Land east of Holt Road, Horsford

Statement of Community Engagement

Prepared by Meeting Place Communications on behalf of David Wilson Homes (Eastern)
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1. Introduction

This Statement of Community Engagement sets out the strategy undertaken for consulting the local community with regard to David Wilson Homes’ plans for a new development on land east of Holt Road, Horsford. The proposals seek to develop the site with 259 new homes including infrastructure and public open space.

This document demonstrates that the applicant has actively informed and involved the local community about the plans, in accordance with Broadland District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and national planning guidance.

David Wilson Homes is committed to stakeholder engagement and wanted to ensure the community was made aware of the proposed development. David Wilson Homes provided opportunities to give feedback on the proposals to establish if any amendments could be taken on board prior to the submission of a planning application.

This Statement of Community Engagement gives an overview of all consultation activity undertaken prior to the current planning application submission.

David Wilson Homes, part of the Barratt Development Group, has been building quality new build homes since 1958, and is now recognised as the highest quality national housebuilder.

In 2015, David Wilson Homes won a 5 star housebuilder rating from the Home Builders Federation for the sixth year running – the only major national housebuilder to do so. David Wilson Homes also received the London Evening Standard New Homes Awards 2014 for Best Large Development winner at Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge. The judges commented this development ‘raises the bar’ for the next generation of communities.

Meeting Place Communications (MPC) was established in 2006 and we are now one of the leading public relations companies specialising in consultation around planning issues. We have worked with a wide range of house builders, retailers and commercial developers. We have extensive experience across England and Wales and we are experienced in reaching out and positively engaging with local residents when it comes to planning applications.
Community involvement is at the forefront of national planning policy and is noted in the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework (adopted March 2012). The NPPF states that ‘early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential’ in the creation of plans.

Planning Policy Statement 12 (para 4.21) required local authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of their Local Development Frameworks. The principle objective of the SCI is to ensure that all sections of the community, including local groups and organisations, are given an opportunity to engage in the planning process.

Broadland District Council adopted their most recent Statement of Community Involvement in July 2016. The SCI outlines how the Council will involve the community and other national and local stakeholders in the planning process. It also highlights the value of developers undertaking pre-applications consultation, and refers applicants to the council’s Community Involvement Protocol, a document which sets out how developers can engage communities prior to submitting a planning application.

2. Requirements of the consultation

The Community Involvement Protocol suggests that applicants should:

- "Adopt an inclusive approach to community and stakeholder involvement, ensuring that anyone who has an interest is given the opportunity to contribute ideas."

- "Demonstrate, by reporting back on the results of community and stakeholder involvement, that all views are listened to and considered."

- "Provide accessible, clear and relevant information relating to proposals and community involvement opportunities."

3. We have responded to this by...

Involving residents and stakeholders:
A newsletter was sent to approximately 1,800 addresses in Horsford, making residents aware of the plans and providing information on the proposals. The newsletter included a detachable feedback slip, and directed recipients to the online consultation hub.

Engaging with local representatives:
We wrote to Horsford Parish Council, offering them the opportunity to meet to discuss the plans on a one to one basis. Although this invitation was declined, we made it clear that our offer to meet remained open.

Encouraging feedback:
The newsletter included a detachable feedback postcard that residents could return via Freepost with their comments and suggestions. A Freephone information line was also provided. The online consultation hub also provided opportunities to engage.

Engaging online:
An online consultation hub – www.eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk – was set up with information about the proposals. The hub was publicised through the newsletter and visitors were encouraged to submit feedback online.

Consulting with local residents:
Our Freephone line was published on the newsletter and on the website and we received around eight phone calls from local residents who had additional questions or who wanted to provide feedback in this way.
4. Consultation

4.1 Newsletter

A 4-page newsletter was sent to approximately 1,800 addresses around the site. This newsletter provided local residents with information about the proposals and informed them about how to give feedback.

- The newsletter included a detachable postcard which was already addressed to our Freepost address.
- The newsletter and detachable postcard can be viewed in Appendix A.
- The feedback received can be viewed in Appendix B.
- A Freephone line was also published in the newsletter, and a number of residents contacted us using this method.

At the time of writing, we have received 10 detachable postcards, all sent to our Freepost address. We have also received approximately eight calls to the Freephone line, with queries covering a wide range of issues.
4.2 Online consultation hub

The online consultation hub – www.eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk – was built specifically for the proposals. This gave information about the plans and explained key elements of the proposals, including design, access and landscaping. The website also had a built-in feedback form where respondents could contribute to the consultation, and also listed our consultation email address – eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk – our Freepost address, and our Freephone address, so that residents knew all the ways they could contact us. The feedback received on the website can be seen in Appendix C, and the letters and emails we received can be seen in Appendix D.

