

Statement of Community Engagement

Revision A - 21 December 2020



1.1. Purpose and Scope of this Report

This **Statement of Community Engagement (SCE)** has been prepared by the in-house community relations and consultation team at King & Co, in support of the planning application for the residential regeneration of the previously developed land aspect of Wells Farm, Cuffley.

This SCE describes how the local community, including elected representatives, have been consulted along with details of the feedback King & Co have received, with a separate section that refers to engagement with statutory consultees. Throughout this process, King & Co have endeavoured to meet and exceed the standards laid down in Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's (WHBC) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), despite the restrictions imposed by way of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, through the use of a Virtual Public Exhibition and remote video conferencing where practical.

King & Co's Virtual Public Exhibition website 'Wells Farm Regeneration' (www.wellsfarmregen.co.uk) was published and went live on Thursday 12 November 2020. Notice was given to Cuffley Parish Council (CPC) on Friday 13 November 2020, and a meeting between King & Co and CPC was held on Friday 20 November 2020 to receive comment on the contents of King & Co's proposals.

The ward councillors for Northaw & Cuffley, Cllrs Simon Wrenn, George Michaelides, and Bernard Sarson were also made aware of the Virtual Public Exhibition on Friday 13 November 2020.

Since the Virtual Public Exhibition went live King & Co has also contacted Cuffley Primary School, the vicar and churchwardens of Northaw and Cuffley Church of England, and Life Church, to raise awareness of the website. To promote public feedback, King & Co have at each stage of community engagement encouraged comments on our proposals through the publicly accessible GDPR-compliant questionnaire. As of 17 December 2020, the Virtual Public Exhibition has received 176 unique visitors, 189 pageviews and 7 public comments from the questionnaire.

In addition, King & Co has been in ongoing pre-application engagement with planning officers as well as dialogue with the LLFA and HCC Highways authorities. This process has shaped the design approach and should seek to ensure that the application will meet technical requirements and represent good design.

King & Co intend to progress this dialogue and will keep the Virtual Public Exhibition open for the duration of the planning application until determination. Therefore, King & Co kindly reserve the right to submit an addendum to this SCE at such point as when we receive further public participation.

The SCE is intended to be a 'living' document, both in recognition of the importance of receiving community feedback and to encourage collective, inclusive, and accessible dialogue to resolve common concerns.



1.2. Consultation Approach

The enactment of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic that has been ongoing since March 2020, has restricted the avenues available to consult with the public. In particular, during determined 'emergency periods' as was announced 23 March 2020 until 4 July 2020 and more recently 31 October 2020 until 2 December 2020, in addition to the limitations of the 'tiered system', the statutory instrument states that no person may leave the place where they are living without reasonable excuse. Public consultation, in the form of direct communication with residents and local institutions, has therefore been frustrated since March 2020.

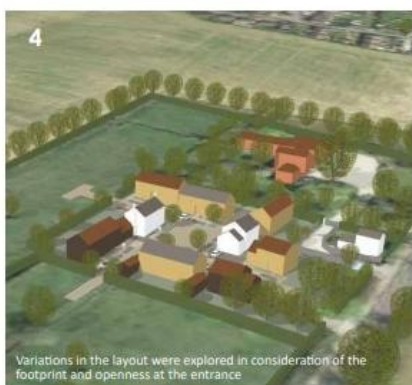
To foster broad and inclusive comment on King & Co's proposals, and to facilitate open dialogue with local elected representatives, King & Co has published a Virtual Public Exhibition 'Wells Farm Regeneration' (www.wellsfarmregen.co.uk) which will remain live until determination of the planning application. This is an established industry-led approach to encourage public

feedback and showcase our proposals, which has been utilised by a variety of larger housing, retail and infrastructure providers including Aldi, United Utilities, and Viridor, as well as by public bodies such as the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Public Health England, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. Between 12 November 2020 and 17 December 2020, the Virtual Public Exhibition received 176 unique visitors, 189 pageviews and 7 public comments from the questionnaire.

In addition to the use of a Virtual Public Exhibition, King & Co has met with members of Cuffley Parish Council through an organised digital conferencing facility and have provided updates on our proposals by call and by e-mail to Cuffley Primary School, the vicar and churchwardens of Northaw and Cuffley Church of England, and Life Church.

King & Co intend to keep the website open for the duration of the planning application until determination, and kindly reserve the right to submit an addendum to this SCE when we receive further public participation.

