

Community Engagement Strategy

2025



Community Engagement Strategy

Brookleigh Development, Burgess Hill

1. Purpose of the Strategy

1.1 This Community Engagement Strategy (CES) outlines the approach to fostering active and meaningful engagement with the residents, stakeholders, and partners involved in the Brookleigh development in Burgess Hill. This strategy supports the goals set out in the **Homes England Strategic Plan**, the **Strategic Growth Programme** (SGP) for Burgess Hill, and the **Mid Sussex Sustainable Economy Strategy** (SES). The CES aims to place the community at the heart of the development process, ensuring Brookleigh evolves into a vibrant, inclusive, sustainable, integrated community with Burgess Hill.

1.2 The CES will be promoted to developer partners at Brookleigh to raise awareness of expectations and explore opportunities for collaborative delivery. The Strategy will be owned by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), in consultation with the **Mid Sussex Partnership's** (MSP), Community Development Sub-Group (CDG), and Homes England. It will establish a joint approach to engagement and community development at Brookleigh outlining the values and behaviours which underpin best practice and acknowledging the link to social value generation at Brookleigh. A Social Value Strategy is being developed separately by AECOM on behalf of Homes England. This will complement MSDC's Contracts and Tenders **Social Value and Sustainability Charter**.

2. Overview of Brookleigh Development

2.1 Brookleigh will deliver approximately 3,500 new homes to the north of Burgess Hill in Mid Sussex. At least 30% of all homes at Brookleigh will be affordable. The new homes will be built alongside new community facilities including, three new schools and two community centres. Leisure facilities will be provided at the Arc Centre for Outdoor Sport. This new sports facility

will form an outdoor extension to the Triangle Leisure Centre providing high quality sports pitches for the local community. Brookleigh will provide neighbourhood parks, allotments, and a network of publicly accessible green spaces. This network will create habitats for native British wildlife and Homes England are predicting a 23% biodiversity net gain across the site.



3. Brookleigh Key Development Partners

3.1 **Homes England** is the government's housing agency. They are responsible for increasing the number of homes that are built in England, including affordable homes and homes for market sale. Homes England have acquired the land at Brookleigh and are the master developer. They are commissioning developers to bring forward individual parcels of land and have directly appointed contractors to bring forward key infrastructure at the right time. Homes England has appointed **AECOM** as the lead consultant for this flagship project. AECOM's role includes providing multidisciplinary services to support the accelerated delivery of infrastructure and new housing.

3.2 **Mid Sussex District Council** plays a pivotal role in the development of Brookleigh. The Council has worked in partnership with Homes England to ensure the provision of essential infrastructure, including affordable housing, schools, public parks, and community facilities. They have secured funding through Section 106 contributions for the development and maintenance of these initiatives, and they are also responsible for allocating affordable housing to those in need. Homes England have transferred ownership of the Arc Centre for Outdoor Sport to MSDC, and when appropriate, will transfer ownership of various open spaces, including neighbourhood parks, allotments, pedestrian and cycle routes, along with two community centres to the Council upon completion. The Council will be responsible for the long-term management of these community facilities.

3.3 **West Sussex County Council (WSCC)**, in partnership with Homes England will be key partners for the provision of two primary schools and a secondary school which will help meet demand for school places and provide further choice for families living in the local area. WSCC are also key partners working in conjunction with Homes England for delivery of highways and sustainable transport infrastructure.

3.4 **NHS Sussex Integrated Care Boards (ICB)** is the organisation responsible for planning health services in Mid Sussex. The ICB is working with Homes England on delivery of GP provision at Brookleigh in collaboration with local GP practices.

3.5 The Council's **Community Development Group**, operating under the **Mid Sussex Partnership**, will play a crucial role in continuing to inform the community engagement strategy for Brookleigh as it evolves. As representatives of the community and voluntary sector, they serve as a vital communication bridge, conveying key messages to the public and ensuring that engagement and feedback from the community is integrated into the process. Their involvement is essential for assessing the impact of the development on current and future residents, local businesses, and community organisations, and for identifying and advocating for the social values important to the community. By working in collaboration with other partner organisations within the Mid Sussex Partnership, the Community

Development Group encourages partners to enhance residents' health and wellbeing, improve quality of life, and encourage community involvement. Their role is especially significant considering the broader Burgess Hill Growth Programme, ensuring that the development aligns with the strategic goals set by the partnership and meets the needs and expectations of the existing and future residents of Brookleigh and Burgess Hill.

