



Statement of Community Involvement

Land off Mill Lane, Whitburn

Date: January 2026

The background of the lower half of the page is a photograph of a long, two-story industrial building made of light-colored stone or brick. It features a series of large, arched windows with multiple panes. The building is situated on a paved area, and there are some metal structures in the foreground. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent olive-green filter.

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1. Introduction

Purpose of Statement

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by ELG Planning on behalf of Story Homes Ltd to accompany a full planning application for residential development on land off Mill Lane, Whitburn.
- 1.2 Prior to submitting the application, a community consultation was commissioned by our client to establish the views of nearby residents and local stakeholders. On behalf of Story Homes Ltd, ELG Planning consulted residents and other local stakeholders to engage with them with regards to the planning and development process.
- 1.3 Paragraph 40 of the NPPF recognises 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.
- 1.4 Paragraph 41 goes onto outline that local planning authorities should, where they think this would be beneficial, 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.
- 1.5 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that applications that can demonstrate early, proactive, and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.
- 1.6 Furthermore, the South Tyneside Local Plan Statement of Community Involvement (February 2022) states in paragraph 5.9:

‘However, we encourage developers/applicants to engage with the local community and relevant interested parties, including Neighbourhood Forums,

before applying for planning permission about their initial schemes. This will give local people and relevant consultees a chance to comment on the development before the application is submitted for consideration by the council. Any pre-application engagement with the local community or relevant consultees should be carried out at an early stage in the design process, to enable any third party comments to be taken into account. The form of consultation will need to be designed to suit the particular circumstances of the site, proposal and locality.'

2. Community Consultation

2.1 Given the guidance on community consultation for development proposals, the following steps were undertaken to notify and engage local residents:

- Approximately 850 consultation leaflets (**Appendix 1**) were distributed among the local area (**Appendix 2**). The leaflets included details of the proposal, a draft site plan and details of how residents could make their views known;
- Consultation details were placed on a dedicated consultation website (**Appendix 3**);
- Councillors and other stakeholders were provided with details of the proposed development.

2.2 All responses received during the consultation period and up to the date of the publication of this report have been taken into consideration and referenced in this document.

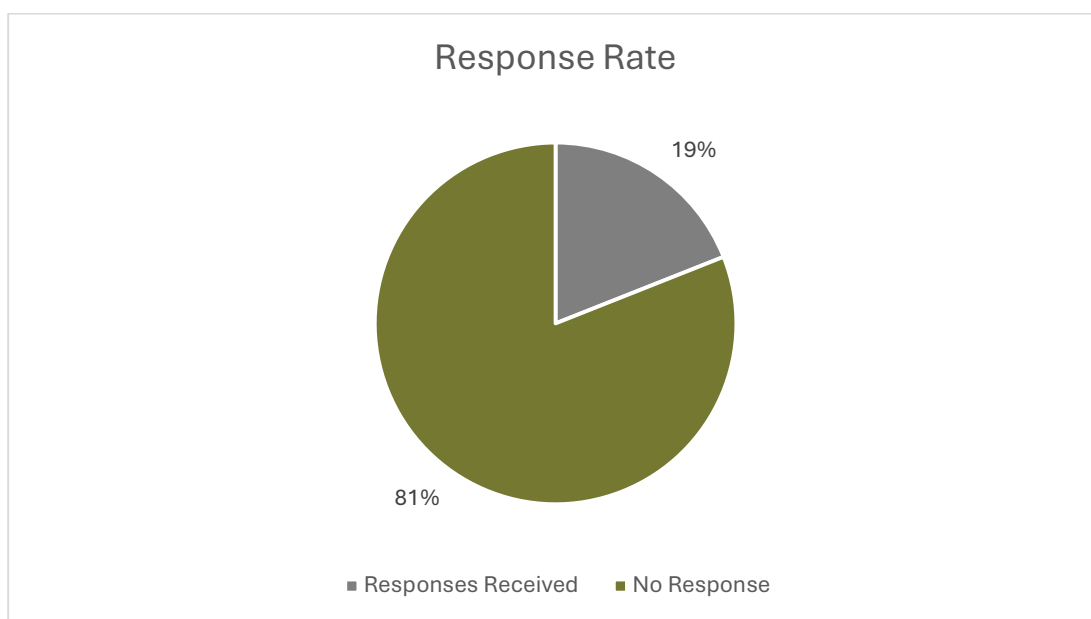
2.3 Details of how respondents could make their views known were set out in the information leaflet, as follows:

- An electronic 'register interest' form on the website;
- Post; or
- E-mail the dedicated consultation e-mail address.

