

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

A short read about how the council asked us about the big plan for our fields. Save Our Fields, September 2026.

In 2026 the council asked people what they thought about a big plan for our area. The plan is called the Local Plan. It says where new homes and other buildings could go. It could mean **1,300 homes** and a big **data centre** near our fields.

A consultation is when the council asks people what they think. This one ran from **31 July to 25 September 2026**. It was our last chance to have a say before the plan goes to a **Government Inspector**. An Inspector is a person who checks whether a plan is good enough.

This is what we found about *how* the council ran the consultation. Some of it was good. Some was bad. Some was ugly. We start with the good, because a fair report says what went right.

THE GOOD

The council did some things well. We will say so first.

- **They gave us plenty of time.** The consultation lasted **8 weeks**. The Government said it must last at least **6 weeks**. The council's own rulebook says 6 weeks is normal. So they gave us more.
- **Their papers work with reading machines.** Some people cannot see, so they use a computer voice to read for them. The council's papers are set up so those voices can read them. That is good, and it is rare.
- **They told people it was happening.** They put a **notice in the paper**. They sent out a **press release**. Both went out on the first day.

Said fairly: we wanted to say these things. A good report should tell you the good bits too. But there were also problems, and they matter.



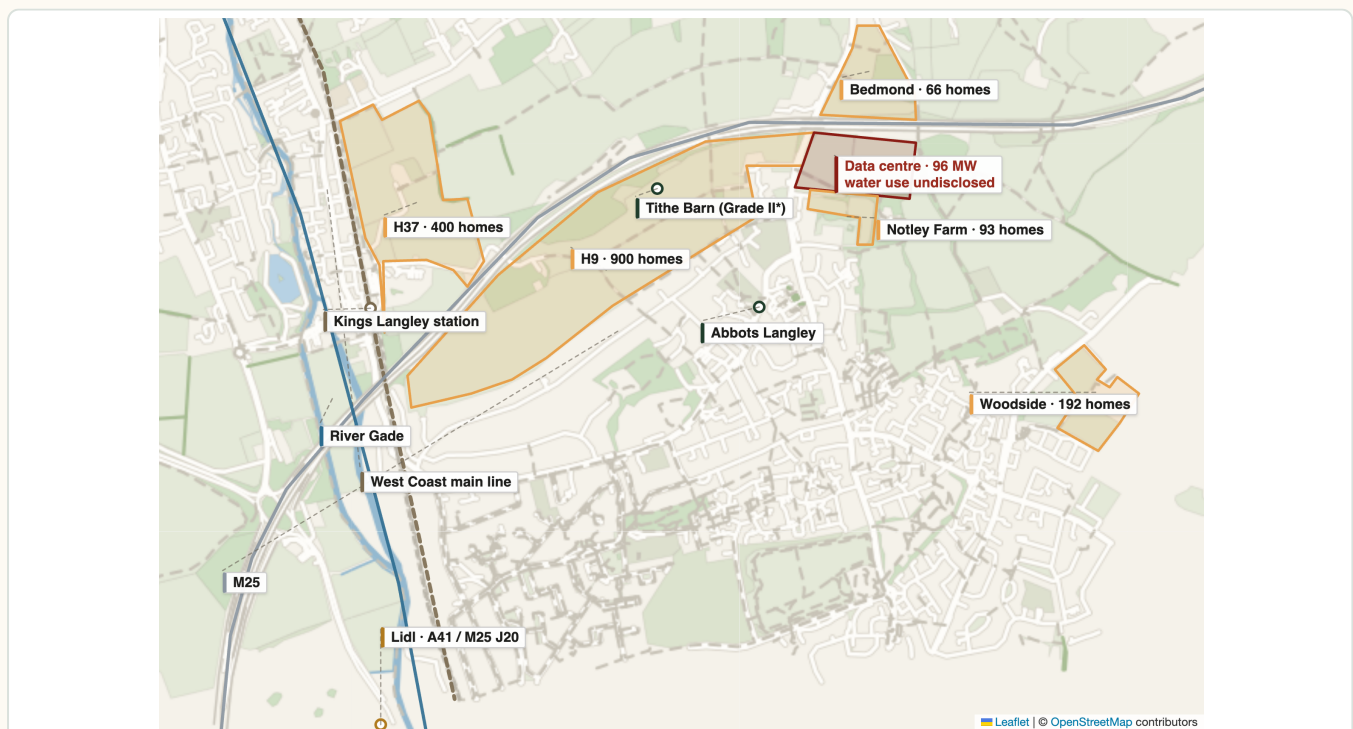
The field behind Abbots Road — the plan puts 1,300 homes here.

