

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

LAND WEST OF SCHOOL LANE, HIGHAM

FEBRUARY 2026



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LAND WEST OF SCHOOL LANE // HIGHAM

1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Scott Properties in support of an outline planning application for up to 50 dwellings at Land West of School Lane, Higham (the Site).

It provides an account of the meetings, discussions and events that have been held with Planning Officers, local residents and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the proposed development.

The statement is structured by the groups we engaged with rather than chronologically in order to best explain the content of discussions held with each group.

2. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS WITH GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes pre-application engagement with local planning authorities, stating at paragraph 40:

“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.”

Gravesham Borough Council’s Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in October 2019, and encourages pre-application discussions with the Council before formal applications are made, as well as consultation with local communities.

Representations in support of the Site have been submitted at every stage of the Local Plan process to date, including the Regulation 18 consultations 2018 and 2020.

A pre-application request was submitted to the Council in January 2021. Advice was sought in respect of a proposal for circa 37 dwellings, public open space, landscaping, and associated infrastructure. A response was received in May 2021 (PRE20210047), including input from Kent Police, Kent County Council Flood and Water Management, and the Environment Agency.

The points raised in the pre-application response were fed back to the project team, and the evolution of the proposals is detailed in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application. The pre-application process also confirmed the validation requirements for the planning application.

3. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER TECHNICAL CONSULTEES

A pre-application request was submitted to Kent County Council’s Highways and Transportation department in September 2025. A response was received in November 2025, which is provided at Appendix A of the Transport Statement which is submitted with this application.

A separate pre-application meeting was held with the Flooding and Drainage department at Kent County Council in their capacity as the Lead Local Flood Authority. This meeting was helpful in agreeing the principles for the management of surface water from the Site, as detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment which is submitted with this application.

4. CONTACT WITH HIGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council was initially contacted in May 2016, shortly after Scott Properties began work on the development proposals, and the following response was received:

"I regret to inform you that my Members have declined your offer to attend our Parish Council Meeting on 4th July 2016 as it is not their policy to meet with any developer before any firm proposals have been formulated and that they do not support development within the village envelope."

The Parish Council were contacted again in November 2025, to confirm arrangements for the public consultation event (see below). A meeting with the Parish Council was also offered, and the following response was received in January 2026.

"Thank you for your offer of meeting with the Parish Council to discuss the proposals but as standard the Parish Council does not engage or provide comments unless a formal application has been made to the Planning Authority. At that time comments are only made to the Planning Authority."

5. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Scott Properties held a public consultation event from 2pm to 7pm on the 29th of January 2026 at Higham Memorial Hall. In order to raise awareness of the event, leaflets were posted to over 1,500 residential and business addresses in Higham and Lower Higham on the 15th of January. The leaflets provided the details of the event, as well as the link for the consultation website and contact details for Scott Properties. The consultation website was due to go live after the event on the 27th, but following a complaint from a member of the public that the information should be available before the event, the website was put live on the morning of the 29th of January.

The event was attended by c. 60 people, and A1 boards were displayed to show the site location, proposed Framework Plan and technical information for the proposals. Four members of staff from Scott Properties were on hand to answer questions, and feedback forms were provided to be either filled in at the time or taken home to complete and post (stamped and addressed envelopes were available). There were also A3 copies of the consultation boards available for anyone unable to access the content online.

The consultation website replicated the information presented at the event and the paper feedback form. The feedback forms and website both requested that all feedback was provided by the 15th of February, and the website was live until the morning of the 16th of February.

A total of 33 feedback forms were received (9 hard copies and 24 online). The feedback form requested (non-compulsory) details such as name, age, and address. Feedback was received across three of the four age groups, with 0 respondents aged under 21, 4 aged 21-40, 5 aged 41-60, and 19 aged over 60. There were 5 responses for which 'Prefer not to say' was selected, or the field was left blank.

The form then asked whether people were a resident of Higham, for which all responses were either 'Yes' or blank.

The next question was **"Are you in support of new homes within Higham?"**. The responses were 5 'Yes' and 20 'No', with 8 stating 'Not sure'. So clearly, the majority of respondents are not supportive of new residential development in Higham.

The feedback form went on to ask “*What type(s) of housing do you feel is most needed in the area?*”, with a list of possible options. The responses were as follows:

- ‘Starter Homes’ (7)
- ‘Family Housing’ (4)
- ‘Affordable Housing’ (11)
- ‘Housing for Older People’ (2)
- ‘Other (please specify)’ (11)

Where ‘Other’ was selected, the further comments related to there being no need for housing (9) or re-stated one of the previous options (2). Whilst 61% of respondents were not in support of new homes in Higham, the most common type of housing selected was affordable housing, which was selected by 33% of respondents.

Respondents were then asked to rate the proposals across three different aspects, with the responses as follows:

- Layout: ‘Good’ (5), ‘Average’ (7), ‘Poor’ (13), and ‘No Opinion’ (7)
- Accessibility: ‘Good’ (2), ‘Average’ (5), ‘Poor’ (21), and ‘No Opinion’ (4)
- Open Space: ‘Good’ (5), ‘Average’ (7), ‘Poor’ (14), and ‘No Opinion’ (6)

The final part of the feedback form was a free text area where respondents were asked “*Please let us know any additional comments you have in relation to the proposals*”. The physical space on the paper feedback form was around one third of a sheet of A4, and on the website the text box had a limit of 2,000 characters (c. 350-400 words). One complaint was received that this character limit was too low, but the respondent was then able to send their feedback in full to the consultation email address which was provided on the event flyer and feedback form.

