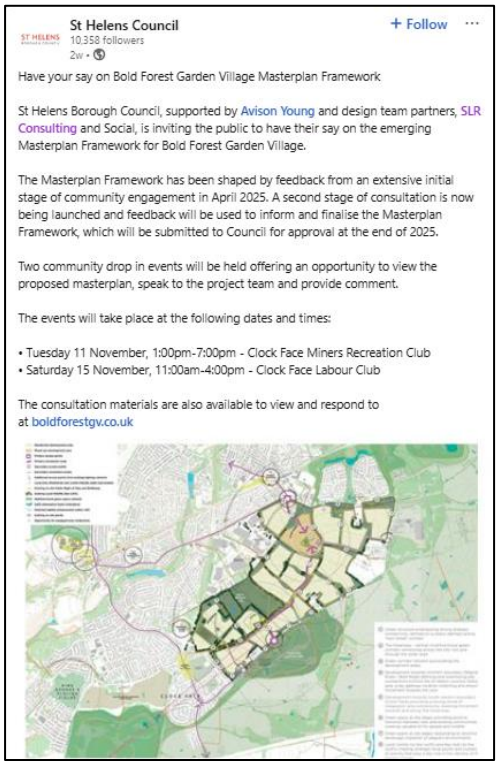
[9] Site Framework banner
[10] Green and Blue Infrastructure banner
[11] Community Hubs banner
[12] Wider Community Benefits banner
[13] Next Steps banner

Appendix 6 – Consultation press release

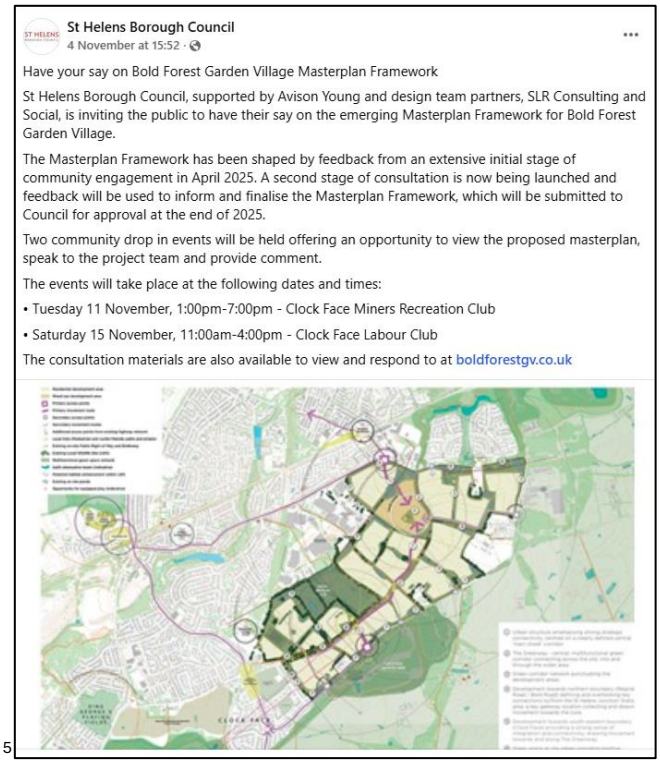


[14]

Appendix 7 – St Helens Borough Council social media



[15]



[16]

[14] Press release, St Helens Star
[15] LinkedIn post
[16] Facebook post

Appendix 8 – Community drop-in wayfinding

[17]

[18]

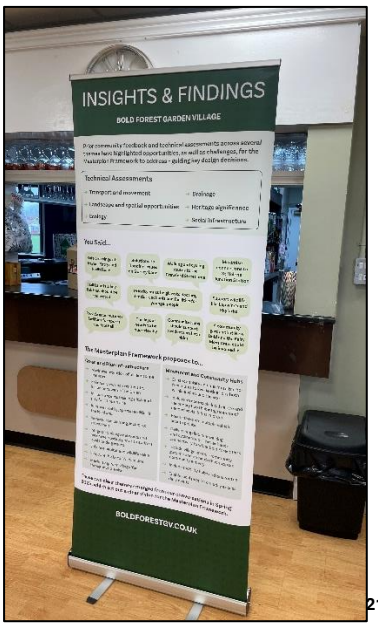
Appendix 9 – Event attendance

[19]

[20]

[17] Wayfinding Internal
[18] Wayfinding external
[19] Tally counter – 11th November 2025
[20] Tally counter - 15th November 2025

Appendix 10 – Printed community drop-in event banners



[21]

[22]

[23]