3.6 Adopting a partnership approach to the community engagement strategy ensures that the strategy is shaped by a diverse range of perspectives, which is essential given the scale and impact of the development. With Homes England committing 10 years of funding for a Community Development Officer role employed by Mid Sussex District Council, there is a clear intention to build a long-term, sustainable community. This dedicated role will facilitate continuous dialogue between Homes England, developers and contractors, the Council, community partners, and residents, ensuring that the evolving needs and feedback of the community are addressed throughout the process.



4. Importance of Community Engagement

4.1 Community Engagement is fundamental to the success of the Brookleigh development. It ensures that the voices of the current and future residents, local businesses, and community organisations are heard. Active community involvement fosters a sense of ownership, belonging and trust which can create a strong foundation for social cohesion and community resilience. By engaging with stakeholders, the development can better align with local needs, values and aspirations. This inclusive and collaborative approach also enhances transparency, accountability and the long-term success of the Brookleigh Community.

30% of all homes at Brookleigh will be affordable housing

200,000 new trees, shrubs and plants, which will be 80% native species

Brookleigh will provide 3,500 new homes in an environmentally sustainable community in Mid Sussex

24,000m² of new employment land suitable for offices, research and industry

3 new schools

Extension to Burgess Hill Green Circle network and Bedelands nature reserve

Network of green spaces, 3 new neighbourhood centres, new roads, link roads, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure

Creation of new community and leisure facilities

Homes England committed to providing a 23% biodiversity net gain across the site

New roads, link roads, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure

A network of 'mobility corridors' to encourage active travel, developed in consultation with WSCC and Metrobus

20% of available parking spaces for flats and apartment blocks will have electric car charging points

5. Strategic Objectives

- **Inclusive Engagement:** Ensure all community members, including under-represented and vulnerable groups, have opportunities to participate in the engagement process by ensuring suitable outreach.
- **Transparency:** Maintain open, honest, and timely communication throughout all phases of development.
- **Community Cohesion:** Foster a sense of belonging and ownership among residents through shared spaces and community initiatives.
- **Sustainability and Economic Growth:** Align with and promote the Sustainable Economy Strategy to promote Burgess Hill as part of a vibrant District that is attractive, resilient and innovative that balances social well-being, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth.
- **Responsive Development:** Adapt plans and services where appropriate based on continuous community feedback to better meet residents' evolving needs.

6. Partnership Approach

6.1 A collaborative approach is essential to the success of Brookleigh. This strategy emphasises shared responsibility and continuous dialogue among key partners:

- **Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC):** Lead in planning and managing community infrastructure. MSDC also employs the Community Development Officer, funded by Homes England.
- **Homes England (HE):** Master developer delivering approximately 3,500 homes, infrastructure, and community facilities, with a 10-year funding commitment for the Community Development Officer role.
- **West Sussex County Council:** Lead in delivering key infrastructure, schools, sustainable transport and highways.
- **AECOM:** Lead consultant offering multidisciplinary services to ensure timely infrastructure and housing delivery.

- **Community Development Group (CDG) operating under the Mid Sussex Partnership Board:** Playing a crucial role in shaping engagement. Representatives of the community and voluntary sector will serve as a vital communication bridge, conveying key messages to the public and ensuring feedback from and to the community whilst representing each of their sectors.
- **Local District Councillors** representing wards in and around Brookleigh.

6.2 This partnership ensures collective ownership of the engagement process, encouraging shared accountability, and maximising social value.

7. Key Principles of Engagement

- **Inclusivity:** Engage diverse voices across demographics and socio-economic backgrounds. Ensure current and future residents, young and old, are represented in community engagement. Mid Sussex District Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all aspects of its work. The Council's Equality and Diversity policy identifies three key roles: as a **community leader**, as a **service provider**, and as an **employer**. This commitment is embedded in our ongoing work to ensure services reflect the needs of the community we serve.

As a community leader, the Council works with partners to tackle inequality and promote inclusion. As a service provider, we strive to ensure our services are tailored to individuals and are responsive to the diverse needs of our population. As an employer, we value workforce diversity and have policies to support staff in balancing work and home commitments. This commitment is underpinned by regular publication of equality data, including workforce statistics and equality impact assessments. These tools help ensure our services and policies are inclusive, responsive, and non-discriminatory. In the context of the Brookleigh development, the Council will draw upon this evidence base and institutional experience to guide inclusive community engagement that recognises and responds to the varied needs of residents. Further information can be found on our website

here.