1.3. Design Evolution



1.4. Engaging Local Organisations

Cuffley Parish Council

King & Co organised a virtual meeting with Cuffley Parish Council which was held via Zoom conferencing on Friday 20 November 2020. The meeting was attended by Chairman Barry Knichel, Vice-Chairman Robert Stubbs, Mike Clark, Paul Singleton, Susan Harden and Clerk Lisa Chaplin. A number of assistive clarifications were raised in relation to the content of the Virtual Public Exhibition, and in our record of the meeting several issues were raised, including:

- Concerns over 'executive-style' housing, mix and tenure;
- Public highways, traffic and congestion, particularly as residential developments in Goff's Oak and Broxbourne are planned;
- Surface water retention on Northaw Road East; and
- The status of the paddocks and whether these will be developed in due course.

After receiving feedback on the proposals King & Co have:

- Amended the proposals to accommodate 2-4 bed family homes, the variety of which is necessary to create balanced communities;
- Agreed to share highways information on the councillors' suggestion;
- Provided an LLFA-compliant surface water scheme; and
- Have confirmed that a small portion of the paddock land does not form part of this application.

Cuffley Primary School

King & Co have notified Cuffley Primary School of the Virtual Public Exhibition and have encouraged comments on the contents of the proposed regeneration of the available brownfield land. Given the lack of publicly accessible social media outlets that are specific to Cuffley, King & Co also requested if the Virtual Public Exhibition weblink could be shared to parents, governors, and interested parties. Because a response has not been received, King & Co intend to keep the website open to ensure that the contents of our proposals remain open to review and feedback.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

The ward councillors for Northaw & Cuffley were also made aware of the Virtual Public Exhibition on Friday 13 November 2020.

Northaw and Cuffley Church of England

Correspondence has been sent to the Church's office, as well as directly to churchwardens and the vicar, notifying them of the Virtual Public Exhibition.

Life Church

Correspondence of the same vein has also been sent to the administrative team at Life Church.

Other local stakeholders

We would like to take this opportunity to refer to other local institutions that we have not been able to contact due to prevailing public health restrictions, including the Northaw & Cuffley Lawn Tennis Club, the Bowls Club, and Cuffley Football Club, as well as The Plough which to the best of our knowledge remain temporarily closed at the time of writing. As it is our intention for the SCE to be considered a 'living' document, we welcome any comments that these important and custodial institutions may have in relation to the regeneration of Wells Farm.

Local Works

There are a few local developments to highlight:

- Station Road in Cuffley will be closed at the railway bridge from 9am Monday 14th December until 11am Sunday 27th December ([more details](#));
- The Parish Council are developing a Neighbourhood Plan, and are establishing a community based steering group. If you would be interested in getting involved, please email Councillor.stubbs@northawcuffleypc.org.uk;
- Wells Farm have created a virtual exhibition, showing their plans for the site on Northaw Road (wellsfarmregen.co.uk).

1.5. Methods of Engagement

In the context of Government guidance and statutory regulations relating to the Coronavirus pandemic, King & Co has had to take a versatile approach to community consultation by way of a Virtual Public Exhibition and the use of conferencing facilities to encourage dialogue.

The apparent deficit in publicly accessible local social media channels and the impossibility of distributing flyers and posters by hand has also required King & Co to notify local stakeholders of the Virtual Public Exhibition directly, through e-mail and telephone.

Have your Say

Please fill out the GDPR-compliant questionnaire below, leaving your name, address, and e-mail. Your feedback will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose other than to inform the design process. The information will be consolidated as an anonymised aggregate within the Statement of Community Engagement for the planning application. All personal information will not be passed to any third parties, and will be destroyed on determination of the planning application.

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Address *

Address 1

Address 2

City

State/Province

Zip/Postal Code

Country

Email *

Do you support the regeneration of brownfield sites such as this? *

- Yes fully agree
- Yes in part
- No
- Undecided

Should this brownfield site be used to support new housing? *

- Yes fully agree
- Yes in part
- No
- Undecided

Do you agree with the modern rural design approach? *

- Yes fully agree
- Yes in part
- No
- Undecided

Please tick the box below if you wish to lodge your support for the scheme.

Send

1.6. Virtual Public Exhibition

On Thursday 12 November 2020 King & Co published the Virtual Public Exhibition 'Wells Farm Regeneration' which remains publicly accessible through the weblink www.wellsfarmregen.co.uk.

The website is set out as a chronology, beginning with an introduction to the brownfield, previously developed components of the site and the aspiration to regenerate this space through the submission of fourteen new family homes. The potential for regeneration is explored, noting that the agricultural use of Wells Farm ceased decades ago and the observation that the site no longer resembles a farmyard. The site is described as a collection of commercial units occupying barn structures and stable blocks, separated by hardstanding and fencing as is apparent in the images of the Wells Farm.