All of the comments and suggested improvements received within the feedback forms or verbally at the event have been collated by subject matter and are provided in the table on the following pages, with Scott Properties’ response alongside.

Comments	Scott Properties’ Response
There is already enough housing in the area / no more houses are needed	There is a significant unmet need for housing within the Borough, with the Council currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. This position is addressed further in the Planning Statement which accompanies this application.
The existing doctor’s surgery is at capacity and it is being relocated out of the village	The NHS will be consulted on the planning application and any measures required to mitigate the impact of this development could be funded via the s106 agreement.
There is a lack of capacity at the local primary school	Kent County Council (Education) will be consulted on the planning application and any measures to mitigate the impact of this development could be funded via the s106 agreement.

Comments	Scott Properties' Response
The local roads are congested / not wide enough and will not cope with the additional traffic (including construction traffic).	A Transport Statement is submitted alongside the application, which considers the development's impact on the local highway network. This has been developed following pre-application discussions with Kent County Council as the statutory consultee.
The development will lead to air quality issues / pollution	Any planning permission would include a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which would need to detail measures taken to mitigate any pollution from the construction phase.
The proposed development will devalue my property	Whilst we do not consider this to be the case, this is not a planning matter so is not addressed in detail. The Design and Access Statement details the measures that have been taken to protect the amenity of existing neighbouring properties at this outline design stage.
The proposed development will ruin the view from my property.	Again, this is not a planning matter and is covered by the previous response.
The proposed development will negatively affect the character of Higham	It is agreed that new residential development in an area leads to an unavoidable change in character when the site comprises greenfield land, and this harm needs to be weighed against the benefits of the proposal. The proposed development has been informed by detailed technical assessments in respect of Green Belt, landscape, and heritage, and the proposed mitigation measures are detailed in the Design and Access Statement.
Higham will no longer be a village if this development goes ahead	We do not think this is the case, but understand the point being made in respect of the character of the settlement (see above).
The land is Green Belt and should be protected	Green Belt land is generally afforded a greater level of protection than non-Green Belt land. The planning argument for this proposal is detailed further in the Planning Statement which accompanies this application.
Brownfield sites should be developed before greenfield sites	This is an accepted point of planning policy, but Gravesham Borough Council will not be able to deliver the quantum of new housing required by only developing brownfield sites.

Comments	Scott Properties' Response
The development will cause flooding for existing residents	The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment, and the Lead Local Flood Authority will be a statutory consultee. Measures are proposed to avoid the risk of surface water flooding and the LLFA will object if these measures are not considered to be adequate.
The development will lead to a loss of open space	It is agreed that the Site is currently greenfield land, but the majority of this land (with the exception of the public footpaths) is not currently accessible to the public. The proposed development will deliver significant areas of new public open space, which we consider to be a benefit.
The development will be damaging to wildlife.	The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, to demonstrate that a net gain of a least 10% can be achieved on site.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This Statement of Community Involvement has been positively prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance and demonstrates the steps that have been taken to ensure that local stakeholders have had the opportunity to share their views on the proposed development, which will continue during the application process. The Design and Access Statement outlines the evolution of the scheme as a result of this engagement. The technical information prepared in support of the scheme is submitted with the planning application and summarised within the Planning Statement.

APPENDIX I - INVITATION FLYER

INVITATION TO ATTEND A PUBLIC CONSULTATION

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT LAND WEST OF SCHOOL LANE, HIGHAM

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

From 2pm - 7pm on Thursday 29th January
Higham Memorial Hall, School Lane, Higham, ME3 7JL



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

If you can't make it...

You can still view the proposals and provide feedback.

Please visit the website at **www.higham.mscott.co.uk** which will be live from 8pm on Thursday 29th January until 8pm on Sunday 15th February.

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



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APPENDIX II - FEEDBACK FORM

FEEDBACK FORM

LAND WEST OF SCHOOL LANE, HIGHAM

Name:

Postcode:

Age range:

Under 21

21-40

41-60

Over 60

Prefer not
to say

1) Are you a resident of Higham? (Please circle below)

Yes

No

2) Are you in support of new homes within Higham?

Yes

No

Not sure

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

Starter
Homes

Family
Housing

Affordable
Housing

Housing for
Older People

Other (please specify):

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Continued overleaf...

4) How would you describe the following aspects of our proposals:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|---------|------|------------|
| a) | <i>Layout:</i> | Good | Average | Poor | No Opinion |
| b) | <i>Accessibility:</i> | Good | Average | Poor | No Opinion |
| c) | <i>Open Space:</i> | Good | Average | Poor | No Opinion |

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

Please place your completed form into the box provided or take a stamped addressed envelope and post it back to us. You can also submit your feedback via the website below.

Website: www.higham.mscott.co.uk

Address: Scott Properties, Suite 5 - Oyster House, Severalls Lane, Colchester, Essex CO4 9PD

Email: higham@mscott.co.uk

The consultation period will end at 8:00pm on Sunday 15th February and we request that your feedback is returned to us by this date. Any feedback received after this time may not be considered.

The information you provide will be used by M Scott Properties Ltd to establish the views of the community in relation to this proposal and assist in formulating our planning proposal. We will not use your data to contact you unless you have specifically asked us to, nor will we share your personal information with any third party. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with our Privacy Policy, a copy of which is available at www.mscott.co.uk or can be provided to you in hardcopy format upon request.



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