

# SOHAM EASTERN GATEWAY

## March 2018 | Public Consultation Report 1 Survey, Pop-ups and Walk & Talks findings

Soundings, community engagement consultants appointed by the developer This Land Ltd, have been conducting the public engagement and consultation for the evolving masterplan for the Soham Eastern Gateway.

This is the first Consultation Report outlining the consultation events held, and the feedback gathered so far from Soham residents in February–March 2018.

This report is currently informing the architects Pegasus as they are working on developing concept designs. The concept designs that will be informed by this and upcoming consultation events will then be shared with the public at a public exhibition. There will be many opportunities for Soham residents to take part in the consultation, we will keep you updated.

### Summary of events and feedback

#### Events held to date:

Pop up day 1 17/02/2018

Pop up day 2 22/02/2018

Walk & Talk 1 10/03/2018

Walk & Talk 2 21/03/2018

#### Survey responses collected:

Total: 106

(Offline 40, Online 66)

#### Information on the consultation is available at:

[www.sohameasterngateway.com](http://www.sohameasterngateway.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/sohameasterngateway>

020 7729 1705



# SOHAM EASTERN GATEWAY

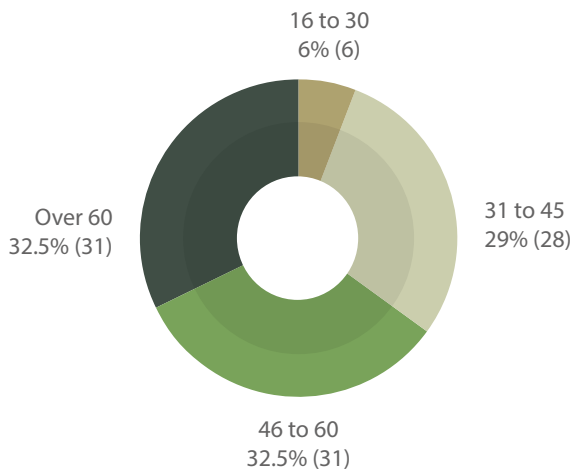
## Survey responses - summary of findings

We conducted our survey over a one month period between February and March 2018. Survey cards were handed out at our pop-up events, the online survey was publicised on our website, on our Facebook page and sent via e-mail to residents that had signed up to receive updates.

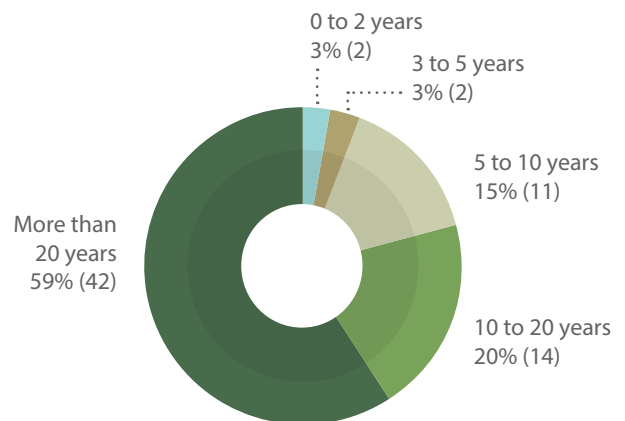
The closed-ended questions (yes/no) are presented in pie charts. We did qualitative data analysis of the open-ended questions (eg. what would you like to see here), categorising them into detailed themes. All themes that were raised by more than one survey respondent are shown.

