

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD, HIGH CROSS

November 2023



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by M Scott Properties Ltd (Scott Properties) in support of an outline planning application for up to 95 dwellings at Land East of High Road, High Cross.

1.2

This statement provides an account of the meetings, discussions and events that have been held with Planning Officers, elected representatives and residents about the proposed development.

1.3

The following statement is presented in the groups we engaged with, rather than chronologically, to best explain the nature of the discussions held with each group.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes pre-application engagement with local planning authorities, stating at paragraph 39:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”

2.2

East Hertfordshire District Council's Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in 2019. It states that they strongly encourage applicants to engage with the local community directly, before submitting an application and secondly, that they advise applicants to make use of the pre-application service with the Council, with an aim to improve the quality of an application before it is submitted.

3. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT WITH EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

3.1

In October 2017 a pre-application advice request was submitted by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Scott Properties for a scheme of circa 75 dwellings including affordable housing.

A response was received from EHDC's Principal Planning Officer in January 2018 which outlined the policy position at the time of writing, the advanced stage of the emerging Local Plan and the Council reporting a 5YHLS.

The response provided officer-level observations on matters such as accessibility, design and layout, affordable housing, education, landscape, housing mix, ecology, drainage, and heritage impact.

3.2.

In October 2018 a second pre-application advice request was submitted to the Council which outlined the potential improvements to the Puller Memorial Primary School and associated housing. A response from the Council received in March 2019 recited the adopted Local Plan policies and concluded that there was no merit in the pre-application meeting taking place.

3.3.

In addition to the above formal pre-application advice requests, there have been numerous discussions held with the Council and other relevant stakeholders about the site and its potential for development. In particular, considerable time has been spent gaining an understanding of how the Puller Memorial Primary School needs new pupils and a new hall.

4. PARISH COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

4.1

Scott Properties attended a Parish Council public meeting and outlined the proposals for the Site. The Parish Council confirmed that they would not be engaging with Scott Properties at the pre-application stage, instead waiting to review the application and comment once the application had been submitted.

4.2

The Parish Council agreed that the High Cross Village Hall was an appropriate location to hold the Public Consultation event. Parish Councillors were invited to attend one hour before it was opened to the public.

5. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

5.1 Public Consultation Event

5.1.1

A public consultation event was held on Tuesday 17th October from 2pm until 7pm, at High Cross Village Hall. Invitations were hand-delivered to all residential properties in High Cross two weeks before the event. Two sets of A1 boards were displayed showing the proposals and Scott Properties staff were on hand to answer any questions. The consultation website was available after the event, with two weeks of access until Monday 30th October. The website also gave those an opportunity who could not attend the actual event, to view the proposals online and provide feedback.

5.2 Consultation Feedback

5.2.1

A total of 84 people attended the consultation event and 38 feedback forms were received on the day, through the post, or via the online form.

5.2.2

The questions asked are within the “Feedback Form”, as shown on the screen view in Appendix II –Consultation Pages. Out of the 38 responses, eight people were in support of new homes within High Cross, 26 were not and four were unsure.

5.2.3

The types of housing considered to be needed most in the area were ‘Starter Homes’ (9 responses), followed by ‘Family Homes’ (6), ‘Affordable Ownership’ (6), ‘Housing for Older People’ (5) and ‘Affordable Rent’ (3).

5.2.4

Many respondents did not have an opinion on the Layout and Housing Mix (11 and 12) which is most likely a reflection of the use of a high-level concept masterplan for the outline application which does not include a detailed layout.

5.2.5

The feedback form also provided an area for respondents to raise any questions about the proposals and if necessary, make suggestions. These responses are summarised below along with Scott Properties’ initial response to each of the points raised.