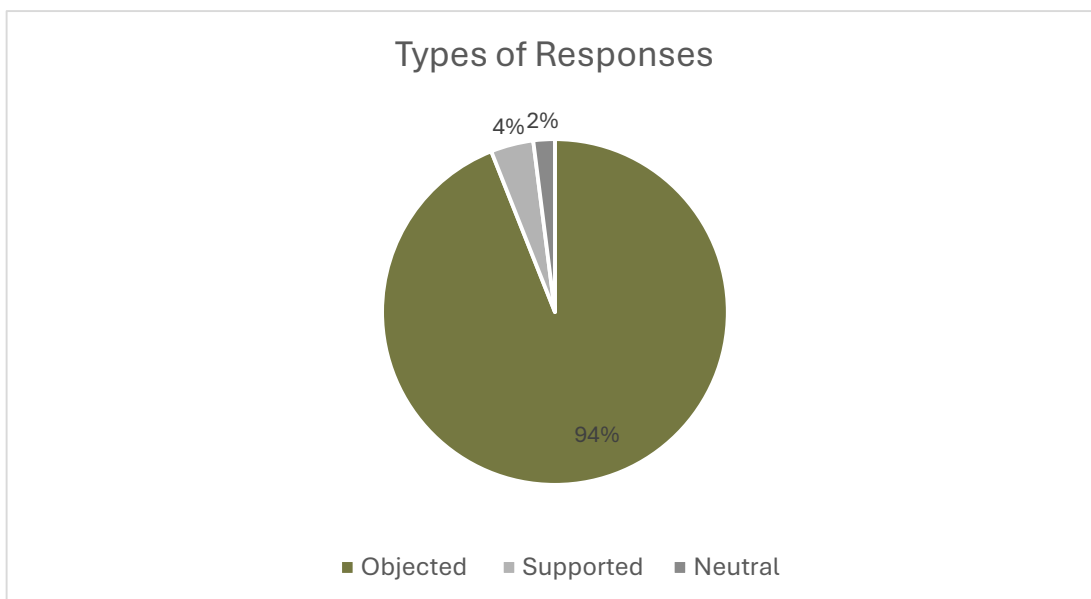
2.4 Prior to this, the applicant has also engaged with local stakeholders whilst promoting the site for residential development as part emerging local plan process, which has been occurring for several years. This has helped the applicant to fully understand local issues and ensure that these have been considered and addressed as part of the submission.

3. Response to Consultation

- 3.1 A total of 162 separate responses were received by email to the consultation exercise, 1 of which was submitted via the post and the remaining 161 were submitted either via email or the consultation website. This response from the community indicates an 19% response rate, when compared against the number of leaflets distributed.



- 3.2 Of the comments received 152 objected to the development (94% objection rate), 7 supported the development and 3 were neutral. The types of responses received are highlighted overleaf.



3.3 The comments received include a response from Whitburn Neighbourhood Forum, and their comments have been given full consideration.

3.4 Some of the comments also included reference to a local petition to preserve the green fields around the primary school, referencing 1,000+ signatures.

Main Issues Raised

3.5 The feedback received provided a range of views and comments on the proposals which have been summarised below:

- Highways
- Local Services and Facilities
- Drainage & Flooding
- Wildlife and Ecology
- Green Belt and Loss of Open Space
- Landscape and character of the village
- Support for the proposal
- Other matters

Highways

- 3.6 A main concern raised by residents relates to the impact of development on local highway conditions and the likelihood of there being increased traffic and congestion, particularly given the number of dwellings proposed and characteristics of the existing highway network (small, narrow roads). Traffic congestion on the A183 and surrounding roads is reportedly already an issue with one respondent describing huge tailbacks at busy times. The concern is that further development will exacerbate this problem potentially causing road safety issues for pedestrians and motorists.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.7 *As part of the planning application a Transport Assessment has been prepared by Eddisons highway consultants. The assessment includes a traffic impact analysis, which has been informed by recent traffic sources and key junctions.*
- 3.8 *It concludes that the proposed access junction off the A183 Mill Lane has been designed to accord with highway design standards and will have sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development traffic. The impact on the remainder of the local road network would be minimal.*
- 3.9 *It is therefore concluded that the development proposals will result in a minimal impact and can be accommodated on the local highway network.*
- 3.10 *The highway consultant has engaged with the local highway authority to scope the contents/methodology for preparing the submitted Highway Assessment, and this will be fully reviewed by the LHA as part of the application process.*

