

# nineteen47

CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS  
& URBAN DESIGNERS

## Statement of Community Involvement

Full Planning Application for development of a three-storey building for marine based activities with associated car parking, vehicle and pedestrian access roads, footpaths and limited soft landscaping.

Land at Endeavour Wharf, Whitby

On Behalf of Willmott Dixon

**Client:**

Wilmott Dixon

**Project:**

Land at Endeavour Wharf, Whitby

**Report Title:**

Statement of Community Involvement

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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement [“SCI” or “Statement”] has been prepared by nineteen47 on behalf of Wilmott Dixon [“the Applicant”] to support a planning application for full planning permission [“the Application”] to North Yorkshire Council [“the LPA”] for the development of a three-storey building for marine based activities with associated car parking, vehicle and pedestrian access roads, footpaths and limited soft landscaping [“the Proposed Development”] on land at Endeavour Wharf, Whitby [“the Site”].
- 1.2 The Proposed Development, known as the “Maritime Hub”, is supported through central government funding via the Whitby Town Deal. The aspiration for the Maritime Hub is for it to be a driver in the rebirth of Whitby’s maritime industry by diversifying the economy and providing new opportunities for employment and training within the town.
- 1.3 Further details of the Proposed Development are provided in the supporting documents submitted as part of the Application, and this Statement should be read alongside this information.
- 1.4 The purpose of the SCI is to outline the steps taken by the Applicant during the preparation of the application to inform the final submission. In this case, this includes pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and other statutory stakeholders in the planning process together with engagement with the general public. The feedback received during the period of consultation has informed the final proposals, where appropriate.
- 1.5 The Applicant considers the pre-application engagement to be coherent, meaningful and insightful with regard to the development proposals and the collation of the final application.

## SECTION 2: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The central theme of current planning legislation and guidance places increased importance on community involvement, as the planning system operates in the public interest, to ensure that development results in a better place for people to live. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages engagement with Local Communities with Paragraph 39 stating:

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

- 2.2 Paragraph 41 emphasises the importance of pre-application discussions, stating that the more issues that can be resolved at this stage, the greater the benefits. Furthermore, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process, in order to have a positive and effective impact. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

- 2.3 Paragraph 132 outlines the importance of considering early discussion between key stakeholders:

*'Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.'*

- 2.4 The Localism Act has placed increased emphasis on consulting with Local Communities and, in this regard, the former Department for Communities and Local Government produced the Plain English Guide to the Localism Act and this states that:

*'To further strengthen the role of local communities in planning, the Act introduces the new requirement for developers to consult Local Communities before submitting planning applications for certain development. This gives local people the chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to proposals.'*

### Scarborough Borough Council – Revised Statement of Community Involvement (2020)

- 2.5 The former Scarborough Borough Council, now forming part of the wider North Yorkshire Council, revised and adopted their Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in May 2020. The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with local communities, stakeholders and other interested parties during the preparation of planning policy documents and when considering planning applications.

- 2.6 The SCI outlines the methods used to encourage and facilitate participation at the different stages of the preparation of policies and plans, and encourages community involvement in the preparation of development proposals.
- 2.7 Section 4 outlines how the Council seeks to actively engage in community consultation with regard to planning applications and encourages discussions between developing parties and statutory bodies. Local communities should be offered the chance to influence proposals in their areas at an early stage through these consultation exercises.
- 2.8 Paragraph 4.8 encourages developers to involve local communities, interest groups and local businesses prior to the submission of a planning application so that they can have an early input into the formation of the development proposals. In this regard, the following methods of engagement are encouraged, inter alia:
- Public Exhibitions and Meetings;
  - Workshops;
  - Virtual Exhibitions
- 2.9 Paragraph 4.19 states that, in terms of public notification, once an application is submitted, the Council will display appropriately located site notices on or near the site. From the date of posting the site notice or publication of the newspaper advertisement (whichever is later), a statutory period of 21 days is allowed for the submission of comments. Neighbours and other members of the public are then given another opportunity to comment on the proposed scheme.
- 2.10 Similar to the public notification, all statutory consultees will receive notification of relevant applications, along with other organisations or bodies which can have valuable input into the decision making process. They will also be allowed to comment within the 21 day period, after which responses received will be considered at the discretion of the LPA.
- 2.11 The remainder of this Statement will set out the Applicant's response to this guidance.