The online consultation hub also provided an introduction to David Wilson Homes, as well as images of previous developments delivered. Downloadable content was also made available, including a site plan and an online copy of the newsletter.

Our website will continue to be updated as the application moves through the planning process, and will continue to be a useful source of information for local residents.
5. Summary of feedback

Please see Appendix B for verbatim feedback from the detachable feedback form and Appendices C and D for written feedback received online and from letters. It should be noted that often couples fill out one feedback card between them, so the feedback represents the views of more people than the number of feedback forms we received.

5.1 Sample comments

“Have you thought about school places, shops and more important the strain on our local GP surgery.”

“Adding the required number of vehicle movements to Green Lane/Holt Road at rush hour times will require substantial improvement!”

“We are a village not an extension of Norwich and nor do we want to be.”

“It would be a great demonstration of transparency if comments logged via the website could be seen by others.”

10 detachable feedback forms returned

6 comments submitted via the website
6. Responding to feedback

Local infrastructure

A number of consultation participants raised concerns about the impact of development on schools, doctors and amenities.

Applicant’s response:
Horsford is recognised as a sustainable location, with a good range of existing services and facilities. If granted planning permission, David Wilson Homes would make significant contributions to local services, through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). These funds would help improve local facilities, such as education facilities, healthcare and roads. The new Public Open Space, including an equipped area of play, would deliver new amenity space for the village.

Bungalows

We received a number of calls on the Freephone information line from residents who were keen to see the new development deliver bungalows for local people to downsize to.

Applicant’s response:
Our proposals include a diverse mix of homes, from one-bedroom maisonettes to five bedroom family homes. Our plans do include some bungalows, and we are confident that the development will help to meet diverse local housing needs.

Junction improvements

Some respondents wanted reassurance that the improvements to the junction of Holt Road and Green Lane would be sufficient to cope with added vehicle movements.

Applicant’s response:
We are confident that the proposed access arrangements will be suitable. Green Lane would be widened between the entrance to the development and the junction with Holt Road, and the speed limit will be reduced to 30mph. Visibility at the re-profiled junction will meet highway standards and the existing speed limit change location on Holt Road will be moved north.

Village character

Some of those who left feedback were keen for Horsford to retain its village character.

Applicant’s response:
The scheme has been designed with Horsford’s unique local character in mind. The range of homes proposed will help create a visually interesting street scene, and houses will be constructed with materials that are in keeping with other properties in the surrounding area.
7. Conclusion

David Wilson Homes has undertaken pre-planning application engagement with the wider community and stakeholders and actively involved them in the project development, in accordance with the guidance in Broadland District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and Community Involvement Protocol.

This activity included a newsletter sent to local residents with the opportunity to provide feedback, a Freepost address and Freephone line, engagement in the local community, and an online consultation hub.

David Wilson Homes has listened to and reflected on the feedback received throughout the consultation process, and is pleased that many local people provided constructive feedback.

The concerns of those who were not supportive of the development have been reflected upon and addressed within the proposals wherever possible. The local community will be kept updated and informed while the application is live and David Wilson Homes looks forward to continuing discussions.
Appendix A: Newsletter

David Wilson Homes is preparing proposals for 259 new homes on land east of Holt Road, Horsford. Adjacent to our current Butterfly Mill development, the site would be accessed from Holt Road, via a widened and improved Green Lane.

The proposals include a mix of new homes ranging from one bed maisonettes and two bed homes, ideal for first time buyers, up to three, four and five bedroom family homes.

Before submitting a full planning application to Broadland District Council, we would like to gather feedback from the local community.

You can let us know your views by filling in the attached feedback card and returning to the FreePost address provided, or by visiting our online consultation hub at www.eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk.

If you have any questions, you can also email us on info@eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk or call us on 0800 148 8911.

eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk

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### About David Wilson Homes

David Wilson Homes, part of the Bovis Homes Development Group, has been building quality new build homes since 1958, and is now recognised as the highest quality national housebuilder.

In 2015, we won a 5 star housebuilder rating from the Home Builders Federation for the sixth year running – the only major housebuilder to do so.

We also received the London Evening Standard New Homes Awards 2014 for Best Large Development winner at Brampton Meadows, Cheadle. The judges commented the development ‘raises the bar’ for the next generation of communities.

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### Consultation

You can let us know what you think by returning the below feedback slip, by emailing us at info@eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk, or calling 0800 148 8911. You can also visit our online consultation hub at www.eastofholtroadhorsford.co.uk.

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**FREEPOST**

MPC FEEDBACK

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259 new private & affordable homes on land east of Holt Road, Horsford.
**Design**

The design of the scheme has been informed by Harford’s unique local character. New homes will be constructed with materials that are in keeping with existing homes in the area, and the range of homes proposed will help create a visually interesting street scene.