Comments Received	Scott Properties' Comments
Highways & Traffic	
<p>§ Road is already fast. Traffic measures are not adequate.</p> <p>§ The road would become busier with the added volume of traffic.</p> <p>§ In addition to the vehicle counters along the main road, there are counters along North Drive. I hope that these are not indicators for bringing traffic along that road routinely. It regularly becomes obstructed by vehicles passing along it and it is too narrow to take high numbers of vehicles.</p>	<p>§ A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan will be submitted with the application and will assess the predicted car trips generated by the proposals and how these can be accommodated by the highway network.</p> <p>§ The traffic counters on North Drive have been placed there so that we can understand the current vehicle movements generated by houses in High Cross. North Drive is not part of our access strategy.</p>
Ecology & Landscaping	
<p>§ Loss to wildlife</p>	<p>§ Ecology surveys have been undertaken and will be submitted with the application.</p>
Flood Risk & Drainage	
<p>§ Flooding & Drainage is a major issue.</p> <p>§ There is already a problem with the mains sewers in High Cross.</p>	<p>§ A Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy will be submitted with the application to ensure that the proposals do not cause any off-site flooding.</p>
The Puller Memorial Primary School	
<p>§ Why are local schools closing (Tonwell) with new houses coming?</p> <p>§ The school is small and unable to cope with more pupils. Extending the school will increase noise levels.</p> <p>§ How long is the space for the school reserved for and who will be required to fund any desired development? Is it a use it or lose it situation for the school and residents? What conditions will be placed on the school if they decide to use the land?</p>	<p>§ New housing in High Cross will help secure the long-term success and viability of the Puller Memorial Primary School.</p> <p>§ The proposed school extension area safeguards an area which will enable the school, with the support of the Education Authority, to consider how best to accommodate new pupils.</p> <p>§ The Education Authority will have a period of time (TBC) to request the school extension area. Details of the transfer have not yet been</p>

	discussed, but will be set out in the Section 106 Agreement.
Local Facilities & Services	
<p>§ Please consider the need for a local shop and extra buses needed for the extra houses.</p> <p>§ Currently end of line for gas/electric and broadband.</p> <p>§ There is no fibre broadband in the village. Are you working with providers to provide advanced connectivity to the site and in turn, the existing residents of High Cross?</p> <p>§ The village doesn't have a pub or local amenities beyond a farm shop and a petrol station. Have you thought about the need for additional amenities to serve the increased population? The High Road will increase in traffic to Ware, as the nearest major town centre.</p> <p>§ No shop, petrol station is very expensive.</p>	<p>§ A Framework Travel Plan will consider access to shops and the existing bus services.</p> <p>§ There are plans to bring Ultrafast Broadband connectivity to High Cross in the next few years.</p> <p>§ High Cross benefits from services that can help with day-to-day requirements and the provision of housing in High Cross will help maintain these existing services. High Cross also benefits from Ware being a short bus trip to the south.</p>
Specific to Proposals	
<p>§ This goes against the neighbourhood plan, which only allows building inside of the village.</p> <p>§ It is unlikely that Section 106 funds will benefit this community (Canterbury Park Development).</p> <p>§ No infrastructure to cope with additional homes.</p> <p>§ The churchyard is nearly full.</p> <p>§ I think it is a fantastic idea. For professionals living in the area and currently renting like I do, it gives</p>	<p>§ The Neighbourhood Plan is a consideration, but there is a real need for housing in the district and we believe that High Cross is a sustainable location for this growth to occur.</p> <p>§ We would welcome the opportunity to continue to engage with the Parish Council to ensure that, where appropriate, S106 funds are spent on local projects.</p> <p>§ Following this feedback, we have amended our proposals to include an extension to the cemetery.</p>

<p>an opportunity to buy in the area I love.</p> <p>§ First refusals for the houses should be given to local people already living in the area.</p> <p>§ We are concerned that this development is too large for the area and should be considered as a reduced proposal.</p> <p>§ Will the development land be adopted and maintained by the council or is it envisaged a private management company will operate it and be funded by the residents?</p> <p>§ The proposal gives no clear outline to the type of property, appearance and benefit to local community.</p> <p>§ The loss of grade one farmland is of great concern.</p> <p>§ Has an impact assessment been shared with local wildlife trust and community groups?</p>	<p>§ It has not been decided yet if the development will be adopted (maintained by the Council) or privately maintained.</p> <p>§ The quality of the agricultural land has been assessed as Grade 3B, the lowest classification of agricultural land.</p> <p>§ The ecology survey work will be shared with the statutory consultees as part of the application. The Local Wildlife Trust will be able to comments as part of this process.</p>
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6. CONCLUSIONS

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance and demonstrates the steps that have been taken to ensure that the local Councillors and community have had an opportunity to share their views on the proposed development, which will continue throughout the application process.

