

Proposed Residential Development

Land South of Woodhall Spa

Statement of Community Involvement

For Witham Trading Co Ltd

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Version 4

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1.0 Introduction

This statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Masons Chartered Surveyors on behalf of the applicant, Witham Trading Co Ltd, to assist East Lindsey District Council in their consideration of an outline planning application for residential development in Woodhall Spa.

This statement explains how the applicant recognises the importance of community involvement in the planning process. It describes how the local community has been consulted on the development proposal prior to making the initial request for pre-application advice.

Since the public consultations were carried out, the scheme has evolved and changed into the scheme which has now been submitted for outline planning consent. The scheme that has now been put forward for development is shown on the attached plan at appendix 1.

2.0 Importance of the Public Consultation Process

Witham Trading Limited is fully committed to engaging constructively with the local community in respect of its development proposals. When public consultation is carried out prior to making a planning application it can be very helpful in identifying the degree of broad local support or opposition to a proposal but also in terms of detail it can highlight matters that need further consideration or amendment and so contribute effectively to shaping the proposals and achieving a successful development.

Community involvement is regarded by central and local government as an extremely important part of the planning process with public consultation encouraged for delivering sustainable development and creating sustainable communities. The importance of such initiatives are highlighted within the National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012, which notes that Local Planning Authorities should encourage applicants to engage with the local community before submitting their application.

East Lindsey District Council's Adopted Statement of Community Involvement (June 2007) strongly encourages applicants to meet with planning and other Council officers prior to the submission of a planning application so that all material considerations can be explored. The applicants understand the value of the public consultation process to the planning system and have actively engaged with the Parish and District council and local residents.

3.0 Consultation Process

The applicant's agents have met and engaged with the Parish Council, the District Council planning department through the pre- application process and together with carrying out two public consultations.

Following the feedback received and the various informal discussions with the Parish Council, an outline planning application has now been prepared and submitted.

3.1 Parish Council Meetings

The developer's agent has attended four parish council meetings. The first was on the 12th August 2016, the second on the 10th November 2016, the third on 8th February 2017 and lastly on the 2nd of May. The developer and agent attended these meetings in order to explain the site and discuss the proposals with the Parish Council in detail. This has formed an important part of the process. As a result of these meetings, the scheme has evolved and developed into the current proposed scheme.

4.0 First Public Exhibition

4.1 Date of Meeting

The first public exhibition was held on Friday 12th August 2016 between 6pm and 8pm.

The meeting was hosted by Simon Williams from Masons Chartered Surveyors, Ian Turvey from Turvey Consultancy Limited and Chris Hancox from Urban Perspective. Mr and Mrs Nelstrop, on behalf of Witham Trading Limited, were also in attendance to answer questions. A series of illustrative master plans based on the development concept were available for review together with a great deal of factual information.

4.2 Publicity

The exhibition was targeted at all local residents including, adjoining householders and local businesses. The meeting was advertised locally and flyers were dropped through the letter boxes of the adjacent housing developments.

The meeting was advertised in the village press and posters were provided for local businesses and were put up around the village publicising the event. A poster was also put

up in the village hall. A copy of the exhibition notification information is provided in appendix 2.

4.3 Attendance and feedback

There was a good turn out from local residents and Parish Councillors attended the exhibition, with 73 names taken although it is estimated that over 100 people attended the event. An attendance register was taken however a number of attendees did not wish to sign the register. A feedback form was provided to the attendees with stamped addressed envelopes for them to send back their reply and associated comments following the exhibition. Verbal feedback was also provided to Simon Williams, Ian Turvey, Chris Hancox and Mr and Mrs Nelstrop.

A total of 17 feedback forms were received back and copies are provided at appendix 2. Of the 17 responses, 52% were opposed to the development, 24% were in favour of the development and 24% were undecided. The responses were forwarded to the case officer (Chris Panton) as part of the Local Planning Authority pre-application process.

