ROYALPILGRIM
COMMUNICATIONS

Statement of Community Involvement

Residential Development, Woodward Court, Mirfield

Bellway

December 2025

Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared on behalf of Bellway Homes as part of the Planning Application that seeks Full Planning Permission for the erection of up to 75 residential dwellings on land off Woodward Court, Mirfield.

A detailed public consultation has taken place including online, written and in-person engagement; engagement with local stakeholders and local media publicity.

About Royal Pilgrim Communications

Royal Pilgrim Communications is a communications consultancy dedicated to delivering inclusive community and stakeholder consultation to support planning applications and development projects. Royal Pilgrim Communications has a track record of public consultation and stakeholder engagement activity and will seek to engage with a variety of local stakeholder groups and residents.

Consultation Process

Policies and guidance

National and local government encourage developers to consult with local communities and stakeholders before submitting a planning application.

Consultation and communication with local communities is an important element of the planning process. It is important that local communities are made fully aware of proposals affecting their area and are provided with opportunities to view any plans and discuss issues with the developers or their professional team. This process should also enable the community to provide feedback.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 40 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) places emphasis on improving communication and engagement at pre-application stage. It advises that:

'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'.

Paragraph 41 states the local authority should:

'…encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.'

Kirklees Council

Prior to commencing engagement, Royal Pilgrim reviewed Kirklees Council's Statement of Community Involvement (March 2024) and Our Development Management Charter (December 2024) documents, both of which set out how the authority consults on statutory documents and planning applications. Whilst no guidance on pre-application engagement is provided to applicants, both documents place importance on community engagement in the planning process and advises applicants to seek formal pre-application advice prior to submitting any planning application.

As such, a pre-application meeting was held between Bellway Homes and Kirklees Council Planning Officers on 2 September 2025.

Informing residents, stakeholders and the public

Stakeholders

The following key stakeholders were identified:

- Kirklees Council ward members for Mirfield, Cllrs Martyn Bolt, Vivien Lees-Hamilton and Itrat Ali
- Mirfield Town Council
- Save Mirfield Campaign Group
- Neighbouring properties including Crossley Fields School

Ward members

Prior to launching public engagement, ward members were contacted via email informing them of the forthcoming planning application and consultation and offering to arrange a meeting with the development team. A meeting was held between all three ward members and Bellway Homes on Friday 26 September 2025.

Topics of discussion at the meeting included:

- Highways issues including congestion at peak hours, school drop-off and pick-up and how the development would impact capacity on the existing highways network. Junction modelling of the wider area was suggested
- Impacts on existing education and healthcare infrastructure
- Site drainage and existing coal seams on the site
- Environmental and ecological impacts.

Mirfield Town Council

An email, inviting Mirfield Town Council informing them of the proposals, inviting them to the forthcoming consultation event and offering to arrange a separate meeting was sent on Friday 26 September 2025.

Save Mirfield

As above, an email was sent to Save Mirfield inviting them to the consultation event. The email was sent to the email address on the website, however, the email was returned as unavailable and an alternative was sought, without success. However, Save Mirfield was made aware of the consultation via communication with other stakeholders and/or the public and attended the consultation event.

Neighbours

A letter (See Appendix 1) was sent to 386 neighbouring properties on Thursday 25 September, including Crossley Fields School, inviting them to take part in the consultation and attend the public exhibition. A Freephone 0800 number and email address were also provided for recipients to raise any queries directly with the team.

Wider local community

An information flyer (Appendix 2) publicising the consultation event was distributed door-to-door to 2,843 properties in the local area, beginning with the nearest neighbours from Friday 19 September. The distribution was solus, meaning no other leaflets were delivered at the same time, to ensure that as many people as possible had sight of the flyer and consultation information.

The flyer also detailed how residents can provide feedback including an email address, freephone telephone number or online via the project website – www.bellway-mirfield.co.uk

Media Release

A media release (Appendix 3) was issued to local news outlets to inform the wider community about the proposals and public consultation. The release received coverage across various local media outlets.