The Design & Access Statement outlines the evolution of the scheme as a result of this engagement including the introduction of the proposed allotments and cemetery extension.

The technical information prepared in support of the scheme, is submitted with the planning application and summarised within the Planning Statement.

APPENDIX I –LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION AREA

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD // HIGH CROSS



APPENDIX II –PUBLIC CONSULTATION INVITATION

INVITATION TO ATTEND A PUBLIC CONSULTATION

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD, HIGH CROSS

Scott Properties would like to invite local residents to view and comment on these proposals.

From 2pm - 7pm on Tuesday 17th October at
High Cross Village Hall, North Drive, High Cross, SG11 1AR

If you can't make it...

You can still view the proposals and provide feedback.

Please visit the website at **www.highcross.mscott.co.uk** which will be live from 8pm on Tuesday 17th October until 8pm on Monday 30th October.

If you can't attend on the day or access the website, please contact us via the details below.



M. Scott Properties Ltd
Suite 5 - Oyster House, Severalls Lane, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9PD
T: 01206 845845 E: highcross@mscott.co.uk

APPENDIX III –CONSULTATION WEBSITE PAGES



The site is located to the east of High Road on the north side of High Cross.

The land is currently in agricultural (arable) use, and extends to c. 18 acres.

Select the image below to open the Site Location board.



[← Previous: Home](#)

[Next: Private: The Proposal →](#)





Private: The Proposal

Land East of High Road

An outline application is proposed for the erection of up to 95 dwellings alongside landscaping, public open space and land for the potential expansion of the primary school.

A policy-compliant level of 40% affordable housing will be provided, as well as 5% self and custom-build dwellings. The detailed housing mix would be determined based on local need as part of a future reserved matters application, and is likely to comprise approximately:

- 40% 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings
- 40% 3 bedroom dwellings
- 20% 4 bedroom dwellings

Allocated and visitor parking will be provided in accordance with District Council and Neighbourhood Plan guidelines.

An area of c. 1 acre is also proposed to be safeguarded to facilitate the future expansion of the primary school, should this be required, with access and services provided to the boundary.

Select the image below to open the Proposed Residential Development board.



← Previous: [Site Location](#)

Next: [Technical Information](#) →





Technical Information

Land East of High Road

The proposals have been informed by a suite of technical assessments and pre-application discussions with the relevant statutory consultees.

The planning application will need to demonstrate that there are no issues caused by the development that can not be mitigated through the design. Technical issues such as transport, drainage, landscape, heritage, ecology, and archaeology, will need to be considered, as well as financial contributions towards schools, health and other community infrastructure.

Select the image below to open the Technical Information board.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION
LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD, HIGH CROSS

ACCESS
Vehicular access can be achieved within the existing 30mph zone via a priority junction to High Road. The new access will comprise a 5.5m wide carriageway with 2m grass verges on either side.
The existing access will be stepped up to provide a pedestrian and cycle access, connecting to the existing provision along High Road. Additional pedestrian connections will be made to the public footpath that runs along the Site's southern boundary.

LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE
There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the Site. A detailed Heritage Assessment will accompany the application, and a high quality design, landscape buffers and retention of views across the Site towards the church spire will help to mitigate any impact. Landscaping, storey heights and the orientation of the proposed dwellings will mitigate the impact on the existing neighbouring dwellings.

ECOLOGY AND ARBORICULTURE
The Site is currently in agricultural (arable) use, with the main vegetation being a mature tree belt to the southern boundary, which will be retained. Development of the Site would not impact upon any Wildlife Sites, Nature Reserves, or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and would deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% through the creation of new habitat and public open spaces.