Services and Facilities

- 3.11 Another main concern is the impact of development on local services and facilities, which many feel are already stretched with little capacity to accommodate additional demand. Specific concerns relate to the availability of school places locally and demand for GP services. A number of residents also note that there is no dentist locally (within Whitburn).

The concern is that additional housing would exacerbate this problem, particularly at the scale proposed, which is considered by some to be overdevelopment (too many houses given the size of the existing village and limited services). Several responses note that additional housing is already proposed at Whitburn Lodge and Wellands Farm so no requirement for additional housing locally and that investment should be directed to existing services/facilities, not additional housing.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.12 *The site is located close to a range of services and facilities, and it is considered that the development can help support these, allowing them to grow and thrive.*
- 3.13 *However, knowing that impact on local services and facilities was a concern that has previously been raised in their discussions with local stakeholders, the applicant has commissioned a Social Infrastructure Assessment report prepared by EFM consultants. As set out in the report and the accompanying Planning Statement, this does not identify capacity constraints that would constraint the proposed development coming forward. However, the applicant will continue to discuss and agree this matter and any necessary contributions during the course of the application.*

Drainage & Flooding

- 3.14 Another main concern relates to reported ongoing issues with flooding with local roads often struggling with surface water and the ground becoming waterlogged. Concerns also relate to inadequate drainage locally with the foul drainage system already operating beyond capacity with subsequent pollution resulting from effluent being discharged into the sea. One respondent describes being plagued with pollution at Whitburn and the development exacerbating this problem given the existing limited capacity of the foul drainage system. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the existing sewerage infrastructure can accommodate the proposed increase.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.15 *Local concerns with drainage are fully understood by the applicant and they have formed a key consideration in preparing the submitted scheme. The application has been informed and supported by a drainage strategy prepared by Coast Consulting Engineering. The strategy confirms that foul water will be discharged in the combined sewer to the east of the site, with Northumbria Water having already provided confirmation that this is acceptable, and confirmed that the Hendon Sewage Treatment Works are able to accept the additional flows.*
- 3.16 *The approach is consistent with that proposed development at the recently allowed appeal at Whitburn Lodge, with the strategy providing betterment to the combined sewer by capturing some of the surface water flooding within the positive drainage system on site and discharging it at a restricted rate into the surface water public sewer.*
- 3.17 *It is important to also note that the betterment from the drainage strategy proposed will be seen most at times of increased rainfall, due to the separation of the foul and surface water flows.*

Wildlife & Ecology

- 3.18 Concerns have been raised about the impact of development on local wildlife that currently make use of the application site, with particular reference to curlews and other rare and migrating seabird, gulls, owls, bats, great crested newts, foxes and hedgehogs. One respondent notes that the site lies close to the Whitburn Coastal Conservation Area and nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which protect sensitive habitats and species along the coastline.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.19 *Comprehensive ecological surveys have been undertaken by BSG ecology, including a suite of bird surveys and offsite wader compensation strategy, to remediate impacts to curlew in perpetuity, which will also indirectly compensate for other waders that were recorded on the site, including golden plover and lapwing.*