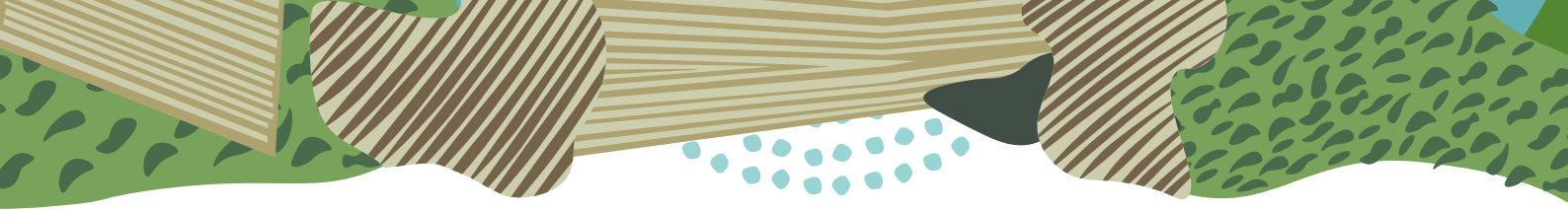
All the analysed data can be seen on the following pages.

Age of survey respondents



How long have you lived in Soham?



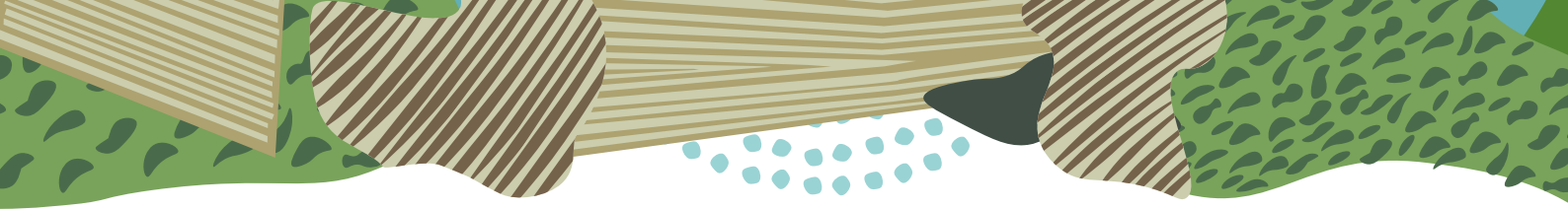


### What do you like most about Soham?



### What do you like least about Soham? Do you think there is something missing in Soham?

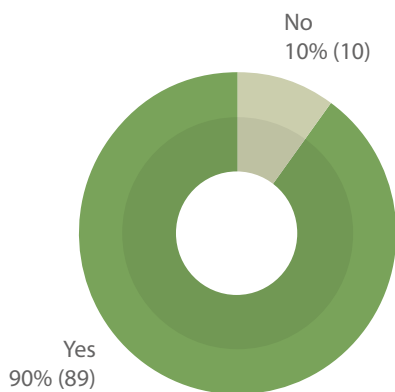




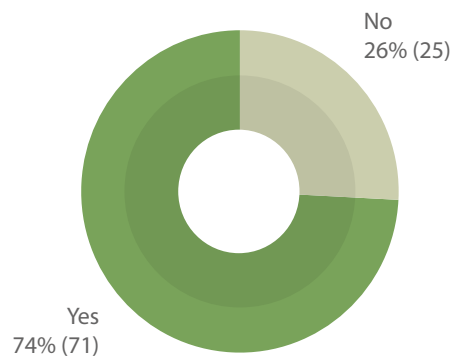
### How would you describe Soham in three words?