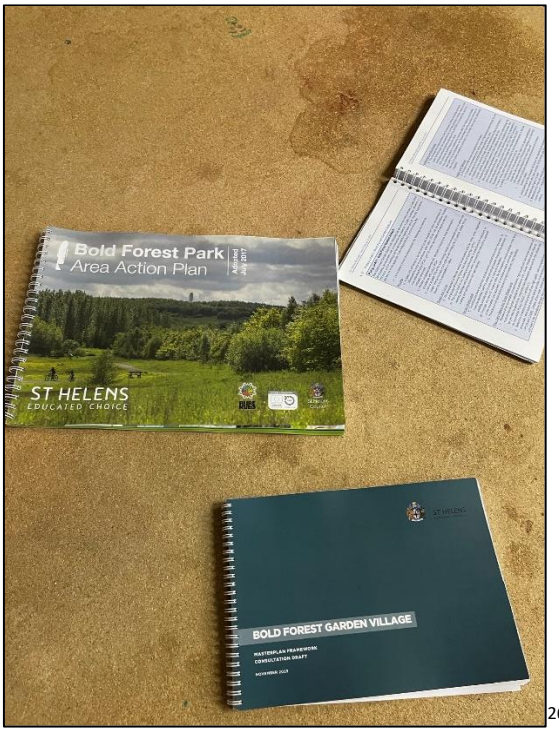
Appendix 11 – Framework Plans and *'Ideas table'*

[24]

[25]

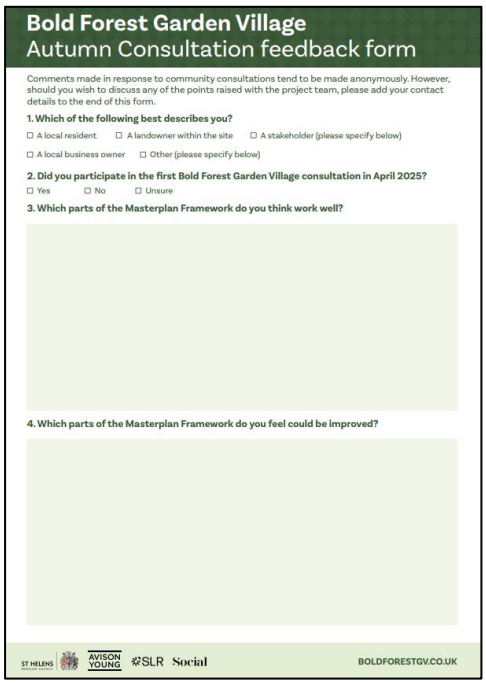
[21] Insights and Findings – printed banner
[22] Site Framework – printed banner
[23] Wider Community Benefits and Next Steps – printed banners
[24] Ideas table
[25] Printed Framework Plans

Appendix 12 – Area Action Plan and draft BFGV Masterplan Framework



[26]

Appendix 13 – Consultation feedback form


Bold Forest Garden Village
Autumn Consultation feedback form

Comments made in response to community consultations tend to be made anonymously. However, should you wish to discuss any of the points raised with the project team, please add your contact details to the end of this form.

1. Which of the following best describes you?
☐ A local resident ☐ A landowner within the site ☐ A stakeholder (please specify below)
☐ A local business owner ☐ Other (please specify below)

2. Did you participate in the first Bold Forest Garden Village consultation in April 2025?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

3. Which parts of the Masterplan Framework do you think work well?

4. Which parts of the Masterplan Framework do you feel could be improved?

BOLDFORESTGV.CO.UK
[27]

5. Do you agree with the following statement?
The Masterplan Framework incorporates feedback captured throughout the April 2025 consultation process.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Partially agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. Having seen the Masterplan Framework for Bold Forest Village Garden, are you:
☐ Strongly in favour ☐ In favour ☐ Partially in favour ☐ Undecided ☐ Partially opposed
☐ Opposed ☐ Strongly opposed

7. Do you have any further comments in relation to the Masterplan Framework?

Please provide your details below:
Name:
Email: Phone:
What would you like to discuss further?
☐ I confirm my consent to be contacted

Please hand this form to a member of the consultation team, or use our free post address:

Bold Forest consultation
FREEPOST RUCJ-HCBA-JGGX
Social
Huckletree, The Express Building,
9 Great Ancoats Street,
M4 5AD

You can also send comments by email to: boldforest@social.co.uk.

You can access relevant documentation on Bold Forest Garden Village by visiting: www.sthelens.gov.uk/BoldForestGardenVillage

We are committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected. Should you provide certain information by which you can be identified when completing this form, please be assured that it will only be used in accordance with this consultation process. For more information, visit: www.sthelens.gov.uk/privacy-policy

If you require a feedback form in another format, such as large print, audio, or braille, please contact a member of the team on the details above.

BOLDFORESTGV.CO.UK
[28]

[26] Bold Forest Area Action Plan booklet, BFGV Draft Masterplan Framework booklet
[27] Feedback Form (front)
[28] Feedback Form (back)