Green Belt and Loss of Open Space

- 3.20 Concerns have been raised regarding the basic principle of development within the Green Belt, which is generally considered inappropriate unless very special circumstances are identified. Concerns identify that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to keep land open and this will be undermined by the proposal, which will result in the loss of open space important to the setting of the village. Have all the non-Green Belt sites been fully exhausted and it has not been demonstrated that the proposal is required to meet housing need over and above what is already planned through the Local Plan. Open/undeveloped land at the periphery of the village should as a matter of principle be retained as open as a green space for the community and enjoyment for local children (the application site being close to a school). A preference has been expressed for building on brownfield sites not undeveloped land.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.21 *There is a clear need to deliver housing in Whitburn and South Tyneside. This positions is accepted and agreed by the local planning authority, as they are unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing and have regularly failed the Housing Delivery Test.*
- 3.22 *In respect of the Green Belt, the Government has introduced the 'Grey Belt', which has been included as a form of development that is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. The accompanying Green Belt Assessment establishes that the site is Grey Belt, therefore the principle of residential development is supported by planning policy. This is on the provision that the 'Golden Rules' are met, which includes the increased provision of affordable housing. To meet this requirement, 82 (40%) of the proposed dwellings will be affordable dwellings. This is a very significant benefit in light of a chronic need.*

Landscape and Character of the Village

- 3.23 Related to the above, concerns have been raised about the harmful landscape impact of the proposed development and the loss of the existing rural/countryside character of the

site and the associated tranquillity, all of which give Whitburn space, identity, and a clear boundary from surrounding built-up areas. Concerns have been raised that development at the site on the scale proposed will undermine the character of this small/historic village with it beginning to feel more like a town or part of South Shields or Sunderland as a result. The open character of the site has historically provided cherished/valued views for local residents, which will be lost.

Applicant's Response:

The scheme has been landscape-led, taking on board the detailed analysis of landscape character and visual amenity constraints, with particular attention to maintaining important views, protecting the setting of the adjacent Area of High Landscape Value, and providing appropriate transition between the built settlement and the rural landscape. Details of this are set out in the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The assessment is able to conclude that the positioning of the site immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge, combined with comprehensive landscape integration measures and adherence to design principles that respect local character, confirms that development would provide a balanced approach to housing provision while respecting landscape context and providing meaningful environmental and recreational enhancements.

Support for the Proposal

- 3.24 Several respondents support the proposal and have expressed an interest in the properties to be built. One respondent noted that new houses would help younger people onto the property ladder whilst another identified the lack of 4-bed homes locally.

Applicant's Response:

- 3.25 *To help inform the submission, the client commissioned a Housing Mix Assessment, to provide an up to date evidence base for establishing the need for type and mix of housing. It confirms that South Tyneside has an acute need for housing, and sets out how higher*

proportion of larger family housing in this part of South Tyneside is also supported by the sub-district analysis of the available evidence.

- 3.26 *It goes on to set out how a failure to provide this type of housing will mean the child age and working age population of the village will continue to decline as it has over the 2011-2021 period. This will in turn unbalance the population in favour of older residents, making it very difficult for local business and services to remain viable.*
- 3.27 *The positive comments received reflect these findings.*

Other Matters

- 3.28 A number of other matters were drawn out of the consultation process; these have been summarised below and have been considered and addressed in the accompanying Planning Statement:

- Concerns relating to the impact of development on the amenity of existing occupants neighbouring the site resulting from increased noise, light pollution and general disruption. One respondent claims that any multi-storey or high-density housing would overlook their property and neighbouring homes, resulting in a loss of privacy. Another respondent expresses concerns about the proximity of the proposed housing and public footpaths to existing homes. The plans suggest pedestrian routes running very close to residential garden boundaries, which raises concerns around privacy, noise, and safety for current residents;
- Concerns raised regarding whether or not the affordable housing will be genuinely affordable for first time buyers and average working families;
- One respondent noted that the development was not included in the 'area plan';
- Concerns raised regarding the loss of agricultural land and the impact on food security (increased reliance on imports).

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The aim of this consultation was to engage with the local community and key local stakeholders at an early stage in the planning and development process, in order to address any issues early on. This followed on from the applicant's previous engagement with local stakeholders.
- 4.2 Of the 850 leaflets that were distributed, a total of 162 members of the community responded by submitting their views via email and by post. This response from the community indicates an 19% response rate, when compared against the number of leaflets distributed.
- 4.3 Of the comments received 152 objected to the development (94% objection rate), 7 were in support of the development and 3 were neutral (requests for additional information/clarity).
- 4.4 The views of those concerned with the development have been summarised in this statement.
- 4.5 It is the view of Story Homes Ltd that the feedback from this consultation, and its subsequent consideration in the reports prepared, provides confidence that the development proposals have addressed the comments raised and accords with the requirements set out in the Development Plan.
- 4.6 ELG Planning has at every stage made the community aware that this consultation exercise does not replace that carried out by the LPA upon the receipt of a formal, valid planning application.