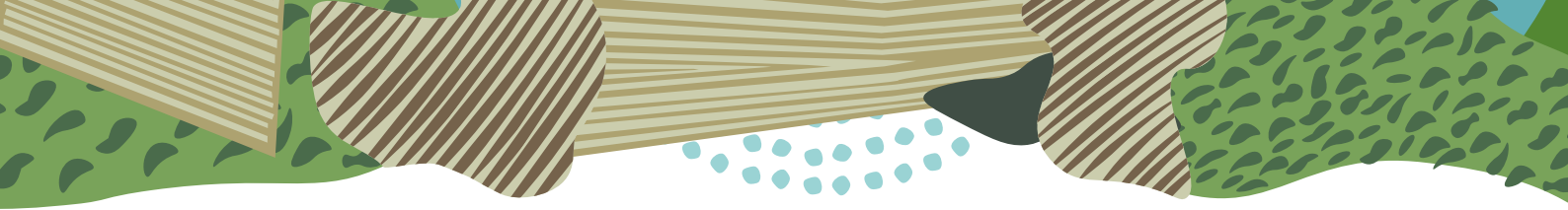


### Have you heard about the Soham Eastern Gateway before?



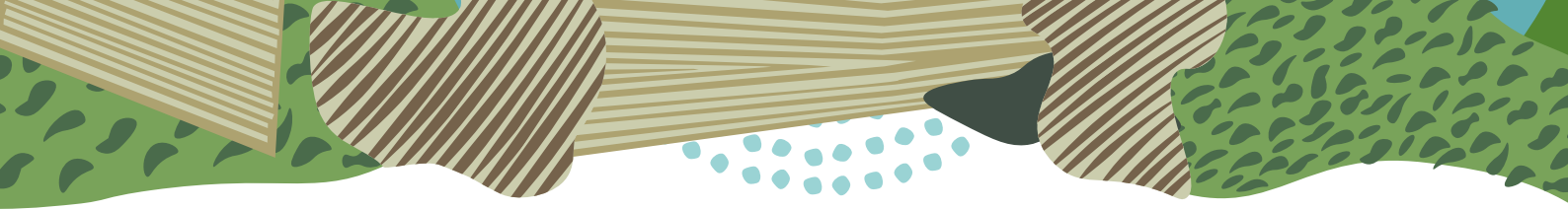
### If yes, are you aware that a previously submitted planning application was withdrawn in November 2017?





## What would you like to see in the Soham Eastern Gateway development?

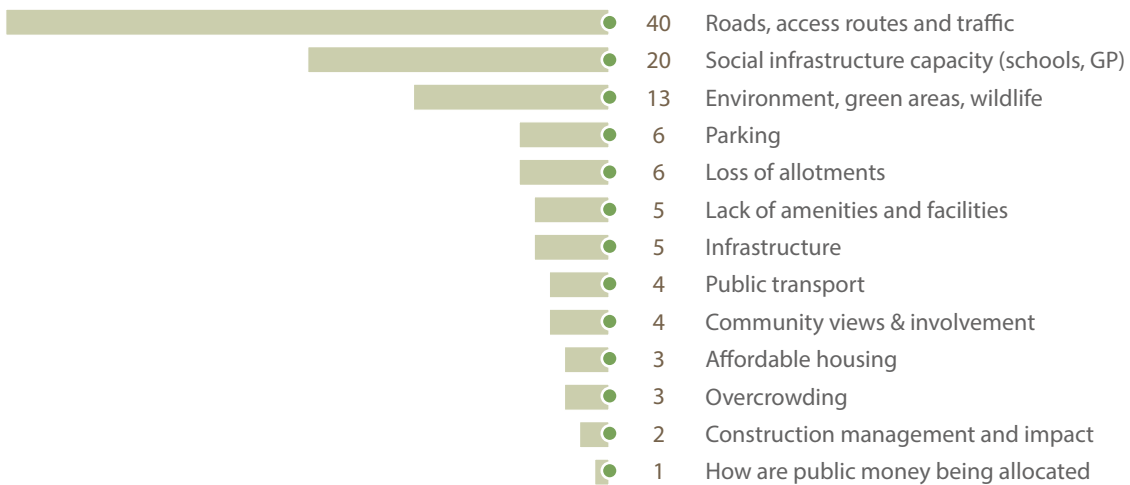




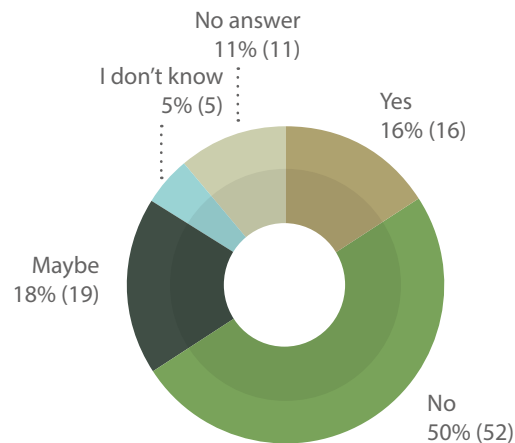
### What would you like to know about the development?