- **Transparency:** Share decisions, plans, and progress clearly and regularly.
- **Responsiveness:** Actively listen and adjust development plans based on stakeholder input.
- **Sustainability:** Incorporate environmental and social sustainability at every stage as appropriate.
- **Social Value:** AECOM are producing a Social Value Strategy on behalf of Homes England to identify opportunities to deliver locally relevant social value opportunities which Homes England and AECOM can capture. Delivery will be through collaboration including identifying and accessing funding and delivery agents. Community Engagement work for Brookleigh will naturally intersect, as both initiatives aim to create lasting positive impact for the local community. Collaborative community engagement work in these areas can ensure that community voices are heard and thereby maximising the impact on the wellbeing of the communities.



8. Stakeholder Identification

This will be subject to ongoing review. Currently identified stakeholders include:

- Current and Future Residents of Brookleigh and Burgess Hill.
- Local Business Community and Business Association.
- Community and Voluntary Organisations.
- Open Space & Ecology Liaison Group (OSELG).
- Educational Institutions (Schools and Colleges).
- Government Authorities and Service Providers.
- Developers and Contractors.
- Housing Associations with customers living at Brookleigh development.
- MSDC, WSCC and relevant Town and Parish Councils and their elected representatives.
- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Boards.

9. Engagement Methods

- **Meetings and Workshops:** in-person and virtual meetings to update and gather feedback. These can be held with the CDG or as drop-in sessions for the public.
- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** feedback collection on for example, infrastructure, community needs, and service satisfaction.
- **Focus Groups:** Targeted sessions with families, youth, elderly, and businesses to address specific concerns which may arise. This could be done at groups already in existence by joining their meetings.
- **Social media and online platforms:** Real-time updates and digital feedback channels to ensure accessibility.
- **Website:** Update the [burgesshill.net](https://www.burgesshill.net) website as appropriate which includes the AECOM quarterly newsletter, latest plans, and general information on Brookleigh.
- **Community Events:** Local events and activities to encourage interaction and build community spirit as the development increases

in population.

- **Partnership Forums:** Community Forum as referred to in S106 document comprising Community Development Officer, a representative from each of The Owner, (i.e. Homes England) the appointed housebuilders, the appointed Registered Providers, the District Council and the County Council.
- **Residents Forums:** drop-in meetings where the public can ask questions and obtain information in relation to the development. This can include representatives of the District Council; the County Council; Homes England; relevant Developer; relevant Travel Plan Coordinator; and any other relevant stakeholders. This will enable the public to have an opportunity to have all their questions answered in one meeting.
- **Engagement with existing community groups including Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE)**– Community Development Officer to engage with existing groups to obtain feedback and share relevant information and updates.
- Engage when appropriate with **Business Associations**, relevant **local businesses**, elected **Councillors** including **Town** and **Parish Councils**.
- Mid Sussex District Council has a strong track record of targeted engagement and inclusive practice across its services, which will inform the approach to community engagement at Brookleigh. Examples include work through community grants, partnership support, Disabled Facilities Grants, housing support, and benefits advice—ensuring that services are responsive to residents facing multiple barriers.

The Council's Wellbeing service, funded by Public Health, provides a particularly strong example of how we identify and support adults at greater risk of poor health and social outcomes. This targeted approach helps ensure those who are often underrepresented in mainstream services are actively reached and supported. These groups include:

- o Carers
- o Young people leaving care
- o Clients where English is a second language

- o Men (underrepresented in some services)
- o Individuals with learning disabilities and autism
- o Individuals managing mental illness (via GP or clinician referral)
- o Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds
- o Individuals seeking asylum
- o Adults (as part of a family approach)
- o Any other adult groups identified by the Council
- o Residents living in the 20% most deprived wards in Mid Sussex

By building on the Council's experience through services such as Wellbeing, but also through wider partnership and core service delivery, community engagement at Brookleigh can be designed from the outset to promote equity of access, foster belonging, and ensure that the voices of all residents, especially those at greater risk of exclusion, are heard and reflected in the development process.





10. Communication Plan

Communication with local groups and the community, in relation to the Community Engagement Strategy, will be led by the Community Development Officer at MSDC. This is to differentiate between general or planning communications in relation to the Brookleigh Development as a whole, which is run by Homes England, AECOM and MSDC teams. Where the communication is for a wider audience or via the Brookleigh/Burgess Hill.net website or social media, the Community Development Officer will liaise with AECOM, Homes England and MSDC where most appropriate.

