



Twycross Zoo

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION CENTRE, TWYCROSS ZOO

Statement of Community Engagement





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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	2
3	CONSULTATION ACTIVITY	3
	Member's Letter	3
	Consultation Board	3
	Website	3
	Consultation Event	3
4	FEEDBACK	4
	Pre-application Engagement	4
5	CONCLUSION	5
6	APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION BOARD	6

TABLES

No table of figures entries found.

FIGURES

No table of figures entries found.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. This SCE has been prepared by WSP on behalf of Twycross Zoo. The Zoo is applying for planning permission for:
- “Development of new animal enclosures and associated infrastructure, new lecture theatre, education block, education facilities and associated residential block and lodges, new access from Orton Hill, new car park, landscaping and all other associated works.”*
- 1.1.2. The pre-application process undertaken by the applicant and the project team has taken account of relevant national and local policy and guidance.
- 1.1.3. Paragraph 40 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and where relevant, statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.
- 1.1.4. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2019) was referenced when WSP prepared the strategy for consultation. The Council encourages applicants to consult with local communities ahead of the submission of a planning application.
- 1.1.5. The project team has taken into account both national and local guidelines on pre-application engagement as detailed in this document.
- 1.1.6. Consultation activities for this project have included a consultation board at Twycross Zoo, provision of information regarding the proposals on the Zoo’s website, a letter to the Parish Council and local Ward Members, informing them of the proposals and asking for feedback, and a consultation event, allowing people to discuss the proposals in person.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1. The Zoo has been rationalising and enhancing its campus over recent years to provide a visitor experience aligned with the best modern zoos in the country and Europe. Investment has been made in improving exhibit habitats, customer services and bringing attractions like the Gruffalo experience.
- 2.1.2. The NSCC is the next stage of its strategic plan to deliver a £55m vision. A core element of the masterplan is the development of the Twycross Life Sciences Park, which will be a STEM Centre of Excellence. Investment to date (£8.4m) has delivered important new habitats, driving revenue and allowing continued investment in research, education and conservation in the Life Sciences Park.
- 2.1.3. The proposed development seeks to secure the next stage of development in the masterplan for the Zoo – the NSCC. Funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund was secured for the scheme in 2021.
- 2.1.4. The proposals will make a significant contribution to the international conservation of biodiversity. This purpose-built centre will support conservationists and scientists around the world with a facility for both research and teaching. The Centre's contribution to supporting conservation; animal welfare; biosciences; STEM activities and public engagement with science will mean that it will propel the Zoo, Leicestershire and the UK right into the heart of the fight against the global extinction crisis and significantly shape the outcomes of the crisis.
- 2.1.5. This proposal is for the development of the NSCC and a new orangutan enclosure, and will assist the Zoo to provide a higher education campus facility with educational, research and ancillary residential facilities.

3 CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

- 3.1.1. Twycross Zoo appointed WSP to undertake community and stakeholder engagement in relation to the proposals for the Zoo in line with relevant guidelines.
- 3.1.2. In Autumn 2023, public engagement was undertaken with key stakeholders in relation to the application.
- 3.1.3. Owing to the nature and location of the development, there will be very little impact on neighbouring amenity (as outlined in the Planning Statement). There are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the site. As such, the engagement strategy focused on the staff and visitors to the Zoo, along with local members.

Member's Letter

- 3.1.4. A consultation letter was issued to Twycross Parish Council and the Local Ward Member of HBBC on 27 September 2023. The letter informed of the proposals and the benefits associated with the development, as well as outlining the timescales for submission.
- 3.1.5. The Zoo recognised that all consultation and engagement requires feedback to be received, considered and acted on (where required). As such, the letter also outlined how feedback or comments about the proposals could be sent to the project team and advised how to get in touch if they wished to discuss the proposed development further.