### Are there any concerns or issues you feel should be prioritised in the consultation?



### Do you think the development will benefit the local area?



# SOHAM EASTERN GATEWAY

## Walk & talks - summary of findings

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Two walk and talk consultation events were held on 10th March 2018. The events were publicised on our website, Facebook pages and mail invitations were sent via e-mail to residents that had signed up to receive updates.

Attending residents walked around the site area with Soundings and the developer This Land, discussed and mapped different issues and concerns. The walks were concluded with a discussion held at the function room of the Fountain.

Each attendee was given a map sheet to write down comments and locate issues. In addition, Soundings were taking notes from the walks and discussions. All the maps and comments were summarised and can be seen on the following pages.

### **Project team attended:**

This Land, Soundings

### **Saturday 10th March | 10:00am – 11:45am**

**Walk & Talk 1:** Brewhouse Lane and surrounding streets, Soham Eastern Gateway site

### **Saturday 10th March | 11:45am – 1:30pm**

**Walk & Talk 2:** Pratt Street and surrounding streets, Weatheralls Primary School, Soham Eastern Gateway site



# Walk & talks - summary of findings



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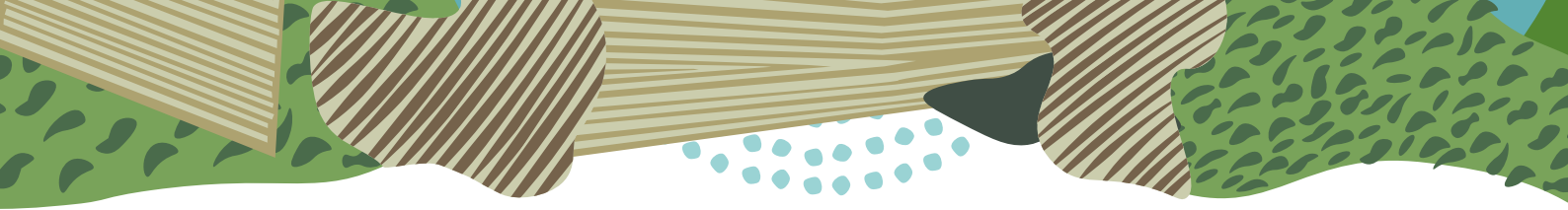
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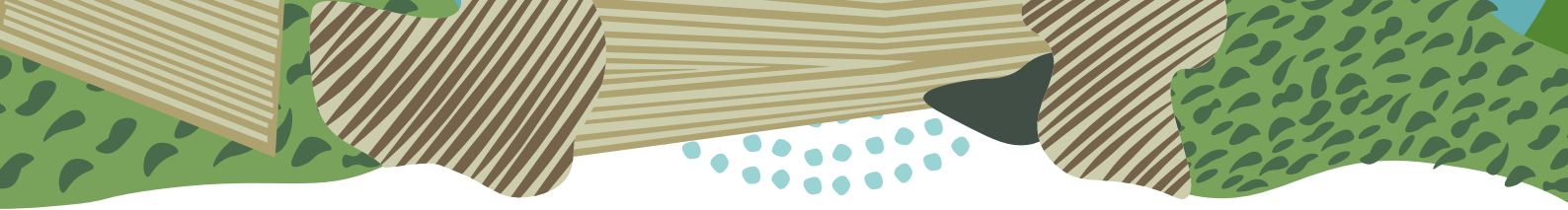
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- 1 Water drainage. Natural underground spring. Often big puddle here during winter. Pond possibly home to great crested newts. Good place for a lake where natural spring rises / or for a conservation area, wetlands.
- 2 Concerns about building new houses close to the Common's boundary. A comprehensive programme of hedge / tree planting to screen development from common and protect flora / fauna, from air pollution as well. No new access points onto Qua Fen Common which would put it under pressure.
- 3 View of St Andrews Church from here
- 4 Possible locations for allotments
- 5 More natural green spaces around the site including for dog walking, 24% of households own a dog, potentially 140 dogs and dog walkers. There is currently no other places for dog walking in the area, therefore putting pressure on commons.
- 6 Ancient (protected) hedgerows need to be protected – root structures of trees need to be preserved in order to preserve wildlife.
- 7 Allotments are very precious to the holders – need to be within walking distance and on good well-drained land. They have put lots of money and effort into it. What will happen to surface flood water at allotment site?
- 8 Potential for parking for high street shoppers within development here, or somewhere else?
- 9 Poor junction, too busy and dangerous. Use £6.5m towards roundabout on this high risk / fatality black spot.
- 10 Use Scotsdales for access road.
- 11 People don't use GP parking, they park on Brehouse Lane when visiting GP.
- 12 Drainage ditches / watercourses – wildlife implications if the area is drained.
- 13 Put green area to connect commons. Wildlife corridors for animals such as deer and fox.
- 14 Water drainage. Wildlife.
- 15 Junction unsuitable for school traffic at peak times. Some kind of traffic control needed maybe. Junction can work decently with proper operation.
- 16 Conservation area on Churchgate Street.
- 17 Blind corner / pinch point into a road with access to the high street, narrow and right-angled, restricted view.
- 18 Not good accessibility from Brehouse Lane, potentially 1100 cars, too much. Issues with access from Brehouse Lane, may need to restrict access.
- 19 Blind corner / pinch point, right angle access.
- 20 People dropping kids off school as none near the school, so parents park up and walk from the back entrance.
- 21 Protected buildings.
- 22 New house on Brehouse corner – does it access onto Paddock Road?
- 23 Kent Lane, single carriageway road, good potential pedestrian connection to development.
- 24 Road narrows, shops lorry parking outside shop.
- 25 Visual and environmental impact on houses along the edge.
- 26 Qua Fen Common must remain a grazing common as it has been for hundreds of years. Any drainage of ditches must be careful not to affect natural ponds on Qua Fen Common.
- 27 Weatheralls School playing field to be moved – what happens to stinky ditch footpath? Stinky ditch floods regularly along the back of the school.



