

Proposals for Land at Fernfield Lane Hawkinge

Application for outline planning permission (access, scale and landscaping included) for 13 detached and 6 semi-detached (affordable) dwellings



Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is prepared on behalf of Shepway District Council who are the site owners. The proposal consists of an application for outline planning permission (including details of layout, access and scale) for the development of 13 detached and 6 semi-detached properties.

The intention that the 6 semi-detached units will form part of the local affordable housing supply and be available to local residents in need of affordable housing.

This Statement examines the proposal in the context of planning policies for the area. The conclusion is that the proposal is appropriate and makes a positive contribution to both the market and affordable housing supply for both the settlement of Hawkinge and the wider Dover District.

2. Description of Proposed Development

Location

The site is located along Fernfield Lane on the western extremity of the settlement of Hawkinge and within the District of Dover. The main High Street (A260) lies just over 1km to the south west of the site and includes a post office/super market and a range of other shops and food outlets as well as Hawkinge Primary School and The Village Hall. Hawkinge Community Centre lies just off the High Street with Churchill Primary School a further 500m to the west.

Also located approximately 1.5km to the south west of the site is the Hawkinge employment area that includes a supermarket, public house, care home and a range of business units and small scale office accommodation. Further development of this area is scheduled to take place in the near future.

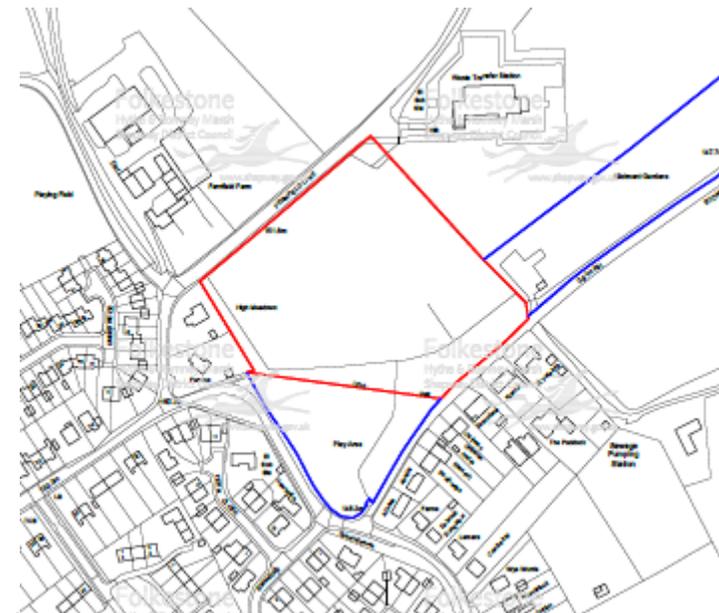
The town of Folkestone lies approximately 5km to the south of the site and provides a full range of employment, retail, social, educational and recreational opportunities. The town also includes both Folkestone Central and Folkestone West railway stations with high speed services to London taking less than 1 hour.

The Site and its Surroundings

The site is approximately 2.12 hectares and is currently undeveloped. The site is bordered to the North West by Fernfield Lane and to the South East by Stombers Lane. The site is enclosed by development with residential development to the south

east and west, farm buildings to the north west and the former transfer station building to the north east. An extensive area of woodland lies along the South Western boundary of the site with a range of other trees and hedges located across the site. Directly to the south lies an area of public open space that is owned and managed by Shepway District Council. This does not form part of the application site.

Figure 2 – Site Location



The Proposal

The application for planning permission seek outline planning permission including details of layout, access and scale for 13 detached houses and 6 semi-detached houses that will be developed as affordable housing.

History

No previous applications for planning permission have been submitted in relation to this site.

3. Pre-planning Application Advice

In advance of the submission of the application for planning permission the views of Dover District Council's Principal Ecologist, Nick Delaney, were sought. The proposal have responded to this advice by :-

- Retaining and enhancing the tree line around the site.
- Locating the bulk of development within the heart of the site which, in combination with substantial landscaping, will ensure that the impact of the AONB is kept to a minimum.
- Retention of the public space to the south of the site to provide a useful link for recreational walking the creation of semi-natural habitats;
- The creation of a loose knit form of development suitable for a edge of village location.