4.4 Consultation Feedback

The exhibition form asked twelve main questions with the opportunity to leave any additional comments on the back of the form. 17 responses were received. The main questions and responses received are summarised below:

Question 1

Do you feel that the proposed development would add positively to the village's community?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

17 responses received to this question 9 were "no", six were "yes" and two were "don't know". The comments received related to inadequate infrastructure and services, lack of community with the continuous spread of development.

35% responded positively

Question II

Do you feel that the arrangement of the proposed development has been done with sensitivity to the privacy of the existing and proposed homes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Six responses received to this question were "yes", six "no" and five were "don't know", with comments relating to the "green buffer" being a sufficient depth and worries about green areas attracting litter.

35% responded positively

Question III

Do you feel that the proposed development would add positively towards the custom of existing businesses in the village?

- d. Yes
- e. No
- f. Don't know

Responses Received

Ten responses received to this question were "yes", One "no" and six "don't know". The comments received acknowledged that more houses means more revenue for local businesses however it was noted by a number of respondents that many local residents did not support the village shops and that many residents shop out of the village.

59 % responded positively

Question IV

What parts of the proposal do you like?

- a. Its long term use for the growth of the village
- b. Mix of land uses
- c. Location of proposed housing areas
- d. Proposed range of open spaces and habitats
- e. Proposed footpath links

Responses Received

The answers to this question were varied with more than one option being selected:-

- Four for the long term use for the growth of the village.
- Five for mix of land uses
- One for location of proposed housing areas(most left it blank)
- Eight responses received liked the proposed range of open spaces and habitats
- Six liked the proposed footpath links.

The comments were generally varied but generally in relation to the proposed open spaces and habitats and the proposed footpath links with some acknowledging that they liked the mix of land uses and location of proposed housing areas.

Question V

Are there parts of the proposal which you think could be improved?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Seven responses received to this question were "yes", four were "no", one, "don't know" and five respondents did not answer the question. The comments related to less housing and more areas to be left for wildlife, additional traffic calming systems

and entry points needing roundabouts. Some answers as expected were very negative with responses such as “don’t want it” and “should be binned”.

23 % responded positively

Question VI

Which types of homes or land uses do you think are needed in the village?

- a. Starter homes
- b. Family homes
- c. Luxury homes
- d. Retirement homes
- e. Smaller homes for downsizing
- f. Affordable homes
- g. Other (please describe)
- h. Do you support the general location of the proposed open spaces?

Responses Received

Of the Seventeen responses received, we received six responses for each of the following; starter homes, family homes, smaller homes for downsizing and affordable homes. One response was received for retirement homes and five for “other” including a “balanced mixture” and “eco- housing”.

Question VII

Do you support the general location of the proposed open spaces?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don’t know

Responses Received

Eight responses received were “yes” although more detail was requested. Five were “no” and “four” don’t know.

47 % responded positively

Question VIII

What do you think about the proposal for a 'wooded Gateway' into Woodhall Spa?

- a. Strongly in favour
- b. In favour
- c. Undecided
- d. Opposed

Responses Received

Four were "strongly in favour", five were "in favour", four were "opposed" and four were "undecided". Comments related to concerns as to whether this will development will actually happen.

53 % responded positively

Question IX

Do you support the general location of the proposed footpath and cycle connections?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Seven responses were "yes", five were "no", three were "don't know" and two were unanswered. Generally people are in favour with comments such as "links to existing are always an advantage" "would be useful, maintained by whom?", "must be adequate width".

41 % responded positively

Question X

Do you feel that the proposed development will create a positive contribution to the village for the long term

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Nine responses were no, three were yes, four were don't know and one respondent did not respond. Generally the comments received were negative with comments as follows; "this is a development too far", "don't want to see Woodhall Spa become a town" and "character of village will not be improved by these developments.