- 28 Extra cars passing by Weatheralls not a good idea for safety reasons.
- 29 White Hart Lane, single carriageway, no entry from the high street, lorries got stuck between buildings here. White Hart Lane one way street in part, unsuitable for HGVs, 'no entry' signs at the top, but halfway down it is allowed to be two way – confusing! Shop knocked by 2 HGVs in 2 days despite the sign saying no HGVs.
- 30 Market Street, very narrow at centre near chip shop, pinch point. Coming onto Churchgate Street cannot see traffic coming to your right. Going down Market Street to Paddock Street, cannot see properly, left or right, when driving onto Paddock Street.
- 31 Paddock Street narrows, cars have to slow down or stop to get past each other, turning right at top of Paddock Street is hard.
- 32 Brewhouse Lane and Paddock Street congested at school times with traffic.
- 33 School parking – none on site – so parking on roads. Where will the access to the site be?
- 34 Cannot get along Pratt street now at school times with parents parking everywhere.
- 35 Footpath 65 and 66 to be kept open during construction. Footpath 52 to be considered open as much as possible during construction.
- 36 Brook Dam Lane is always full of parked cars, and getting out onto the High Street is a bad turn, long wait to turn right, and turning left is tight, you have to swing into the other side of road, or you hit the kerb or bollards, one is already broken.