The proposals aim to provide residents with a mix of private gardens and communal areas. A main area of public open space is planned for the middle of the site, with smaller areas also created in key areas of the site.

The layout of the scheme has been created with the intention of creating a safe environment for residents and visitors. The design incorporates ‘Secured by Design’ principles, which aim to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime.

**Landscape**

The scheme will deliver 27,352 square metres of public open space and landscaping that is sensitive to the site’s semi-rural context. The central area of public open space will provide an equipped area of play for local children, and will be large enough to be used for a range of activities.

The plans also include significant planting and screening, particularly along the boundaries of adjacent properties. Landscape features will include new trees, native hedges and ornamental plants. Where appropriate, existing key trees will be retained.

**Transport & access**

Vehicular access will be provided from Green Lane to the north of the site, to enable this Green Lane will be widened for vehicles and the junction of Green Lane and Hill Road will be improved.

Access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided via the improved Green Lane. The plans also ensure pedestrian and cycle connectivity with our Taylor Wimpey development. Paths through the site will ensure accessibility for both people with disabilities and able-bodied residents.

The development will allow buses to travel through the site, into Butterfly Mill and through to Mill Lane. Only buses and emergency vehicles will be able to access the Butterfly Mill development through a rising bollard system connecting the two sites.

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**Let us know your views**

If you would like to receive updates on the progress of these proposals, please leave us your contact details.

- **Comments:**
- **Name:**
- **Address:**
- **Postcode:**
- **Email:**
- **Telephone:**

The information supplied on this form will be retained by Wrong Place Communications on a database and will be used to compile responses. Your information may also be used to keep you informed about future developments and you could be contacted by letter, fax, telephone or email. If you do not wish to receive such further information please tick this box.
Appendix B: Newsletter feedback

• No thank you! Horsford is a village not a town!

• Horsford village is slowly being destroyed by houses. No more houses in Horsford!

• Too much traffic going through village as it is. Schools can't cope. Co-op won't cope. Spoil it by building more houses.

• Enough houses here already. Village already has too much traffic.

• Please, please choose another area. Horsford is a small rural village, which has been built up too much and too fast over recent years. Leave it how it is, before more homes destroy Horsford. More homes mean more traffic, schools and surgeries suffer, and we lose more of our beautiful countryside.

• Terrible news. David Wilson Homes have gone down even further in my estimations. Before I bought my home I did ask about any future plans and was told by your sales person there were none! What a lie. What a shame about Green Lane. I am now selling.

• I am not averse to improving Horsford but this site seems a step too far. Because the school is opposite to where I live I fear the traffic will further entrap me in my home. It takes up to 30 minutes to get out of my drive at the moment and with all the increase in traffic will make it worse. Have you thought about school places, shops and more important the strain on our local GP surgery. We have to wait two weeks for an appointment. Now how long will we wait with residents for another 250 houses? Say no to this development.

• This is a numbskull idea. All those houses at the north end of Horsford will have an effect on every resident here, as you can see this will mean another, perhaps 1,000 vehicles through Horsford. It’s a nightmare now crossing our main road or trying to exit a side road, not to mention the impact on the schools, doctors surgeries and amenities. Why not build at the southern end of the village as this would not create all the extra commuter traffic through the village, and this would be close to all the amenities of Taverham and Drayton and with the new Northern Bypass road would be much quicker and easier for commuters to get to Norwich. No vote.

• How is Holt Road going to cope with all the extra traffic? 5 weeks is the normal time to wait for a doctors appointment at any of the three surgeries, and schools will be overflowing.

• Keep green… Horsford is overpopulated now, let alone more! Strain on schools, doctors, roads. Horsford is not the size of Dereham or Wymondham. No more homes!
Appendix C: Website feedback

- Three main areas of specific comment, all recognising that homes have to be built somewhere! 1. Has there been adequate consultation with the education authorities regarding provision of schooling for the new residents? The school infrastructure in Horsford already needs development before adding many new pupils. Plus of course knock on into secondary education. 2. Has there been adequate consultation with the health care authorities? The Horsford doctors surgery is already very busy, even after integration with Drayton etc… Adding further, substantial, burden to the existing load is not going to help. 3. Junction improvement at Green Lane/Holt Road. Adding the required number of vehicle movements to this junction at rush hour times will require substantial improvement!! This is a difficult junction at which to join the Holt from either side because of the acute viewing angles, and that is at the present traffic load and at most times of day. Adding a large traffic load will not help at all. The junction is also further complicated by the entrance/exit to the parking area for Horsford Woods (Forestry Commission). Many locals and non-locals use this parking area for dog and family walks, and of course it is the Forestry Commission’s entrance to their woodland too. Binding this into the junction improvements would be essential. Given the speed of the Holt Road, approaching from Holt, drops to 40 mph just short of the junction, and recent traffic surveys have demonstrated that traffic entering Horsford has an average well above 40 mph (unsurprisingly!) greater speed restriction would seem essential. Is a roundabout or other traffic control being considered? If it isn’t planned thoroughly I can foresee accidents, and one occurred only the other day at this very junction.