Appendix 1:

Consultation Leaflet



Public Consultation for Proposed Residential Development

ELG Planning are submitting a planning application on behalf of Story Homes for the construction of 205 new homes on land at Mill Lane in Whitburn, ranging from 1-bedroom apartments through to 5-bedroom family homes.

We welcome your comments on the draft development proposals.

There are three ways in which you can make your views known.



Complete and submit the electronic form available at: <https://elgplanning.co.uk/contact-us/>



Write to: ELG Planning, 55 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7EH



Send an email to: consultation@elgplanning.co.uk leaving your name and address along with your comments.

Please submit all comments by the 21 December 2025.

Story Homes

Story Homes is a highly-respected, premium housebuilder with a proven track record of delivering high-quality homes in sought-after locations. With over 35 years of experience, Story Homes prides itself on its commitment to excellence, craftsmanship, and customer satisfaction.

Story Homes is proud to offer this exciting opportunity to future residents and is dedicated to building a community that will thrive for years to come.

A copy of this information leaflet, draft site layout plan and further details of the proposed development are available online at:

<https://elgplanning.co.uk/projects/mill-lane-whitburn/>



The Proposal

The proposed development includes 205 new homes, ranging from 1-bedroom apartments through to 5-bedroom family homes. The homes are designed to be energy-efficient, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and modern living standards. Each home will be carefully constructed to provide a high level of comfort, with ample outdoor space and access to community amenities.

Key aspects of the proposal include:

- **Affordable housing:** 82 affordable housing units spread throughout the site, which equates to 40% of the overall provision of housing.
- **Nationally described space standards:** 100% of the house types meet the Government's nationally described space standards, ensuring high-quality, well-designed homes.
- **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** To manage surface water efficiently and reduce flood risk, the development will feature a comprehensive SuDS strategy, including an above ground basin, to allow for betterment in terms of the management of surface water drainage and impact on the local drainage network.
- **Public open space and play areas:** The adjacent Corner Stone Park play area will be enhanced, with new areas of public open space provided throughout the development.
- **Connectivity and active travel:** New pedestrian and cycle connections will link the site to the wider network of footpaths and cycleways, including the National Cycle Network Route 1 along Mill Lane.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, the development will include measures to improve local biodiversity, ensuring that the natural surroundings are protected and enhanced for future generations. High-quality landscaping and green spaces will ensure that the development does not disrupt the local environment but instead integrates harmoniously into the community.
- **Site access:** A priority junction will be created off the A183 (Mill Lane) to provide safe and efficient vehicular access.