# Walk & talks - summary of findings



Footpaths, public right of way

Ancient hedges

Protection buffer for the Commons

Natural spring, place for lake or wetland

Green protection for existing homes

Green corridor between commons, suitable for wildlife like deer, fox

Critical junctions, pinch points, right angle access points, restricted visibility

View towards St Andrews

Potential access from Scotsdale land



# Summary of comments from Walk&Talks

## 1. Wildlife, natural, rural environment

Residents need green areas, preserving existing wildlife and plants should be a priority.  
Places for a decent walk.  
A tree for every house planted on development somewhere.  
There should be space for nature to run through.  
Work with nature.  
There should be wild natural environments as part of development for children to explore nature in safe area. If playing fields are built for school, some of the wild nature on site should be kept.  
There are protected species in area to plan for.  
Ancient trees of more than 50 years in the area support many species of insects, birds etc.  
Ancient protected hedges on site.

## 2. Traffic and road congestion

Traffic will get worse with extra homes built, volume of traffic in and out of town is crazy busy, how will it cope with extra 1000 cars.

Traffic surveys need to be conducted on Brewhouse Lane in rush hours (7am–9am, 3:30pm–7pm), if not the entire day. Traffic surveys should be conducted in wider area as well and should take into consideration new bypass.

Noise and air pollution from additional vehicles. Most of these houses will have commuters and lots of cars which need to be provided for. The Ely bypass will impact Soham bypass – in a very bad way. Will Eastern Gateway be used by existing residents? Can this be useful for the High Street? Poor access to the A14 via A142, mostly commutes to Cambridge.

Poor access to Ely from A142, the A142 Soham bypass is inaccessible during commuting times, people use the high street for a safe access to the A142.

## 3. Parking

Allow enough parking in development for new residents (how much parking will be allocated per home?).  
No parking uptown or Ely currently.  
School provision of parking would be useful. Parents picking up children would use it and hopefully go to high street if a short walk through – remove the need to drive to high street, but not by making everything out of town.

## 4. Footways

Existing footways (with right of way) need to be retained, not be turned into creepy little alleyways between houses. They need to be kept open during construction.  
Soham Millenium Walks passing by site, heritage of local footway network is important.

## 5. Sewage

There are already problems due to overload in Soham. Old and not fit for purpose.  
Qua Fen pumping is overflowing.  
Drainage – left over from fenland drainage.  
Sewage should be in place before development begins.

## 6. Architectural typologies

Any bungalows? Lessen impact by having more bungalows.  
Make sure none of the buildings are taller than 3 stories because of the low-lying nature of all the surrounding land.  
Aesthetics less important – Soham isn't all that pretty, what we really need is practical, affordable and quality.

## 7. Allotments

Why not use Bishop land for allotments – do not include allotment in open space allowance. Allotments very precious to the holders – need to be within walking distance and on good well drained land. They have put lots of money and effort in it.  
There is Royal Charter on allotment land – is this being considered?  
If the allotments are to be moved, please make sure not placed on one of the many waterlogged places, people want to grow veggies, not rice.



## 8. Commons

More footpaths on Qua Fen common will increase pressure on flora / fauna on commons – more dog mess.

The commons should not be used as the 'lungs' for the development. They are already being spoilt by numerous dog walkers and the mess they make.

## 9. Schools

Schools are subscribed at capacity already, this needs planning, what will happen?

Maybe if you target first-time buyers and retired people, there would be less new children in town and less pressure on schools.

## 10. Scotsdales Land & East Fen Common junction

If access from Scotsdales is included in site, East Fen Common junction can be made more safe because junction has a lot of accidents and near misses.

## 11. GP surgery, doctors, dentists

If GP is moved it still needs really good access because they have 20,000 patients and many cars visiting the centre.

The surgery should be moved only after the new one is built. How will the access to GP be during move and construction?

Need much better infrastructure – doctors, and dentists.

Doctors, schools, dentists are overstretched already.

## 12. New jobs

Need some jobs developed for all these new residents.

## 13. Access for emergency vehicles?

## 14. View of St Andrews Church

You can see this landmark from Eastern Gateway site and bypass, don't build so they obstruct the view.