## SECTION 3: ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- 3.2 3.1 In order to adhere to guidance, as set out in the NPPF and the SCI published by the Council, the Applicant has sought early engagement with the LPA and the local community. This has allowed for the Application to be informed by the consultation, which has taken place from an early stage in the process. The following consultation events have taken place to inform the preparation of this planning application:

### Whitby Town Deal Consultation – 2019 onwards

- 3.3 As part of the Town Deal a Town Investment Plan (TIP) had to be produced identifying deliverable projects. Project selection was underpinned by extensive stakeholder engagement and further developed by the workstream groups which were made up of stakeholders from the public, private and community sectors in Whitby, led by representatives from the Whitby Town Deal Board.
- 3.4 The public were invited from the outset to submit their ideas for what they thought was needed most in the town. The consultation process has included at least 9 public consultation events and exhibitions, over 30,000 engagements/views via electronic and social and traditional media and over 400 direct contributions, 10 Town Deal Board meetings and over 30 development meetings. Specific support for the Maritime Hub was evidenced in the TIP in strengthening Whitby's connection with the maritime industry and allowing for the expansion of new skills.
- 3.5 Since the acceptance of the TIP by DLUHC (then MLGHC), the Whitby Town Deal Board have continued to have oversight of project delivery as detailed below.

### Steering Group Engagement – February 2023

- 3.6 A steering group was established for the project in 2021, made up of Whitby residents, council officers from NYC and representatives of the local maritime industry. A meeting was held virtually in February 2023 to discuss the emerging project, and they have continued to have monthly meetings.

### Whitby Town Deal Board Presentation – February 2023

- 3.7 A virtual meeting was undertaken in which the development updates and emerging proposals were presented to The Whitby Town Deal Board. They continue to receive regular updates at their meetings and a written update once a month.

### Community Consultation Event – February 2023

- 3.8 A public consultation meeting was held at the Coliseum Theatre on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023. The purpose of this event was to engage with community stakeholders and present the emerging proposals and design approaches, additionally the meeting was held to encourage discussion with the project team and other attendees.

### Technology Tournament – March 2023

- 3.9 On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023, NYC officers and representatives of Willmott Dixon attended Whitby's annual Technology Tournament to speak with students from local schools about the

design of the building. Further youth consultation took place with students from Whitby Fishing School and the Sixth Form at the Coliseum Theatre later that evening.

### Pre – Application Enquiry – April 2023 / September 2023

3.10 The formal pre-application meeting with North Yorkshire Council took place on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at the Town Hall in Scarborough. This meeting was attended by the Applicant, key members from their project team as well as various officers from North Yorkshire Council including planning, regeneration, estates and drainage. The key matters raised by the Council are summarised as follows:

- The principle of the development is strongly supported by local policies. The limited harm posed by the development on parking spaces is considered to be offset in the balance by the strong presumption in favour of the scheme provided by the policies.
- The development should be contingent on their being a functional, operational link between the building and the harbour itself, and that non-compatible uses (café, tourist information centre etc.) would likely not be acceptable.
- Consideration of the impacts upon the estuary should be considered, as well as the impact upon birds, their flight paths and migration. Consideration should also be given to nesting opportunities and how an increase in lighting may impact local species.
- The scale of the building and its massing can likely be justified as comprise in either of these aspects could potentially undermine the planning benefits. However, the current roof form may be problematic and so the design approach should take reference from the initial design philosophy with a view to creating a building (and particularly roof design) which would easily assimilate into its context. The materiality of the building should also take into account local context, and a similar palette to the RNLi building in Scarborough is recognised to work well.
- A Transport Assessment will be required as part of any planning application.

3.11 In addition to the pre-application enquiry meeting, various Teams meetings have been held between Historic England, NYC Highways and the Environment Agency. Details of how the scheme has evolved to reflect feedback is outlined within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

### Community Consultation Events – January 2024 / February 2024

3.12 A number of public exhibitions ran in January and February as follows:

1. Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024 - Eastside Community Hub, Whitby Abbots Road, YO22 4EA – ran from 10.00 until 16.00;
2. Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Coliseum Centre, 1B Victoria Place, Whitby, YO21 1EZ – ran from 10.00 until 16.00;
3. Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 - Coliseum Centre, 1B Victoria Place, Whitby, YO21 1EZ – ran from 10.00 until 19.00;



4. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 - Whitby Leisure Centre, West Cliff, Whitby, YO21 3HT – ran from 10.00 until 14.00.