- Further to my full submission it would be a great demonstration of transparency if comments logged via the website could be seen by others. May be too late if people haven’t been asked before submission but I wouldn’t object at all. To protect individuals it may be worth considering a Q&A of FAQ’s posted online and from postal comments on your website.

- I object to the building of properties east of Green Lane Horsford as I feel the village would not sustain so many more people and traffic. People going to school would use Mill Lane which is already virtually a carpark when cars queue to get in and out. When the NDR is completed there will be just one main route heading towards Norwich as I wouldn’t think anyone would use Shorthorn Rd onto Cromer Rd to head out, after all why go miles out of the way when Holt Rd is the quickest route. Also the impact on already busy doctors surgeries would be detrimental to patients using the practice. I feel that losing more farm land to development would mean Horsford would simply become a main road with hundreds of houses tagged on instead of a village, with no sense of character. Sadly, with the arrival of the NDR it would seem these pockets of development will pop up more and more so I feel it is important to object before Horsford becomes just another sprawl. I appreciate the need for housing however once vital farm land is built on its gone for good. Inner cities should be looked at as so many buildings stand empty ready for development and not the continuous plundering of the countryside.

- Absolutely ridiculous can’t get out of the gate now, my husband was born here I have lived here for 49 years it’s not a village any more. The schools are full as is the doctors surgery. There soon won’t be any green countryside left, I don’t know why you need peoples opinion on this as we all know it’s a forgone conclusion what ever we all object to it’s a waste of time.

- I am totally against any further large developments in Horsford for the following reasons. The village is fast losing its identity as a village and is becoming a town. The schools cannot cope with many more children. The Doctors are under extreme pressure to manage the patients they have without adding such a vast increase in numbers. There is far too much very fast traffic going through the village and many more accidents will occur at the Green Lane / Holt Road junction, even if the road is widened. The traffic from the Holt direction is too fast and the slight curve would endanger many lives.

- My property had been sold STC since May 2016 and achieved three hundred thousand pounds unfortunately due to a probate issue with my buyers I was unable to exchange contracts at this time and the matter dragged on to such a point that when it came time to exchange contracts I had to declare the David Wilson proposal to the rear of my property, at which point my buyers immediately withdrew their offer. I am currently seeking a new buyer and I wondered if by chance David Wilson Homes would consider purchasing my dwelling? If you are interested at all please do not hesitate to contact me.
Appendix D: Letters and emails

• I received the information RE: the proposed development of the Land east of Holt Road, Horsford. I believe there are several issue that need to be addressed before cramming 259 houses and families onto the plot. The local infrastructure seems to currently be at capacity. The local doctors surgery can clearly not cope with the current population. I regularly wait four to six weeks for an appointment, many of them at the neighboring surgeries in Drayton and Horsham St Faiths – people without their own transport don’t even have this luxury. My son doesn’t yet attend the school so I am unsure of how many places are available at the moment – hopefully this has been considered. With 33% affordable housing I imagine this will attract a lot of young families which will see a spike in school requirements over the next few years. I am also concerned about the extra volume of traffic along the holt road – assuming two adults per household there could be 1,000 extra journeys going past the woods and school. Pollution and accidents could potentially increase. Horsford is very lucky to be situated near the woods with the wildlife that inhabit it. I understand that the current fields are not protected but the continued erosion of green space next to the area can only have an adverse effect on the indigenous fauna - whether that’s pollution, destruction of habitat or even the extra cats hunting! On a personal note I moved to Horsford for the open spaces, privacy and sense of community. Our house will now be overlooked by at least 10 properties. We are now actively looking to move out of the area as we feel Horsford is developing the same feel as I would expect in the Longwater estate – houses crammed in and no sense of a country village community. I feel that the promise of native plants and trees will not be sufficient and an avenue of mature trees needs to be planted along the existing property line to increase privacy and try to mitigate the decrease in property prices for everyone.

• I state quite clearly my worries with regard to this proposed development and from the depth of feeling at the meeting in our village. I echo the feelings of many residents. The villagers did not want your last development for the same reasons and this proposed one is one too many. We are a village not an extension of Norwich and nor do we want to be. Please reconsider this plan and find somewhere else with more room for expansion.