## 15. Affordable housing

Make sure at least 100 houses are affordable to

allow at least half to be managed by Thrift CLT so they are rented to genuine local people.

Affordable housing for local young people is needed, smaller starter homes.

There are a lot of very big family houses, but very few 1-bed cluster style homes affordable for young people – no more 'affordable' 4-bed homes.

## 16. Dogs and dog walkers

Public space in Soham is not geared towards dogs, but lots of people have them. Commons aren't really meant for dogs. A dog space/dog park would be a great sales point!

## 17. Sustainability

Building needs to be sustainable and as environmentally friendly as possible. Try to minimise disturbance. Disturbance of wildlife and the environment can take decades or centuries to repair.

## 18. High Street

There is no evidence that extra housing will bring life into the High Street. All the extra housing we have had resulted in the loss of the butchers, bakers, greengrocers, the hardware store and building society. Replacing with cheap and nasty takeaways. Also no police presence.

No one even goes to the High Street.

## 19. New development generally

New houses really only attract people working in Cambridge / Ely who cannot afford properties in that area.

Other developments have already been approved for Soham off Brook Street. Development approved and passed for Fordham Road too adding to further congestion.

Soham residents are sceptical because the town has had some terrible developments. Dobede way – parking + 10-year doubling leaser. Kingfisher Roads not finished and currently pressures on sewage. Cherry Tree sewage problems.

Why is Soham a dumping ground for housing, they pay council tax same authority as the other villages who are not facing overdevelopment.

Make sure the proper infrastructure is in place, Soham doesn't need to suffer anymore with problems occurring further along from new houses



and with the new other developments taking place.

## 20. Water and flooding

On all of the site the water table is no more than 2ft below the surface, even the ditches get filled quickly. Gardens will be waterlogged quickly. You'll have major problems with drainage constantly and you better have Anglian water's number on speed dial.

Water currently backing onto the allotments, where will the water go now? (Brewhouse Lane risk?) Farmers haven't grown anything in 12 years on flooded land.

## 21. Public space

Public spaces should be made in the development, accessible for Soham residents, rather than just private gardens. More trees should be on site. Benches for old people to sit down, integrated with public spaces, not in separate zones. Currently only one organised green space in Soham.

## 22. Public transport

Public transport is very poor. Train is needed. Soham-Cambridge bus is also very expensive and time-consuming.

## 23. Benefits and amenities for Soham residents

What extra amenities be provided for Soham as a result of the development, eg. swimming pool, 10 pin bowling alley, cinema...?  
New places or facilities in development usable for local people should be made near the town centre on walkable distance.  
What type of recreation use can be provided?

## 24. Construction period

Footpaths to be left open and accessible during construction.  
Minimal disruption to existing residents.

## 25. Community investments

Investing in existing evolving community projects, existing community groups.

## 26. Business units? Are there businesses that want units? What type?

## 27. This Land

You have other schemes – we would love to know these successes to build trust.

## 28. Archaeology

How deep are the ditches being dug? If they don't do it properly now they'll have to do additional work later on.

## 29. S106 and CIL money

How will this be spent, can it be spent on improvements for the town? Can it be allocated in consultation with people and town council locally? Town parking?

## 30. Consultation process ideas:

- collaboration with school – talking about development in geography class
- including young people - Go to groups and their meetings to hear young peoples' views, the children will have opinions, but more importantly their leaders. Some groups – guides, scouts, young farmers, viva.
- leave leaflets in doctor's surgery
- posters in Town Council notice boards
- posters in residents' shops
- local newspapers – Newsmarket journal and Ely standard
- make events that are more than just a meeting (like a walk or an activity)
- inform additionally short-notice on Facebook, people sometimes respond on the day when they are free
- local groups to get in touch with – Twilight Women, Young Farmers, PTE school group

## 31. Name the development something we can say. No Dobedes!

## 32. Agricultural land? For post-Brexit, 50% of our food is imported.