- 3.13 Prior to the exhibition, the events were publicised by North Yorkshire Council through various channels. Details of the consultation events were made available on the Council’s website, social media channels and in the Your North Yorkshire Newsletter, which has an approximate 150,000 subscribers. Further to this, a press release was issued which was picked up by various newspapers including the Yorkshire Post, the Scarborough News and the Darlington and Stockton Times.
- 3.14 The aim of these events was to present the current proposals to the local community and gain responses on the proposed plans and the principle of the proposed development. The events were hosted by North Yorkshire Council, which allowed for members of the public to question Council officers and members of the project team.
- 3.15 Across the four dates, it is estimated that approximately 50no. people attended these events. Attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire such that comments and feedback could be reviewed and where necessary, the scheme updated to reflect these.
- 3.16 In addition to the in-person public exhibitions, an online exhibition was published to allow those who could not attend but wished to comment on the proposals, a meaningful platform to do so. This provided access to the same questionnaire that was provided at the in-person events. In this respect, it is recognised that the online form was widely utilised by local residents therefore representing an effective approach for engaging with the community and allowing them to give feedback through the website portal and via email. In this regard, a substantial number of responses were received to the consultations.
- 3.17 Table 3.1 below sets out the summarised responses to the questionnaires that were completed by attendees of the events.

Question	Response (comments)	% Response
Q1. Do you live in Whitby?	Yes – 200 No – 56	Yes – 78% No – 22%
Q2. Do you work in Whitby?	Yes – 114 No – 125 No Answer – 17	Yes – 45% No – 49% No Answer – 6%
Q3. What is your postcode?	YO21 – 140 YO22 – 77 Other YO – 17 Other – 15 No Answer – 7	YO21 – 55% YO22 – 30% Other YO – 7% Other – 6% No Answer – 2%
Q4. What is your employment status?	Employed (Working Age) – 120 Unemployed/Retired (Working Age) – 132 Full Time Education – 2 No Answer – 2	Employed (Working Age) – 47% Unemployed/Retired (Working Age) – 51% Full Time Education – 1% No Answer – 1%
Q5. Supporting the maritime industry is a key priority for	Yes – 180 No – 69	Yes – 70% No – 27%

the town. This regeneration scheme includes investment in a facility for the maritime industry. Do you support the investment?	No Opinion – 7	No Opinion – 3%
Q6. We believe that a quayside location is the best site for the Whitby Maritime Hub. Do you agree?	Yes – 156 No – 95 No Opinion – 3 No Answer - 2	Yes – 61% No – 37% No Opinion – 1% No Answer – 1%
Q7. We believe the design reflects the scale of the buildings in Whitby. Do you agree?	Yes – 127 No – 113 No Opinion – 16	Yes – 50% No – 44% No Opinion – 6%
Q8. We believe the material choice for the building fits in with the surrounding area. Do you agree?	Yes – 129 No – 99 No Opinion – 16	Yes – 53% No – 41% No Opinion – 6%
Q9. We believe that creating the most sustainable building possible, including access to public transport, should be a key priority for the project. Do you agree?	Yes – 198 No – 39 No Opinion – 19	Yes – 77% No – 15% No Opinion – 8%
Q10. This project includes a reduction in parking to accommodate a facility in this location. Better management of alternative parking provision will be encouraged. Do you support this element?	Yes – 151 No – 83 No Opinion – 19	Yes – 60% No – 33% No Opinion – 7%
Q11. Overall, how supportive of the scheme are you?	Very Supportive – 91 Supportive – 33 Somewhat Supportive – 53 Not At All Supportive – 75 No Answer – 4	Very Supportive – 36% Supportive – 13% Somewhat Supportive – 21% Not At All Supportive – 29% No Answer – 1%

Table 3.1 – Questionnaire Responses

3.18 In addition to the 11 questions that were posed, the questionnaire also features a general comments section in which respondents were able to provide any further feedback, should they have wished to do so. Following the end of the consultation period, all of the general comments have been reviewed and Table 3.2 sets out the general themes of the responses received which were supportive of the principle of the development and the proposed scheme.