18 % responded positively

Question XI

Having seen the draft proposals are you

- a. Strongly in favour
- b. In favour
- c. Undecided
- d. Opposed

Responses Received

Three responses were strongly in favour, one response was in favour, nine were opposed and four were undecided.

23 % responded positively

Question XII

How useful was the information at today's exhibition?

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Poor
- d. Don't know

Responses Received

Eleven responses were good, two were average, one was poor and three were don't know. The general comments received were "larger scale maps would be better" "more detail required".

65 % responded positively

General Comments Received

Some of the comments as quoted from the feedback forms, both positive and negative are summarised below:

- "increase flood risk to Grove Drive, Urbanisation affects wildlife, need for wildlife survey"
- "Links to Woodhall Spa history, like references"
- "Footpath widening, new properties matched with existing properties, traffic/speeding problems, privacy and more bus stops"
- "Drainage, more car parking spaces, pedestrian and vehicles exiting the site, footpath on far side of the road, how easy is it for pushchairs and cyclists to exit, also new infrastructure like schools".
- "Effect on surface water drainage and access to ditch, Flood risk, effect on services, types of properties, adequate safe access from Tattershall road, later development of green area".
- "Services are full, sewage in the village is poor"
- "Services are full, car parking inadequate"
- "it is assumed the land will ultimately be sold off to a developer who will over-rule Mr Nelstrop's plans anyway, so the development will end up larger and bear no resemblance to the original plan"
- "The infrastructure of Woodhall Spa cannot cope with housing on this scale. If the proposed development on Witham Road is approved, the Woodhall would be completely ruined (its heading that way already). No doubt the application will still go ahead in spite of what residents say"
- "I would like to see links to the history of Woodhall Spa, both in style and its connections. A few landmark references would also reinforce this"

- “I am opposed because, in spite of reassurances to the contrary, I am afraid that this will be “ the thin end of the wedge” leading to further development spreading further east of the proposal site”
- I have three major concerns:
 - The “urbanisation” of the whole area will have a detrimental affect on wildlife habitats. The areas at the end of Grove Drive (trees, ponds, drains and rough pasture) are rich in wildlife. For example, kingfishers, egrets, sandpipers, geese, tawny owls, barn owls and little owls. There is a need for a wildlife survey.
 - The size of the housing development will increase the flood risk of the existing properties, particularly those on Grove Drive. We are already in a flood risk area.
 - A large increase in the village population will add to the pressure already seen on health services and schools”.

The approach taken in the design concept for the proposed development has endeavoured to reflect the comments made during the initial consultation process and subsequent meetings whilst bearing in mind the observations of Planning Officers of the Council. The technical reports which will support the planning application deal in detail with the various issues raised, in particular that relating to traffic and drainage and show how these can be satisfactorily addressed. Attendees were assured that unless the application can satisfy the stringent planning standards, planning consent would not be granted.

The applicants acknowledge the need to provide the local community with sufficient information regarding the proposed development and are therefore committed to keeping the community updated. Predictably many of the negative comments received were perhaps as a result of lack of understanding of the planning process and this is something that the applicants are aware of and are trying to address through further dialogue and content of the Design & Access statement in particular.

It became apparent at the meeting of the 12th August 2016 that many of the initial concerns of the members of the public could be properly dealt with by further explanation about the technical reports and how the planning process works to challenge the technical reports against local and national standards and policies. The applicants are confident that they have been able to explain matters in some detail as a consequence of that interaction and

through constructive dialogue over a long period of time. The liaison with the local community will continue throughout the planning process as far as possible.

5.0 Second Public Exhibition

5.1 Date of Meeting

A second public exhibition was held on Saturday 18th March 2017 between 2pm and 4.30pm at Coronation Hall in Woodhall Spa. The second public exhibition notification information is provided at appendix 4.

The meeting was hosted by Simon Williams from Masons Chartered Surveyors. Mr and Mrs Nelstrop, on behalf of Witham Trading Limited, were also in attendance to answer questions. The revised series of illustrative master plans were available for viewing and further comments on the revisions made to the scheme were invited.