- **Information Dissemination:** Consistent updates via newsletters, emails, websites, and social media and local groups the Community Development Officer engages with.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Surveys, open forums, and suggestion boxes, to gather community input.
- **Reporting:** Transparent updates on progress and next steps fed through the CDG meetings up to the MSP Board.
- **Community Notice Boards:** When the development has progressed further, consider installing at key locations to provide updates and promote engagement opportunities.

11. Action Plan

- **Short-Term (0-2 Years):**
 - o Community Development Officer to arrange Community Forum as required by the S106 agreement in collaboration with Homes England.
 - o Community Development Officer to arrange Residents Forum bringing together residents, planners, developers and other stakeholder to discuss and share information about Brookleigh.
 - o Arrange introductory community engagement events and/or Community Development Officer to attend events arranged by developers for the community.
 - o Ensure Brookleigh/Burgess Hill.net and social media channels are kept up to date.
 - o Arrange workshops with CDG as necessary to discuss themes or future projects.
 - o Arrange an event at the Bedelands Nature Reserve.
 - o Arrange joint events with Burgess Hill Town Council and other local groups to engage with residents whilst delivering activities.
 - o Engage with impacted Parish Councils and ward members.
 - o Promote and foster openness and transparency between stakeholders and the public.
 - o Work in collaboration with local groups to encourage engagement between Brookleigh residents and the wider community of Burgess Hill.
 - o Engage with local Business Association.
 - o Update and refresh the CES as appropriate to ensure relevancy.
 - o Community Development Officer to liaise with Travel Plan Co-ordinators.
 - o Community Development Officer to attend Developer community engagement events.
 - o Engage with residents on proposed Public Art Strategy for Development at appropriate time.
- **Medium-Term (3-5 Years):**
 - o Promote and foster openness and transparency between

- o stakeholders and the public.
- o Work in collaboration with local groups to encourage engagement between Brookleigh residents and the wider community of Burgess Hill.
- o Partner with local organisations to co-deliver community programmes and services.
- o Update and refresh the CES as appropriate to ensure relevancy.
- o Community Development Officer to liaise with Planning and Sustainable Economy in relation to their negotiations with potential end-users for the two community facilities at Brookleigh.
- **Long-Term (5-10 Years):**
 - o Evaluate the effectiveness of community initiatives and adapt as needed.
 - o Encourage and facilitate the community to set up community groups as they desire ensuring diverse residential representation as appropriate.
 - o Support residents and local businesses through collaborative initiatives.
 - o Update and refresh the CES as appropriate to ensure relevancy.



12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Success Metrics**
 - o Participation rates in engagement activities.
 - o Resident satisfaction surveys.
 - o Number of community-led initiatives launched.
 - o Benchmarking where possible and appropriate.
- **Review Process**
 - o Annual reviews of engagement outcomes and Engagement Strategy with adjustments as needed.
- **Reporting**
 - o Transparent sharing of progress and adaptations with CDG and all stakeholders.

13. Conclusion

13.1 The Brookleigh Community Engagement Strategy is founded on collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity. By working together, Mid Sussex District Council, Homes England, AECOM, and the Community Development Group will ensure that Brookleigh evolves into a vibrant, sustainable, and cohesive community. Through continuous engagement and shared responsibility, Brookleigh will serve as a model for integrated community living, enhancing the wellbeing of current and future residents.

13.2 A collaborative approach between the CDG and MSDC is vital for effective community engagement at Brookleigh. This collaborative working ensures that the voices of future residents and the wider community are heard and can be incorporated into decision making. By working together we can align resources, share expertise to foster a sense of belonging and social cohesion. The collaboration will help to support community led initiatives which will ultimately enhance the overall quality of life for Brookleigh residents thus contributing to the long-term success of the development.

Contact the Community Development Officer, Marie McNabb, on brookleigh.community@midsussex.gov.uk if you have any questions on this strategy.

Reference Documents

- o Homes England Strategic Plan
- o Mid Sussex Strategic Growth Programme (SGP) for Burgess Hill
- o Mid Sussex Sustainable Economy Strategy
- o Homes England Social Value Strategy
- o Mid Sussex Social Value and Sustainability Charter

Next Steps

- o Launch the CES with developer partners
- o Begin implementation of engagement activities
- o Establish monitoring frameworks