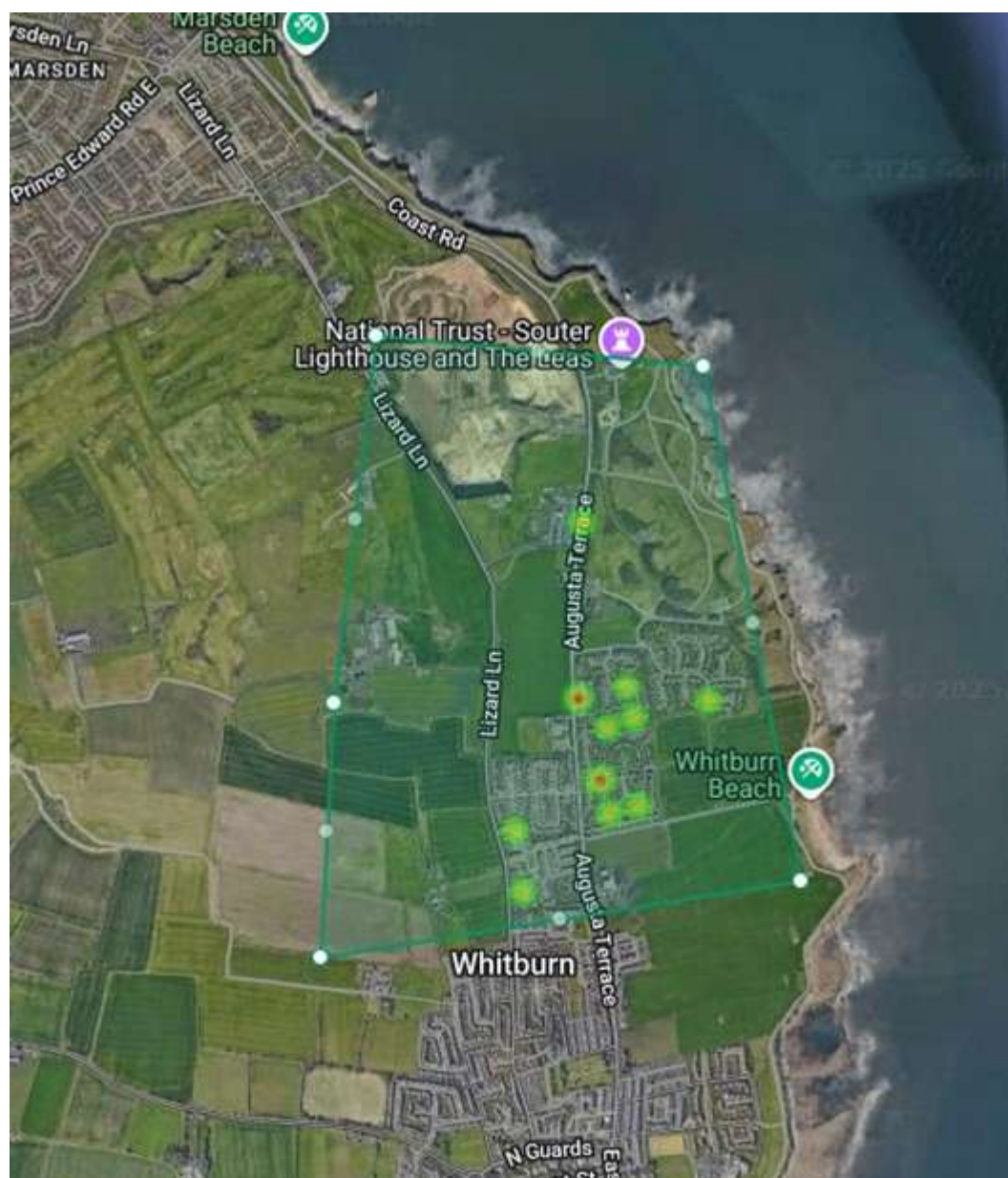


Please Note

This community involvement exercise has been commissioned to involve the public in the planning application process prior to any planning application being submitted. It will not replace the normal consultation exercise undertaken by South Tyneside Council when dealing with any formal planning application. All responses will be held by the company in accordance with GDPR 2018. Your contact details will not be made public or be retained on any database.

Appendix 2

Consultation Leaflet Distribution Area



Appendix 3

Screenshot from dedicated consultation website.



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[Consultation](#)
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Mill Lane, Whitburn

— Consultation Hub

We welcome your comments on the draft development proposals by 21 December 2025, which can be provided using the comments form below.

Alternatively, you can:

- Write to us at: ELG Planning, 55 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7EH
- Send an email to: consultation@elgplanning.co.uk leaving your name and address along with your comments

Please Note: All responses will be held by the company in accordance with GDPR 2018. Your contact details will not be made public or be retained on any database.



Details

ELG Planning are submitting a planning application on behalf of Story Homes for residential development on land off Mill Lane, Whitburn. Detailed site investigations, supported by specialist consultants, have informed the proposals, which are now at a stage suitable for community review.

The proposed development includes 205 new homes, ranging from 1-bedroom apartments through to 5-bedroom family homes. The homes are designed to be energy-efficient, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and modern living standards. Each home will be carefully constructed to provide a high level of comfort, with ample outdoor space and access to community amenities.

Key aspects of the proposal include:

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- Nationally described space standards:** 100% of the house types meet the Government's nationally described space standards, ensuring high-quality, well-designed homes.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** To manage surface water efficiently and reduce flood risk, the development will feature a comprehensive SuDS strategy, including an above ground basin, to allow for betterment in terms of the management of surface water drainage and impact on the local drainage network.
- Public open space and play areas:** The adjacent Corner Stone Park play area will be enhanced, with new areas of public open space provided throughout the development.
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- Site access:** A new access will be created off the A183 (Mill Lane) to provide safe and efficient vehicular access.



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