5.2 Publicity

The exhibition was targeted at all local residents including, adjoining householders and local businesses. Letters were personally addressed to all attendees who signed the attendance register during the first exhibition and a separate letter was then dropped through the letter boxes of local residents. Copies of the letters are provided at appendix 5. A notice and a copy of the letter were also put on the notice board at Coronation Hall.

5.3 Attendance and feedback

The exhibition was again very well attended with many local residents attending the exhibition. An attendance register was taken however a number of attendees did not wish to sign the register. 36 names were taken although it is estimated that around 135 people attended the event. An updated feedback form was provided to the attendees with stamped addressed envelopes for them to send back their reply and associated comments following the exhibition. Verbal feedback was also provided to Simon Williams and Mr and Mrs Nelstrop.

A total of 15 feedback forms were received back and copies are provided at appendix 6. Of the 15 responses received.

34% were either strongly in favour or in favour of the development.

5.4 Consultation Feedback

The exhibition form asked twelve main questions with the opportunity to leave any additional comments on the back of the form. The questions asked and responses received are summarised below:

Question 1

do you feel that proposed development would add positively to the village taking a long-term view?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

Responses Received

Five responded yes, ten no.

Negative Comments were received containing anti-growth sentiment generally

33 % responded positively

Question 2

Do you feel that the arrangement of the proposed development had been done with sensitivity to the privacy of the existing and proposed homes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't Know

Responses Received

Five responses to this question were "yes", ten were "no". The comments received were "no as proposed cycle was coming within 3 metres of my retirement flat" and "yes, provided it is not altered"; "some existing homes were not even shown on the plan".

33 % responded positively

Question 3

Do you feel that the proposed development would add positively towards the custom of existing businesses in the village taking a long-term view?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Five responses to this question were "yes", seven were "no" and three were "don't know". The comments received were "the car parking in the village is not adequate now so where will people park- more likely to go elsewhere"; "supermarkets in village cannot cope now in summer population doubles with visitors"; "the village is already prosperous. Any vacant shops are quickly occupied"; "no there are no empty shops and have not been in the 5 years we have lived here. This suggests that business is good".

33 % responded positively

Question 4

What parts of the proposal do you like?

- a. Green space?
- b. It's a high quality development
- c. access to the countryside
- d. the retirement homes element
- e. Proposed improved connectivity

Responses Received

Green space and retirement homes were the most popular responses, followed by high quality development and proposed improved connectivity.

Although there was not an option for “none”, eight responses were received to this effect with associated comments of “I don’t like anything”; “This development is not needed in Woodhall Spa”.

Question 5

Are there parts of the proposal which you think could be improved?

- a. Yes (please provide details)
- b. No
- c. Don’t know

Responses Received

Of the responses received to this question, two simply responded “no”, eight responded “yes” and four responded “don’t know”. The responses received included “More cycle and footpaths”, “scrap the idea of such a large site make it smaller”; “If it goes ahead (the development) scrap the tree-lined approach on Tattershall Road- we already have hundreds of trees”; “it should be abolished”; “stop this proposal at once”; “yes, don’t build anything”; “too many houses. We have enough given permission already”.

13 % responded positively

Question 6

have you seen the village neighbourhood plan and understands its relevance to this forthcoming application ?

Responses Received

nine responses to this question were “yes”, six were “no” and two were “don’t know”. The responses received were “if you mean the display at Coronation Hall then yes”; “saw it in Council offices and library”; “The village plan states that new housing needs to ‘fit in with the distinct character of the village’. This proposal doesn’t”; “The plan sets out to discourage developments that are unlikely to maintain visual cohesion and architectural traditions”.

60 % responded positively

Question 7

Do you support the general location of the proposed open spaces?