Theme	No. of Responses	Applicants' Response
Great for Whitby – The development is very	53	The Applicant welcomes this feedback

welcomed and will rejuvenate the town centre. Many recognise the future impact the development will have, with some requesting for the building to be delivered as soon as possible.		
<b>Economic Boost</b> – the development will provide excellent job opportunities and will help boost and diversify the local economy.	33	The Applicant welcomes this feedback
<b>Current Conditions</b> – the maritime industry needs support. Some have noted that training/learning should be at the forefront of the development with some recognising that there is currently limited opportunities for working and learning in the area.	37	The Applicant welcomes this feedback
<b>Design</b> – the proposals are of a high-quality design, are in keeping with the surrounding area. Some requested further features to be included such as a café, pool, garden etc.	27	The Applicant welcomes this feedback

Table 3.2 – General Comments of Support

- 3.19 As noted above, the feedback received was generally very positive with the majority considering the site to be in a suitable location and the proposals being beneficial to the area. Based upon the responses received, 70% of people stated that they were, to varying extents, supportive of the development.
- 3.20 In addition to the above, Table 3.3 below sets out a summary of the general feedback provided in terms of the principle of the development and the proposed scheme.

Theme	No. of Responses	Applicants' Response
<b>Parking and Infrastructure</b> – extant problems with traffic and parking will be exacerbated, loss of parking spaces is unacceptable. Some note that facilities such as the	50	The application is accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and discussions with the Highways Authority undertaken. During the design process the amount of parking spaces to be retained has been maximised

Park and Ride need upgrading/enhancing.		
<b>Location is Inappropriate</b> – the site is located within the flood plain and is unnecessary for its proposed use. Some have noted that other vacant buildings could be re-used such as the Eskdale School site or various buildings along Baxtergate. Some have noted that there has been historical concerns that the land is unstable.	86	The Site requires a sea front location. The sequential assessment included within the Planning Statement shows that there are no sites/buildings in lower flood zones that are available.
<b>Design and Impact on Landscape</b> – concerns raised about the scale of the development and its impact on local views and vistas. Some claim the design is inappropriate in terms of its materiality and form. Some have stated that the building is not in keeping with the surrounding area, and would be detrimental to local heritage.	74	The accompanying Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement set out the design rationale and demonstrate how feedback from the relevant stakeholders has informed the finalised scheme
<b>Proposed Use</b> – money would be better spent elsewhere in Whitby. Some have stated that other uses (education, housing etc.) would be more appropriate. Some have claimed the development is unnecessary and a waste of money.	48	Whilst this is not a planning consideration, the Council takes the proper use of public fund seriously. Funding for the Whitby Maritime Hub is entirely funded by the Towns Fund. The Towns Fund is intended to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of our towns for long-term economic and productivity growth. The allocation of the Whitby Town Deal, Towns Fund is set out in the Whitby Town Investment Plan. Following extensive consultation and analysis of the evidence, workstreams groups were established to identify projects that addressed the key challenges for the town. Projects then were required to produce a Business Case to demonstrate good value for money for the public funding. An allocation of £10 million was awarded to Maritime Hub on the strength that it would provide access to high quality training for the maritime industry and increase the prosperity in Whitby.
<b>Other General Comments</b> – some have requested confirmation of who the end users will be and how the development will be managed. Some have	13	The proposals will provide new accommodation for the harbour master as well as space for maritime based businesses.

stated that the consultation was poorly advertised and presented.		
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Table 3.3 – General Issues Raised

## SECTION 4: SUMMARY

- 4.1 This Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the policy considerations relevant to the proposed scheme have informed the engagement strategy applied to consult with stakeholders and inform the evolution of the proposed scheme. The proposals positively consider the advice set out in the NPPF and Localism Act to ensure that appropriate levels of engagement have been undertaken.
- 4.2 Having considered the guidance set out in the NPPF, the Localism Act and the Council's own SCI, the Applicant has adopted a proactive approach to engage with the local community and stakeholders across several different events in different locations across the area.
- 4.3 The comments received through the community engagement process have resulted in design amendments to create a legible development, which positively responds to the surrounding locality and the specific characteristics of the site.
- 4.4 The Applicant considers the engagement outlined in this Statement of Community Involvement to be invaluable to the development process and an open approach to consultation will continue during the application process, supported by the statutory consultation process.