For the viewer's clarity, the buildings are and where there are previous planning permissions to support other uses this is stated. The site's relationship with the local history and existing community is also analysed, before a 'pinwheel' layout design is displayed showing clearly where the housing will be located when compared with the site plan.

King & Co's proposals are summarised towards the end of the Virtual Public Exhibition alongside example house typologies and rural precedents. A 3D rendering of the scheme is also displayed, which is modelled on the three core house types.

The Questionnaire

At the end of the Virtual Public Exhibition viewers are encouraged to have their say by filling out the GDPR-compliant questionnaire. One of the councillors during King & Co's meeting with CPC helpfully notified us that it should be made plain when personal information will be destroyed, and this is stated to be on determination of the planning application.

Three key questions are asked and ticking one of the options in answer to each question was compulsory in order to submit the questionnaire. The last box, 'Please tick the box below if you wish to lodge your support for the scheme', is a completely optional component of the questionnaire.

A full copy of the Virtual Public Exhibition is appended to this SCE. Between 12 November 2020 and 21 December 2020, the Virtual Public Exhibition has received 212 unique visitors, 226 pageviews and 7 public comments from the questionnaire. Because King & Co intend to keep the website open for the duration of the planning application until determination, King & Co kindly reserve the right to submit an addendum to this SCE at such point as when we receive further public participation.

The SCE is intended to be a 'living' document, both in recognition of the importance of receiving community feedback and to encourage collective, inclusive, and accessible dialogue to resolve common concerns.

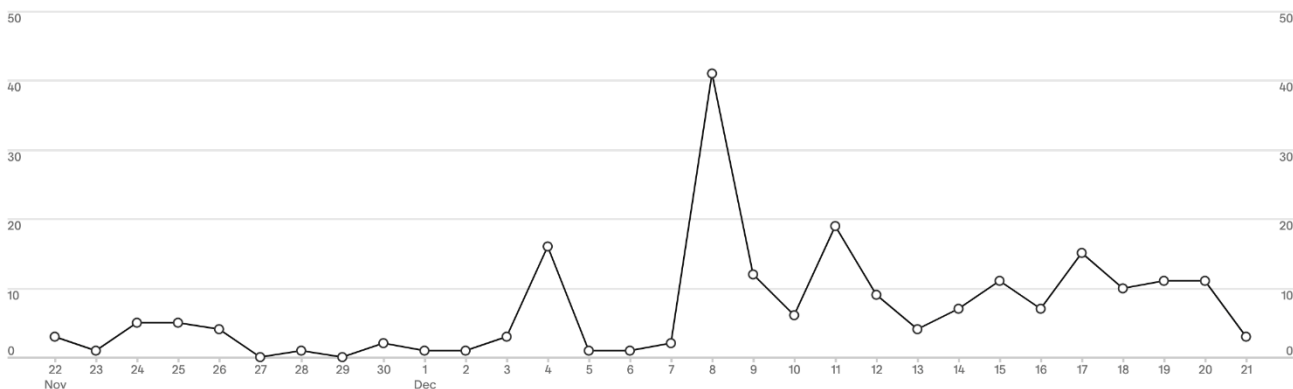
Questionnaire Submission	Do you support the regeneration of brownfield sites such as this?	Should this brownfield site be used to support new housing?	Do you agree with the modern rural design approach?
1 (08/12/2020)	Yes fully agree	Yes in part	Yes fully agree
2 (08/12/2020)	Yes in part	Yes fully agree	Yes fully agree
3 (08/12/2020)	Yes fully agree	Yes fully agree	Yes fully agree
4 (08/12/2020)	No	No	No
5 (08/12/2020)	Undecided	No	Undecided
6 (08/12/2020)	Yes in part	Yes in part	Yes fully agree
7 (10/12/2020)	Yes fully agree	Yes in part	Yes fully agree
% YES		71.4%	

Unique Visitors

Nov 22–Dec 21, 2020 • 212 Total +272% mo/mo

Daily ▾

UNIQUE VISITORS





Wells Farm, Cuffley

We are delighted to welcome you to our virtual exhibition of the regeneration of Wells Farm, Cuffley. As the culmination of considered architectural design, our proposals include fourteen new family homes to make best use of this previously developed brownfield land on the site of the commercial yard while enhancing this part of the village. We welcome your feedback and have included a questionnaire below.

KING & CO



The Potential for Regeneration

The agricultural use of Wells farm ceased decades ago and the site no longer resembles a farmyard. This part of the site which is previously developed brownfield land consists of a collection of commercial units, occupying barn structures and stable blocks, separated by hardstanding and fencing.