- a. Yes (please provide details)
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Four responses to this question were "yes", four were "no", three were "don't know" and 4 were left blank. The responses received were "leave things as they are now"; "totally agree providing the plans are adhered to"; "protection includes no further development on green spaces"; "it's the flood plain so should not be built on"; "no, don't build on existing green space".

26 % responded positively

Question 8

What do you think about the proposal for a 'Wooded Gateway' into Woodhall Spa?

- a. Strongly in favour
- b. In favour
- c. Undecided
- d. Opposed (Any further comments would be appreciated)

Responses Received

Three responses were "strongly in favour", one response was in "favour", nine responses were "not in favour" and two were undecided. Comments received included "People do not walk except for leisure and they would still use cars"; "what on earth is this? There is a 'wooded Gateway' at the moment through Kirkstead"; "is this a way round/ sweetener for the planning proposal".

27 % responded positively

Question 9

Do you support the general location of the proposed footpath and cycle connections?

- a. Yes (please provide details)
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Three responses were "yes", nine responses were "no" and three responses were "don't know". The responses received were "more cycle/ footpaths"; "yes as described"; "would like to see exactly who's land the cycle path will be on connecting up with tor o Moor Road"; "not required as the development will not exist"; "development shouldn't be permitted"; "Stanhope/ Tor-o-Mor corner is potentially dangerous".

20 % responded positively

Question 10

Do you feel that the proposed development will create a positive contribution to the village for the long term?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Responses Received

Five responses were yes and 10 responses were no. The comments received included "It will kill our village and make it a town. Crime and drugs will follow"; "it will adversely affect the village environment as it currently exists and would create a town".

33 % responded positively

Question 11

Having seen the proposals are you

- a. Strongly in favour
- b. In favour

- c. Undecided
- d. Opposed

Responses Received

Two responses were strongly in favour, three were in favour and ten were opposed. Several responses were “Strongly opposed”.

33 % responded positively

Question 12

How good was the information given and the presentation of the proposal at today's exhibition

- a. Good
- b. Average
- c. Poor
- d. Don't know

Responses Received

Six responses were “good”, two were “average” and seven were “poor”. The responses received included “wider issues such as drainage, parking, schools, doctors and dentists were brushed aside”; “the maps were all very vague. No key to the coloured area and mention of scale”; “no details on schools, surgery, car parking- 360 units/ 720+ cars”; “not all residential dwellings were shown on the plan”.

40 % responded positively

General Comments Received

In addition to the specific questions asked, attendees were also asked to provide general comments which are summarised below:

- “The village infrastructure is already overstretched. I see no evidence of any provision for any improvement in easing pressure on the village amenities, and just increasing the

population will only make things worse. Until recent years locals could boast about the ease of parking cars in the centre when shopping, but this is becoming more difficult daily. Getting a doctor's appointment can only get worse. Woodhall Spa is a village with great character and is in danger of outgrowing its attraction by overpopulation".

- "very informative- thank you!"
- "Not enough services etc.- doctors and school.
- "We have no objection to development provided commitment is made regarding essential services".
- "Some control of traffic to the village from the south is needed to reduce speed".
- "The consultation was good. The only comment I have is that the plans given at the last consultation have already altered and I feel that once detailed plans of the proposed development are submitted they should be adhered to. i.e. not as has happened with Beckside a proposal by the owner at the time and ELDC stated the density was not good enough. The developer then increased twice and two entrances appeared. The plans we saw at the consultation were good and in keeping with Woodhall Spa. Please stick to them and do not include further development (car parks or properties on the flood plain and adjacent areas"
- "We are against these proposals. Already there have been approved plans for 150 houses on Witham Road and 98 houses on Tattershall Road. If a further 260+ are added where are the jobs coming to support these people (no industry in Woodhall Spa)? Already the surgery, school and dental surgery are at max capacity. These homes mean 700+ cars. The public parking in the village is for about 15 cars".
- "We do not feel this development should go ahead. The village is already struggling to provide for the current residents. Both doctors surgeries are full. There is one dentist and many people, like ourselves travel 20 miles or more to a dentist because there is no alternative. The parking in the village is often a nightmare. 49 houses could mean 100 cars or more. If people cannot park, they will shop somewhere else. The drains in the village smell now, especially in the summer, so more waste and sewage will make matters worse. We came to live in Woodhall Spa nineteen years ago for a village that was small, quiet and friendly. It has doubled in size since then and the volume of traffic has increased even more than that. We had hoped it would not change but it has, and now these proposals are therefore totally unacceptable to us".
- "I am extremely concerned about this proposed development; it would adversely affect the quality of our village life. This development is unnecessary with current and proposed

