

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Land North of Whalley Road, Read

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared to accompany the planning application for residential development on Land north of Whalley Road, Read (known locally as Hammond Ground). It explains how the local community has been consulted prior to submission, summarises the representations received, and describes how these have informed the preparation of the planning application.

The pre-application consultation has been undertaken having regard to national guidance and best practice, recognising the sensitivity of the site, its planning history, and the strength of local interest.

2. Consultation Methodology

2.1 Consultation Approach

The applicant and project team undertook targeted pre-application consultation with local residents and stakeholders prior to submission of the planning application. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Raise early awareness of the emerging proposals;
- Provide accessible information on the indicative masterplan and key development principles;
- Invite feedback from local residents and interested parties;
- Identify key issues and concerns to inform the preparation of the submission proposals and supporting assessments.

2.2 Consultation Activities

The following consultation measures were undertaken:

- **Distribution of consultation leaflets** to nearby residential properties in Read, setting out the site location, the nature of the emerging proposals and contact details for submitting comments;
- **Opportunity to provide written representations**, by email or letter, throughout the consultation period;
- **Provision of an illustrative masterplan**, identifying indicative development areas, access arrangements and proposed public open space.

The consultation period ran during **April 2026**.

3. Summary of Consultation Responses

3.1 Overview

A total of **30 written representations** were received during the consultation period. The responses demonstrate a high level of engagement from local residents and other interested parties.

The majority of representations objected to the principle of development on the site. While the tone and level of detail varied, the issues raised were highly consistent and fell into a number of common themes, summarised below.

3.2 Key Issues Raised

a. Principle of Development and Planning History

Many respondents objected to residential development on the site in principle, frequently referring to previous refusals of planning permission and dismissal at appeal, the Planning Inspector's conclusions regarding harm to a valued landscape, and assertions that no material change in circumstances has occurred since the previous appeal decision. Several representations questioned why the site is being promoted again, given its planning history and earlier findings.

b. Landscape Character and Visual Impact

A substantial proportion of respondents emphasised the contribution the site makes to the rural, edge-of-village character of Read, its open countryside views and its role as a clear settlement boundary, together with the historic parkland setting associated with Read Hall. Concerns were raised that development would result in permanent and irreversible harm to landscape character, openness and visual amenity.

c. Heritage and Historic Interest

Numerous responses highlighted the historic significance of the site, including its association with the Battle of Read Bridge (1642), its relationship to the Read Hall estate and historic parkland landscape, and potential sensitivity in relation to archaeology, including references to possible war graves and historic land use.

d. Traffic, Highways and Road Safety

Highway impacts were among the most frequently cited concerns. Issues raised included existing congestion on Whalley Road and connecting lanes, perceived road safety risks particularly near primary schools and during peak school times, increased vehicle movements associated with both construction and occupation of the development, and concerns regarding access arrangements, junction capacity and cumulative traffic impacts.

e. Local Infrastructure and Services

Many representations raised concerns regarding the capacity of local infrastructure and services, including availability of primary school places, access to GP and healthcare services, and limited local shops and community facilities. It was suggested that further development would place additional pressure on already stretched services and lead to increased reliance on private car travel.

f. Public Open Space and Potential for Future Development

A strong and recurring theme concerned scepticism about the proposed public open space. Respondents questioned whether land shown as open space would be protected in perpetuity, what mechanisms would prevent future development of those areas, and whether the proposals represent an initial phase of a wider or incremental development of the land. Many representations assumed that areas identified as public open space could be the subject of future planning applications once residential development is established.

g. Impact on Residential Amenity

A number of representations, particularly from residents immediately adjoining the site, raised detailed concerns regarding residential amenity. Issues cited included loss of outlook, privacy and rural setting for properties backing onto the site; proximity of indicative development parcels to existing garden boundaries; lack of detail at consultation stage regarding house types, heights, massing and separation distances; construction impacts including noise, dust and disturbance; and potential implications for property value and saleability.

h. Ecology, Biodiversity and Environmental Effects

Several representations raised concerns about environmental impacts, including effects on wildlife habitats and protected species (with references to bats, birds of prey and other fauna), loss of greenfield land and grazing use, drainage and flooding, soil conditions, and the need for comprehensive ecological assessment and mitigation.

i. Consultation Process and Level of Detail

A number of respondents criticised the consultation process itself, raising concerns that information provided was too limited or indicative to enable fully informed comment, that consultation materials lacked sufficient detail on layout, scale and design, and that the process was perceived by some as procedural rather than genuinely exploratory, particularly given the site's planning history. These representations expressed a desire for earlier, more detailed and more transparent engagement, including consideration of alternatives to development.