Website

A website was launched which includes details about the plans, consultation event and an online survey. This provides residents with the opportunity to submit feedback online, as well as via the survey, by email, or via a freephone telephone number. The website can be accessed at: www.bellway-mirfield.co.uk

In-person information event

An information event was held to allow residents to view the proposals and speak to members of the development team. The event took place on Thursday 2nd October at St Andrew's Church, Old Bank Road, Mirfield and was attended by around 75 people.



The event format was a drop-in session and members of the public were able to attend anytime during the opening hours between 4pm – 7pm. The proposals were displayed on roller banners and feedback forms were also available for people to complete on the day, or take away with a freepost envelope.

Feedback

Summary

To date, 21 feedback forms have been submitted either at the in-person consultation event or online via the website's feedback form. Two of the forms were supportive of the proposals. One person welcomed the development as they were looking to move back into the area and the other agreed with the scheme if Wellhouse Lane could be made one way.

The key issues raised via the feedback form and through discussions at the consultation event or at meetings, include:

Highways & Access

Several comments were made regarding existing highways issues and congestion, especially around school drop-off and pick up, and that the development would have a significant adverse impact on the existing situation.

Some mentioned that a secondary access/exit point to the development was required to ease congestion on Woodward Court and one person suggested that the access should be via Balderstone Hall Lane. Making Wellhouse Lane a one-way street was also suggested.

Residential amenity

Residential amenity was raised by some respondents and included concerns around overlooking from the new properties, flooding and drainage and boundary treatments. It was also suggested by a resident on Crossley Lane that the footpath to the school from Crossley Lane be closed and diverted via the site, to improve the current parking disruption during drop off and pick up.

Flooding, drainage & coal

Some respondents raised this as a potential issue saying that the site has coal seams running underneath and is currently boggy. One resident raised the smell of the water in the attenuation pond as a potential issue.

Social infrastructure

A number of respondents mentioned that the proposals would put pressure on already stretched infrastructure including healthcare and education.

Scheme amends

A number of respondents queried what was different about the current proposals from the previously refused scheme.

Biodiversity

Some respondents raised this as a key consideration, including loss of habitat for wildlife.

Response to issues and considerations

Highways & Access

A Transport Assessment (TA) submitted with the planning application considers existing roads, traffic flows, traffic speeds, on-street parking, junction capacities, and accident data, as well as estimated new trips generated by the development. It also looks at any mitigation that may be required on the surrounding road network. The Transport Assessment will be rigorously assessed by Kirklees Council through the planning process to ensure the development is acceptable in highways terms.

The TA also compares the data collated in 2017, for the planning application submitted that year, to the current situation using the most up-to-date data from the national trip database, TRICS and new traffic counts.

In summary, the TA shows that there has been a general decline in residential development vehicular trip rates over the last decade or so, particularly accelerated by the Covid pandemic and the associated changes in working practices and travel patterns.

A report prepared in 2022 by TRICS shows that on average, residential vehicular trip rates have reduced by 5.4% compared to the previous decade. The TA submitted with the application also shows that for this particular site the predicted peak hour trip rates are some 6% to 7% less than the values previously put forward in the 2017 TA and 25% less than the values previously considered appropriate by Kirklees Council.

The existing traffic flows along the Wellhouse Lane corridor have also reduced since the previous planning application was submitted. This is based on a comparison between the average daily flows undertaken over a 7-day period in 2016 (a survey used to inform the 2017 TA) and a 7-day period in 2025 (used to inform our current TA) - this shows that traffic flows on Wellhouse Lane (just south of the Woodward Court Junction) have reduced by some 12% to 14% during the intervening nine-year period.

All of the modelled junctions would operate comfortably within capacity during the future 2030 design year and can therefore satisfactorily accommodate the development proposals. Beyond these junctions the development impact dilutes even further, becoming negligible and immaterial compared with daily fluctuations in traffic flows. The impact of the development is certainly not severe which is the test applied in paragraph 116 of the NPPF.

During the busiest AM and PM peak hours, the development is predicted to generate 39 two-way trips during the peak AM hours and 38 two-way trips in the peak PM hours. The trips will then reduce significantly along the Wellhouse Lane corridor because the distribution shows circa 58% will head north and 42% south. Hence, a maximum of around 17 two-way trips routing along the southern section of Wellhouse Lane, which is the length containing areas of constrained highway.