SURFACE AND FOUL WATER DRAINAGE
The Site lies entirely within flood zone 1; the lowest risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. Surface water will be stored in attenuation basins with controlled discharge at the existing greenfield run-off rate. Foul water will be disposed of via a connection to the existing public sewer in High Road.

UTILITIES AND SERVICES
Connections can be made to the existing electricity, water, foul drainage and broadband networks located in High Road.

TOPOGRAPHY
The Site is broadly flat, with a gentle slope from the highest point in the north-eastern corner towards the lower points at the southern and western boundaries.

SCOTT
PROPERTY GROUP



[← Previous: Private: The Proposal](#)

[Next: Submit your feedback →](#)





Please use the form below to submit your feedback.

We ask that all feedback is submitted no later than 8:00pm on Monday 30th October. Any feedback received after this time may not be considered.

Name

Address

Postcode

Are you a resident of High Cross?

- Yes
- No

Email

Age Range

- Under 21
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 60
- Over 60
- Prefer not to say

Are you in support of new homes within High Cross?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

What type(s) of housing do you feel is most needed in the area?

- Starter Homes
- Family Housing
- Affordable Ownership
- Affordable Rent
- Housing for Older People
- Other (please specify)

Please let us know how you would describe the following aspects of our proposals

Layout

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- No opinion

Housing Mix

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- No opinion

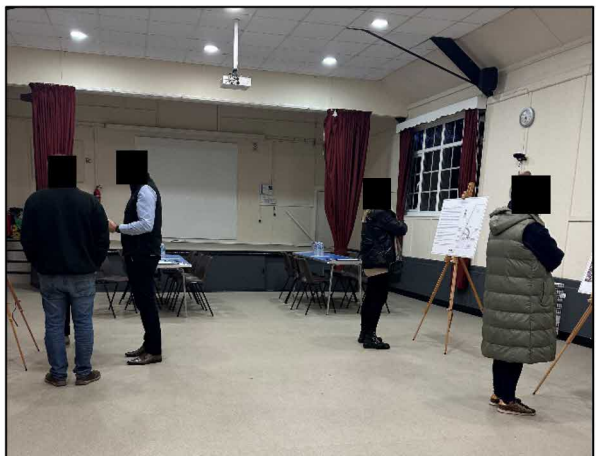
Public Open Space

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- No opinion

Please let us know any additional comments you have in relation to the proposals



APPENDIX IV – PHOTOS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION



APPENDIX V -PUBLIC CONSULTATION BOARDS

SITE LOCATION
LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD, HIGH CROSS



PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
LAND EAST OF HIGH ROAD, HIGH CROSS



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SURFACE AND FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

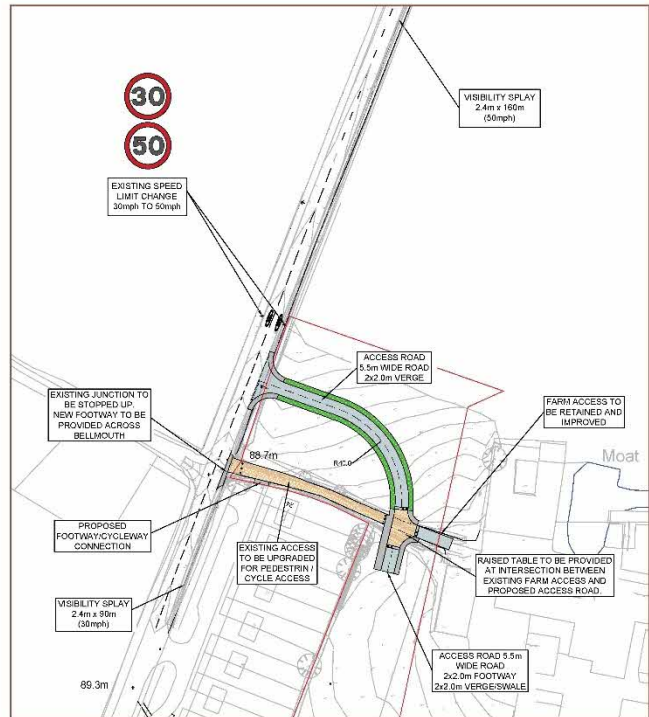
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