4. Response to Consultation

All consultation responses have been reviewed by the project team and have informed the preparation of the planning application and its supporting documentation.

Public Open Space and Long-Term Protection

A significant concern raised by local residents related to the permanence of the proposed public open space and the risk of future development. The applicant confirms that the public open space will be **protected from future development** by being placed within a **management company owned by the future residents of the development**. The land will be retained and managed for the benefit of the community, ensuring that it cannot be developed separately at a later date. This approach provides long-term stewardship and certainty and directly addresses concerns that the public open space could represent a temporary or interim arrangement.

Housing Mix and Community Benefits

The submitted proposals include a total of **77 dwellings**, comprising **30% on-site affordable housing** and **15 bungalows**. The proposed housing mix provides a range of dwelling types and tenures, including provision suitable for older residents and those seeking to remain within the local community.

Technical Assessment and Detailed Design

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Heritage Assessment, Transport Assessment and all the necessary technical and ecological reports and surveys. Matters of residential amenity, layout principles, buffering and separation distances, and the interface with existing properties are addressed through the submitted plans and Design and Access Statement.

Some respondents expressed concern regarding the level of detail available at consultation stage. The applicant notes these concerns and confirms that the consultation material was intentionally illustrative, with full technical detail, fixed parameters and impact assessments now provided as part of the submitted planning application. The applicant acknowledges the strength of local feeling relating to the site and recognises that where valid matters have been raised, they are material considerations in the determination of the application.

5. Ongoing Engagement

The applicant remains committed to constructive engagement through the formal planning process. All representations made in response to the submitted planning application will be considered by Ribble Valley Borough Council as part of the determination process.

6. Conclusion

This Statement of Community Involvement demonstrates that meaningful pre-application consultation has been undertaken, that a wide and informed range of representations has been received, and that the issues raised have been clearly identified and taken into account in the preparation of the planning application.

The consultation process has provided valuable feedback, ensuring that community concerns are transparently documented and addressed through the application and its supporting material.

Appendix A – Summary of Key Consultation Issues and Applicant Response

Key concern raised by residents	How the planning application addresses the concern
Risk of future development on “public open space”	All proposed public open space will be transferred to and retained by a management company owned by the future residents . This structure prevents disposal or redevelopment of the land and secures its long-term use as open space in perpetuity. This directly responds to repeated concerns that the open space could form a future development phase.
Lack of affordable housing	The scheme provides 30% on-site affordable housing , fully policy-compliant, secured through the planning application.
Lack of housing suitable for older residents	The proposals include 15 bungalows within the overall total of 77 dwellings , providing single-storey accommodation suitable for older households and those with mobility needs.
Landscape and visual impact	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment accompanies the application, assessing effects on landscape character, views and the setting of Read, and informing the layout and design of the scheme.
Heritage and historical impacts	A Heritage Assessment addresses impacts on the historic parkland setting of Read Hall, the wider historic landscape and potential archaeological considerations, including associations with the Battle of Read Bridge.
Traffic congestion and highway safety	A Transport Assessment assesses access arrangements, capacity, and cumulative traffic impacts, including effects during peak periods and near local schools.
Ecology, wildlife and drainage	Ecological surveys and mitigation proposals form part of the submission, addressing protected species, habitats, greenfield land use and surface water considerations.
Consultation lacked detail	Consultation materials were illustrative. Full technical assessments, detailed layout parameters and mitigation measures are now provided at the application stage to support informed decision-making.