Furthermore, at the public consultation event, a number of local residents suggested the scheme including a secondary vehicular access point, to help ease local traffic. Following the event, this was explored and considered in great detail which has resulted in the scheme being amended to create a second exit for vehicles out of the site, which will minimise traffic around the Woodward Court and Wellhouse Lane junction and the Wellhouse Lane/Flash Lane junction, for those travelling from the site to destinations to the east and south of the site.

The development proposals result in an overall reduction in traffic flows on the southern section of Wellhouse Lane during the morning peak hour and no change during the evening peak hour i.e. providing either a betterment or at least a 'nil detriment' impact on this part of the road network.

Residential amenity

Engagement is ongoing and we will liaise directly with neighbouring residents to answer individual questions regarding the proposals, including issues relating to overlooking and boundary treatments.

The distance between existing properties and new properties will vary across the site. However, there will be a minimum of 21m plus a significant landscape buffer to protect the amenity of existing neighbours. The landscape plan, submitted as part of the planning application provides further information.

Flooding, drainage & coal

The Flooding & Drainage Assessment submitted as part of the planning application considers mitigation measures to ensure that the rainwater run-off rates remain the same as at present. Mitigation measures proposed include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as an attenuation basin which captures rainwater and releases it slowly.

Regarding the coal seams across the site, further surveys have been undertaken as recommended by the Coal Authority to identify the locations of the shaft openings. Appropriate ground works will be undertaken to ensure the development is safe.

Social infrastructure

During the determination of the planning application, Kirklees Council will assess the scheme to establish if any s106 monies are required as a result of the development.

Scheme amends

Although the proposals look similar to those previously proposed, there are a number of things that have changed since 2018.

On site changes:

- More of the existing hedgerow is retained
- A landscaping buffer is proposed between existing properties and the site
- More tree planting is proposed
- Introduction of a secondary vehicular access point

Other changes:

- The site is allocated as Safeguarded land within Kirklees Council's Local Plan, which safeguards the site for potential development in the future.
- Kirklees Council does not have a 5-year housing land supply and this site will help to address the very immediate need, providing much needed new homes.
- There has been a decline in existing traffic flows and residential development vehicular trip rates – as explained earlier in the document and within the TA.

Biodiversity

An ecological survey will be undertaken to assess existing habitats and wildlife and set out mitigation measures where appropriate. The existing hedgerow on the site will be retained and new planting, including tree planting will provide habitat opportunities. The development will achieve a 10% BNG with a mix of onsite and offsite measures.

Conclusion

A comprehensive engagement has been undertaken prior to submitting a planning application for the proposed development, including a meeting with ward members and an in-person consultation event. Amendments have been made as a result of community and stakeholder feedback.

Engagement is ongoing and will continue throughout the planning and development process. All feedback received has been considered by the development team and we have attempted to respond to issues and address concerns raised.

Appendix 1: Neighbour letter

On behalf of

18 September 2025

Dear Neighbour,

Proposed residential development, land off Woodward Court, Mirfield – Invitation to public consultation

I am writing on behalf of Bellway Homes regarding its proposed residential development on land off Woodward Court, Mirfield. Bellway is preparing to submit a planning application for 75 new homes to Kirklees Council in the coming weeks, but before that happens, we are consulting with the local community.

I would like to invite you to a drop-in public consultation event where you will be able to view the proposals and speak to members of the development team. The event will be held on Thursday 2 October at St Andrew's Church, Old Bank Road, Mirfield between 4pm and 7pm.

The site is allocated as Safeguarded land within Kirklees Council's Local Plan, which safeguards the site for potential development in the future. However, given the lack of viable and deliverable allocated land in Kirklees, and the demonstrable and pressing requirement for new homes in the area, Bellway would like to bring this site forward sooner to help to address the immediate housing needs of Kirklees.

