



Homes
England



Northern Arc Update

April 2020



This is the second in a series of quarterly newsletters from Homes England to provide an update on the progress of delivery of the Northern Arc, Burgess Hill.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

Homes England is adhering to Government guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19) and is supporting Government at this difficult time. Homes England is open for business and continuing to invest in its development pipeline, which will help to give the housing sector some certainty as it rebuilds its capacity.

What will the Northern Arc deliver?

The Northern Arc has been carefully designed to enable modern living within an environmentally sustainable community. In total, it will deliver up to 3,500 new homes (30% affordable), surrounded by approximately 80 hectares of green space. New community and leisure facilities, primary and secondary schools and employment opportunities will provide the vibrant focal points of day-to-day living.

Site update

Countryside Properties have begun development at Freeks Farm having temporarily paused from the end of March through to mid-April while they reviewed site activity in line with evolving Government guidance. The 460 new homes that they will build include a mix of apartments and homes from one to four bedrooms, including 30% affordable. Public open space and a new play area will also be delivered along with cycle and pedestrian routes connecting the site to the local area. The playground close to Freeks Lane is now closed to allow underground utility diversions to take place and the new access road into the site to be built. The new play area is expected to open this autumn and has been designed with input from students at Sheddingdean Primary School.

Development timeline

WINTER 2019/2020

Homes England received consent for the eastern bridge and link road
 Western link road planning application submitted
 Ground investigations began

SUMMER 2020

Construction of the eastern bridge and link road anticipated to begin
 Freeks Farm construction underway
 Construction of the western link road anticipated to begin

SPRING 2020

Countryside Properties began construction at Freeks Farm
 Anticipated date for determination of the western link road planning application

Virtual Session

- Please join us for the second of our quarterly drop-in sessions which will be held online on Tuesday 5th May, 6-7.30pm. This will be in the format of a series of live presentations with the opportunity for members of the public to ask questions. We are committed to keeping you informed and answering your questions about the progress of the Northern Arc during this time where face-to-face interaction is not possible.
- To access the drop-in session, please use this link: <https://bit.ly/Northern-Arc-5-May>. You'll be able to join in a web browser on a computer. If you plan to use a mobile phone or iPad, you will need to first download the Microsoft Teams app, which is free.
- You will be able to submit questions via the link in advance of or during the session. We will do our best to answer as many questions on the night as possible. If there are any questions we don't manage to answer during the live session, we will add them to our project FAQs - see the link at the bottom of the last page.
- There will be progress reports on key areas such as infrastructure, ecology, building work by Countryside Properties and future phases of the Northern Arc.
- We want to be accessible to all. If you do not have access to the internet or would like to see the content of the Virtual Drop-in Session in a different language or format, please email northernarc@aecom.com or call 07776 527643.

Connectivity



Sussex Way

The western arm (Sussex Way) will be widened to provide two lanes on the approach to the roundabout over a distance of approximately 40 metres. The northern arm (the A273) will also be widened to provide two lanes over a distance of approximately 25 metres.



York Road

The northern arm (Jane Murray Way) will be widened to provide two lanes on the approach over a distance of approximately 30 metres.



Jane Murray Way

The eastern arm will be widened on the approach to provide two lanes over a distance of 20 metres. A new traffic signal controlled pedestrian crossing will also be provided on Sussex Way to the east of the roundabout.



Coulstock Road

The northern arm (Jane Murray Way) will be widened on the approach to provide two lanes over approximately 35 metres.

We are committed to delivering a well-connected development and are working closely with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and Highways England to deliver a wide range of improvements which will benefit both existing and new residents of Burgess Hill. These include:

- Increasing the capacity of key junctions including three existing roundabouts on the A273 Jane Murray Way, at York Road, Coulstock Road and Sussex Way. Please see the images above.
- A spine road through the site which will provide a link road between the A2300 and the A272 Isaacs Lane. This will also relieve parts of the existing highway network in Burgess Hill by providing a more convenient route for some through traffic travelling between Isaacs Lane, the A2300 and Jane Murray Way.
- Contribution to the dualling of the A2300 being delivered by WSCC.
- A Public Transport Strategy, developed in consultation with WSCC and Metrobus, which will ultimately see buses connect the Northern Arc with key destinations in Burgess Hill via buses every 12 minutes, like the town centre, railway stations and key employment areas. Discussions are ongoing with other bus operators to further enhance this bus service.
- A three-tier network of cycling and walking routes throughout the Northern Arc, which will cater for a mix of ages and abilities.

MSDC and WSCC are co-ordinating a 'Places and Connectivity Programme' which will connect the development areas with other areas of Burgess Hill via safe cycling and walking routes, providing an accessible and reliable alternative to using the car. Shops and other community facilities will all be within 5-10 minutes walking time for residents, reducing the need for short car journeys and lowering congestion. There will be safe routes for walking and cycling to the new schools, electric car charging points, and easy links to public transport.