The buildings are underutilised and have previously had planning permission to support other uses. Regeneration of the site can bring back the sensitive rural aesthetic to this part of the village that echoes its historic past.



Part of the Local History

Wells Farm was built in the 1850s and named after the local historic landmark of the Kings Well some 600m to the north of the site. The site was developed some 70 years prior to the modern settlement of Cuffley.

Cuffley's dramatic growth in the 1920s can be attributed to the arrival of the train line to the east of the original hamlet in 1910 and the heroic exploits of Lieutenant W L Robinson V.C. who successfully shot down the first German airship on British soil in his small plane during the First World War.

The 3rd September 1916 became known as 'Zepp Sunday' and the wreckage of the Schutte-Lanz SL-11 drew large crowds, with many curious members of the public seemingly deciding to settle in the area.



Connecting to the Community

The site is in a sustainable location well connected by existing footways to the nearby school, sports and recreational facilities and the High Street. The existing flooding of Northaw Road East will be mitigated by reducing run-off onto the road surface, as well as through swales and ponds which are proposed to manage and control surface water. Our transport consultants have also confirmed vehicular access to Wells Farm can be provided by using one of the existing access points with a negligible effect on vehicle movements on the highway network. Together with the bus service along Northaw Road and the proximity to the Train Station, there is good access to the wider public travel network.

Pedestrian accessibility to the site will be improved through our plans to relocate the 60mph speed limit further away from Cuffley and to improve the footway along Northaw Road East, providing enhanced linkage to the village and to the Recreation Ground.



Providing new Family Homes

Since the 1970s to the present day, Cuffley has seen very little change in the number of houses and occupants. The housing crisis is well documented with affordability ratios making home owning an unachievable dream for many. The regeneration of this previously developed site will enable the delivery of sensitively designed 2-4 bed homes suitable for 21st Century family life.



A Sustainable Brownfield Site

We are bringing forward the suitable re-use of the brownfield part of the site. The land edged red could therefore accommodate 14 new 2-4 bed family homes, making a modest contribution to the Council's pressing requirements in a highly sustainable location within walking distance of village amenities.



Complementing the Countryside

The 'pinwheel' layout design set around a communal courtyard mirrors historic farmyards typical to Hertfordshire's agricultural heritage. The formal 'manor house' presents a central focus to the yard with a number of barn-like buildings enclosing the central shared-surface space. The site is at the bottom of the slope alongside the Hempshill Brook and is well screened by existing mature trees and hedgerows. This will be further reinforced with additional hedge and tree planting to enhance the soft, natural appearance and preserve the setting of the open countryside beyond.

Our Proposals

- Brownfield regeneration through the re-use of previously developed land
- 14 2-4 bed family homes, recognising the need for local housing
- Homes designed for modern living with a fabric first approach to reduce energy requirements and an electric vehicle charging point for every house.
- Remodelling of under-utilised barn and commercial units in a rural aesthetic
- Reduction of hardstanding and mitigation measures to reduce the flooding of Northaw Road East by controlling water run-off from the site
- Additional swales and ponds proposed to further manage and control surface water
- A suitable sustainable location within walking distance of village amenities and transport

Example house typologies



New homes echoing Hertfordshire Farm buildings and using traditional materials including black painted timber and red clay tile roofs with a central barn gable. A small number of large openings with smaller windows at first floor under the eaves further reinforce the agricultural design.



Modernising the farm manor-house to create a central focal point to the pinwheel yard concept.



Large openings with timber screens confer a barn-like appearance, while covered garages allow the buildings to be read as a simple barn-like structure in keeping with a modern rural feel.



Drawing on our Modern Rural Precedents

Below are some precedents of sensitive Hertfordshire development by King & Co. Please see our website, www.kingandcompany.co.uk for more details.



1.7. Consultation with Statutory Consultees

The applicant team has entered into a formal pre-application submission with the planning authority for the proposed scheme where there was general support for the design approach which has been carefully considered and developed through iterative dialogue.

Dialogue has also been had through formal pre-application engagement with the local lead flood authority (LLFA) and agreement has been reached in terms of the methodology for the drainage strategy including acceptable run-off rates and the approach to providing attenuation and other mitigation.

1.8. Ongoing Public Consultation

On registration of the planning application and throughout the statutory consultation process, King & Co will update the Virtual Public Exhibition to include a link to the Council's planning portal.

As it is King & Co's intention for the SCE to be considered a 'living' document, we welcome any public comments that residents and local stakeholders may have in relation to the regeneration of Wells Farm.