THE BAD

The consultation was very hard to take part in.



- **It was very long.** The two main papers are more than **120,000 words**. That is about as long as two big grown-up books. There was **no short, easy version** to help you understand what changed.
- **It was very hard to read.** We measured it. One paper reads at **university level**. The other is even harder. Plain English is written at about **age 9**. The council's papers were much harder than that.
- **One form for every rule.** If you wanted to talk about the fields, the green belt, the roads *and* the number of homes, you had to fill in **four forms**. Not one form. Four.
- **It ran in the summer holidays.** The consultation opened on **31 July**. That was in the school summer holidays. **Five** of its eight weeks were in the holiday. The council did not give people more time to reply.
- **You had to ask to be told.** To hear about new consultations, the council says you must **email them and ask to join a list**. So busy families could easily miss it.
- **The papers did not say which fields.** The fields have three names: **H9, CFS26a** and **"The Kings Langley Estate"**. The papers did not say where they are in plain words. We had to find them on a map ourselves. We are **not** saying the council hid the fields. We are saying it was very hard to tell which fields the papers were about.



We had to find the fields on a map ourselves.

THE UGLY

This is the part that worried us most.

- **Nobody explained the rules.** In 2026 the law changed. The old rules were thrown out, but kept alive for a short time. A brand-new set of national rules came out **in the middle of the consultation**. The rule that councils must work together was scrapped. **None of this was explained**. It took us a long time and three sets of rules to work out which ones apply. A normal family could not do that.
- **The council's own experts were worried.** On **27 January 2026** the council's staff wrote a report. In it they said the plan was **"likely to be thrown out at examination"**. That means the Government Inspector may say no.
- **Their own rulebook is out of date.** The council has a rulebook about asking people what they think. It was written in **2020**. The law says it must be checked **every 5 years**. That check was due in **June 2025**. It still has not been done.
- **They have not yet told us what happened to our views.** The rulebook promises to **"report back"** after every consultation. It says they will tell us who was asked, how many replied, and what changed. **The council still has time to do this for this consultation — the plan is not sent to the Inspector until 30 November 2026. But it has not, as far as we can tell, published one for any earlier stage.**

The consultation closed on 25 September 2026. The plan now goes to the Government Inspector. The council must send it by 30 November 2026.

What we are asking for

1. Give people more time, and do not run it in the school holidays.
2. Tell the people who live there, and say how many you told.
3. Write a short, easy version of the plan.
4. Say clearly which rules are being used.
5. Say where each site is, in plain words.
6. Finish the rulebook check that is late.
7. Report back, as your own rulebook promises.

This is a short version of our longer audit. Every fact comes from the council's own papers. Read the full six-page audit at saveourfields.com/regulation-19-process. If we have got something wrong, tell us and we will fix it.



WHERE THIS COMES FROM

We did not make this up. We checked every fact against the council's own papers. The main ones are:

- The council's **Statement of Representations Procedure** — how to take part (July 2026).
- The council's **Statement of Community Involvement** (June 2020) and its 2021 addendum — its rulebook for asking people.
- The council's **Local Development Scheme** (June 2026).
- The **Local Plan consultation page** on Have Your Say.
- The council's **press release** and **public notice** (31 July 2026).
- The **Local Plan, Part I (Policies)** and **Part II (Site Allocations)** (July 2026).
- The **Stage 4 Green Belt Review** by Ove Arup (February 2026).
- The Government's **Consultation Principles**, and the planning rules and guidance.

The full audit lists every source, one by one, with links: saveourfields.com/regulation-19-process. If we have got something wrong, tell us and we will fix it loudly.