Find out more: <https://burgesshill.net/transport/sustainable-transport>

Environment

As well as making pleasant spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy, the network of green spaces throughout the Northern Arc will have the important positive impact of creating habitats for native British wildlife. The Northern Arc is required to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain across the scheme. Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that leaves nature in a better state after development than it was in before. All areas of ancient woodland on the site will be preserved. Areas have also been identified to create new hedgerows, woodland, ponds and wildflower meadows, and the ecological condition of the River Adur will be improved.

Ecology in Action at Freeks Farm



Before anything else happened at Freeks Farm, the first area on which new homes will be built, an ecologist was employed to survey the existing habitat. Detailed work was done to establish exactly which species were living there, and it was found that there was a rich and varied ecosystem on site. Natural England have reviewed the Northern Arc ecological mitigation strategy, which sets out how the impact of the development on wildlife will be minimised and key species will be protected.

There was a population of dormice discovered at the site – a European Protected Species. This small mammal has reddish brown fur and tiny ears. It is known for having a very long period of hibernation, building nests out of dry grasses and honeysuckle bark. Following the advice and guidance of Natural England, the Government's natural environment advisory body, construction work will be planned around protecting the populations of these animals as follows:

- Where dormouse habitat must be removed as part of the construction work, this can only be done under a Natural England licence with supervision by a licensed ecologist.
- Removal can only be done during specified times of year that will cause least disruption to the dormice.
- New planting will be provided to replace habitat removed and to provide additional habitat. The species planted will be those known to encourage and support dormice and allow them to continue to forage for food.
- New dormice nest boxes will be installed in the woodland surrounding the Northern Arc, to supplement the 50 that we installed in 2019.
- The success of these measures will be monitored.

Homes England Case Studies

It's not just the Northern Arc wildlife that's getting special consideration - Homes England has a proven track record of prioritising native flora and fauna. Previous projects have left a legacy of thriving ecosystems and natural spaces for people to enjoy.

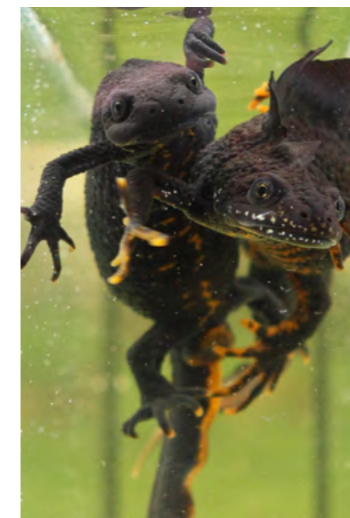
Bat Bridge at Sherford

A new bridge crossing the main road in this town near Plymouth was installed in 2016 with one unusual feature – it was for bats! With a local bat population of at least 14 different species at this development near Plymouth, the wooden 'bat bridge' was designed to provide them with roosting and breeding space, and also to shield them from light from the road. Not only a haven for bats, the bat bridge is planted on top with grass and native plants which has encouraged a thriving ecosystem to spring up.



Find out more: <https://sherford.org/news/sherford-bat-bridge-to-the-rescue/>

Washlands at the Avenue



The Avenue Coking Works in North East Derbyshire used to be one of the most polluted sites in Europe – but there was still a thriving ecosystem on the former colliery. Before Homes England started to clean up the area and begin building, an estimated 8,000 newts, 50 grass snakes and 250 water voles were moved to new homes or safely protected in their existing ones. The final design includes a newt reserve and a water vole retreat to provide habitat for them as water flows through their newly planted reedbed. Members of the public can now visit the Washlands to enjoy wildlife spotting in the reedbed, ponds and grassland in the valley of the River Rother.

Find out more: <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/avenue-washlands>

Wild Heath at Ringwood



St. Leonard's Hospital sits within areas of Dorset heathland – an important habitat for rare flora and fauna. When Homes England began to explore the possibility of building new homes on the hospital site, they worked closely with representatives from Natural England, the Dorset Wildlife Trust, Johns Associates (ecological consultants) and Alaska (specialists in safely relocating wildlife protected species to new homes) and as a result, 18 hectares of new heathland was created and given to Dorset Wildlife Trust. Local populations of sand lizards, nightjars, rare orchids and smooth snakes now have restored habitat in which to flourish.

Find out more: <https://dorsetlnp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Case-Study-St-Leonards1.pdf>



Artist sketch of Freeks Farm development

Get in touch

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Find out more about the Northern Arc on our FAQ page:
<https://burgesshill.net/faqs/planning-process/northern-arc/>

We want to be accessible to all. If you need this newsletter in a different format please contact us.