The proposals include:

- Up to 75 new homes with a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed properties, including a 20% affordable homes provision
- Retained and new landscaping across the site, including tree planting. Landscape screening between existing properties and the site to protect residential amenity.
- Retained Public Right of Way (PROW) across the site and improved footpaths linking to the PROW.
- Publicly accessible open space for new and existing residents to use and enjoy.
- Vehicular access is proposed from Woodward Court.
- Financial contributions to local infrastructure such as education and healthcare.

A full and comprehensive Transport Assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application. As will a Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment.

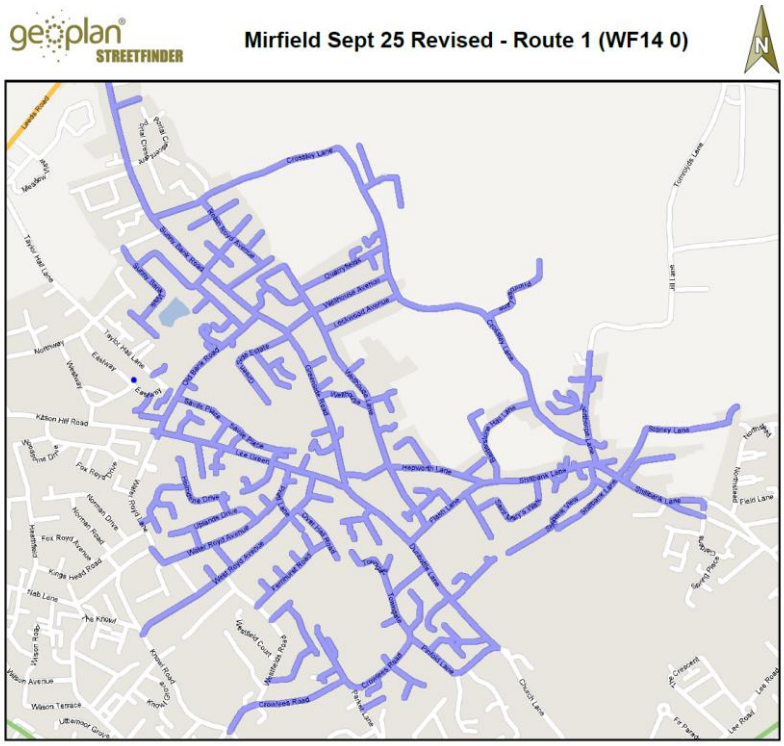
Details of the proposals, along with an online feedback form can be found at www.bellway-mirfield.co.uk

We hope you can attend the drop-in event, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please do contact us on 0800 089 0362 or ben@royalpilgrim.com.

Appendix 2: Flyer



Delivery map for the leaflet distribution



Appendix 3: Media release

Press Release

19th September 2025

Bellway Homes consults with community on Mirfield development

Bellway Homes is inviting residents to get involved as it consults on its latest proposals for up to 75 new homes on land off Woodward Court, Mirfield.

The housebuilder is holding a public consultation drop-in event at St Andrew's Church, Old Bank Road on Thursday 2 October 4pm – 7pm. Members of the development team will be on hand to answer any questions.

The proposal includes a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings, including 20% affordable homes. Retained and new landscaping, including tree planting, is proposed across the site and a landscape buffer between existing and new properties will protect residential amenity.

Public Rights of Way will be retained and improved footpath links are proposed, alongside publicly accessible open space for new and existing residents to use and enjoy.

The site is allocated as Safeguarded land within Kirklees Council's Local Plan, which safeguards the site for potential development in the future.

Stewart Thomson, Land Director at Bellway Homes Yorkshire Division said:

"There is a pressing need for new homes in Kirklees and a lack of viable and deliverable allocated sites within the borough, so we would like to bring this site forward for development to help address the immediate housing need.

"We appreciate there are local concerns about development on this site and we are keen to listen to residents and understand the issues. We would encourage residents to come along to the event and speak with the team."

The draft proposals can be viewed on www.bellway-mirfield.co.uk and anyone with questions can contact 0800 089 0362 or ben@royalpilgrim.com.

A planning application is being prepared for submission in the coming weeks, which will include a full and comprehensive Transport Assessment, as well as a suite of technical documents.

-Ends-