development already in place, the 15 year plan for Woodhall Spa housing is already exceeded. Also, a development such as this intrudes onto the green spaces and open countryside, that is one of the main attractions for many residents and visitors. There isn't and won't be the necessary infrastructure to support all these additional dwellings. The area for the development is one of historic importance which should be protected. One of the village plan objectives states "protect... Woods, open spaces and countryside around the village". The village plan also states; "all development... will respect the environmental assets and heritage attributes in and around Woodhall Spa". In my opinion, the proposed development disregards this statement.

- "Woodhall Spa will become too big with the development and it will become congested with traffic. Its unique character will be lost, which is popular with visitors who would probably go elsewhere. The roads can't cope now and are breaking up so more traffic could be fatal. There are no crossings on Tattershall road and trying to get out of our drive is a challenge at times, without all the extra traffic this proposal would generate. The infrastructure cannot cope now with schools, doctors and dentist full. Drains overflow when there is a heavy downpour, electricity goes off regularly and broadband is awful"

6.0 Defend Woodhall Spa- Facebook Page

A page on the social media portal, Facebook, has been set up by a local resident which has been labelled as "Defend Woodhall Spa" and currently has 406 members. The page has been set up with the objective to "stop the over development of Woodhall Spa".

On the 15th March a post was put on the Defend Woodhall Spa page to inform residents that the public exhibition which had been advertised was being organised by the developers and not the local council. A copy of the notice advertising the exhibition was put on the notice board in coronation Hall, together with a copy of the accompanying letter from "Masons" to make it clear who was organising the meeting. The publisher of the post also recommended that residents did not attend the meeting due to a concern that "objections would be ignored and spun by the developer to justify the development". Amongst the negative comments, there are some genuine concerns, one respondent commented "I was very vocal in objecting to the 50 houses being built along Witham Road- not in principle but because of the infrastructure not being supported and surface and water treatment is being airbrushed out as a concern by the council".

Several videos have been posted on the Facebook page which inform the public where the various development sites in Woodhall Spa are being proposed. The author of the videos suggests that the information that has been provided so far in relation to this site has not been a true reflection of what is proposed and that the public are being misled. The landowner has made the public aware of the proposed scheme as far as possible and the purpose of the public exhibitions which have been undertaken is to inform the public. The scheme has evolved following the first consultation and following the comments received from local residents and the developer has actively sought the views of residents. The agent has tried to make contact with the author of the Facebook page to ensure that the information that is being relayed to the public is correct, however, Mr Keegan did not want to engage with the Landowners and was corrected on the number of dwellings. He was advised that he was deliberately misleading the public in the absence of the facts.

7.0 Conclusion

The public exhibitions have provided a forum for people to voice their concerns, which have provided the developer with valuable feedback on the scheme and ways to improve it where possible.

As a result of the public exhibitions, there have been some very useful and valid planning points made which has resulted in what the developer believes to be positive alterations being made to the scheme.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Plan of Development
Appendix 2	First public exhibition notification information
Appendix 3	First public exhibition feedback form
Appendix 4	Second public exhibition notification information
Appendix 5	Letters advertising second public consultation
Appendix 6	Second public exhibition feedback form