Consultation Board

- 3.1.6. A consultation board has been displayed at the Zoo, which displayed the latest proposals and provided a contact email for more information. A copy of the consultation boards is included in Appendix A.

Website

- 3.1.7. Alongside the physical information provided to inform the consultation, information has also been displayed on the Zoo's website to enable a wider reach for the consultation.

Consultation Event

- 3.1.8. A public consultation event to showcase and discuss the proposals was also included in the engagement strategy. The event coincides with the finalisation and submission of the application, taking place on 11 October, allowing people to drop in to the event and discuss the proposals with a member of the team.

4 FEEDBACK

4.1.1. The public engagement was undertaken to provide members of the community and relevant stakeholders with the opportunity to share their feedback regarding the proposals and to have further discussions about the proposed development if desired.

4.1.2. At the point of submission, WSP are not aware of any feedback received as a result of the consultation letter, the consultation board or the information on the Zoo's website.

Pre-application Engagement

4.1.3. Twycross Zoo recognises that engagement is critical to ensure that the local community and key local and key stakeholders are aware of development proposals at the Zoo. As such, the Zoo has engaged with planning officers.

4.1.4. A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in November 2022 (Ref: 22/10166/PREMAJ), which sought advice from the Council for the proposed NSCC.

4.1.5. The pre-application engagement comprised a written request for pre-application advice and was then supported by three pre-application meetings. The scheme was presented to officers during these meetings and a range of matters were discussed, including design, the principle of the development and the technical assessments that would be required to support an application.

4.1.6. The pre-application advice received is outlined below:

- Heritage is not anticipated to be an issue due to distance and screening, but a high-level heritage statement would benefit the submission;
- Given the distance to neighbours, it is not anticipated there would likely be any impact on residential amenity;
- 1% biodiversity net gain required and approach to trees is acceptable, with replacements likely required where removal cannot be avoided;
- Habitat Regulation Assessment required to support the submission;
- Low risk of flooding on the site, but a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Assessment will be required for the submission;
- EV charging expected in line with the NPPF, alongside the submission of a Transport Statement and Travel Plan; and
- The application needs to account for the nearby River Mease Special Area of Conservation, demonstrating that the phosphate position will not be worsened by the development.

4.1.7. The discussions were positive and productive, confirming that the principle of development was consistent with the adopted development plan and the project team were able to iteratively develop the design in collaboration with the officers.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1. The engagement programme undertaken has met the requirements of the national planning policies and the general principles set out in Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.1.2. To engage on the scheme, the development team delivered a pre-application engagement programme, which included engagement with the local authority, local stakeholders, the local community and statutory consultees.
- 5.1.3. The main objective of the public consultation was to provide key stakeholders and the local community with information on the updated proposals and provide an easy and convenient method to provide feedback.
- 5.1.4. The project team ensured that as much of the local community was engaged in the proposals and were able to provide their comments.
- 5.1.5. The feedback provided has been considered and through the development proposals, mitigation measures will be incorporated into the scheme to address the comments.

6 APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION BOARD

Coming Soon...

**INTRODUCING THE NEW
NATIONAL SCIENCE &
CONSERVATION CENTRE
PLUS NEW
HABITATS AND FACILITIES**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

To showcase and discuss our proposed exciting National Science & Conservation Center development.
A government levelling up project in conjunction with
Hickley and Bosworth Borough Council.

**WEDNESDAY 11TH OCTOBER
5.30PM TO 8.00PM**

In the "Windows in the Wild" room
Main Entrance Building, Twycross Zoo.

No pre booking needed. Please just drop in and
speak to a member of the team.

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Twycross Zoo
IN THE HEART OF CONSERVATION

This cutting-edge research facility and complementary orangutan habitat will focus on
enhancing our understanding of the natural world and developing world-leading strategies
to protect and encourage the amazing animals we share our planet with.

Planning Application
October 2023

Please contact
marion.dgtham@twycrosszoo.org
for more information

Planned Completion
October 2025



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