4. Planning Application Documents

The following are submitted to support the planning application :-

- Site Location Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- Site Sections A-A
- Site Sections B-B
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVIA)
- Figures for LVIA
- Tree Survey
- Transport Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Impact Assessment Report

5. Planning Aims and Policies

National Policy

National Planning Policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in March 2012. The document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied.

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through both plan making and decision taking. It confirms that development which is sustainable should be approved without delay.

Paragraph 47 seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing. Local Authorities should use their evidence base to ensure the delivery of their full, objectively assessed housing needs for market and affordable housing. Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 55 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Local Plan Policy

In February 2010, Dover District Council adopted the Dover District Local Development Framework, covering the period to 2026. The Core Strategy is a strategic document setting out the long terms vision and priorities for the District.

The Core Strategy requires the delivery of up to 14,000 new homes during the Plan Period. This figure is based on a 'high growth' strategy that support the supply of labour thereby enhancing economic growth and the regeneration of Dover District.

The Core Strategy sets out a the settlement hierarchy and development distribution for the Dover District. Policy CP3 sets out a broad distribution of housing allocations and proposes that the 'rural' area delivers approximately 1200 dwellings during the plan period. Paragraph 3.32 confirms that housing requirements ' should be taken as

minimum targets, rather than ceilings'. In short the Core Strategy supports the principle of an appropriate level of new housing in the rural area, representing approximately 8% of the District's new housing supply. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy aimed at guiding the location and scale of development across the District. However, in considering this application for planning permission in terms of the Dover District settlement hierarchy, it is necessary to consider the specific nature of the site's location.

The site is located on the north eastern edge of the settlement of Hawkinge that lies within the district of Shepway. The site itself lies just within Dover District but in practical terms should be considered in terms of its relationship to Hawkinge rather than settlements contained within the Dover hierarchy. The Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan, identifies Hawkinge as a service centre and the defined settlement boundary includes all of the land up to the adjoining District boundary.

Given the nature of the site, on the Dover/Shepway boundary and the edge of the settlement of Hawkinge, it is necessary to consider the overall aims of Dover Core Strategy Policy CP1 and whether the proposed development would help to achieve those aims. The adopted Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan defines Hawkinge as a services centre which lies at the third tier of the hierarchy below sub-regional towns and strategic towns. The settlement hierarchy as set out in the Dover Core Strategy is almost directly comparable with the top three tiers consisting of secondary regional centre, district centre and rural service centre.

It is considered that the proposal should be assessed against the defined function of rural services centres as set out in policy CP1 which is defined as follows :-

Main focus for development in rural areas; suitable for a scale of development that would reinforce its role as a provider of services to a wide rural area.

This is reflected in Policy CP3 of the Dover District Plan that supported significant levels of development at the service centres of Sandwich (500) and Aylesham (1000). Similarly the strategy for Hawkinge, a defined in Shepway's local plan policy, is to grow and consolidate the position of service centres through an appropriate level of development.

In summary it is considered that the proposed development should be assessed in terms of the overall policy aims for service centres as set out in Policy CP1 and on that basis the proposal should be supported.

Housing Land Supply

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Authorities to demonstrate a five year housing land supply to meet their objectively housing needs. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that Local Authorities should :

'Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirement with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the Plan Period) to ensure choice and completion in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, Local Planning Authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved from later in the Plan Period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the plan supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land'

The adopted Core Strategy requirement is to allocate land for a minimum of 10,100 new homes over the 20 year period to 2026, but adopt a flexible approach and an overall objective to deliver 14,000 dwellings. This is the equivalent to building 505 homes a year. Over a 5 year period this equates to 2025 new homes. However, as set out in the Dover District Council 5 Year Housing Land Supply 2015 Position Statement, due to housing delivery under-performance since 2006/07 the revised five year housing land supply requirement is 4,154 dwellings, equating to 975 dwellings per annum over 5 years. The Position Statement also confirms that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply of deliverable sites. Where Council's are unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, paragraph 49 of the NPPF applies, as listed below :-

49. Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Given that that the housing supply polices for the Dover District are not considered up to date the proposal set out in this application should be supported as it represents sustainable development as defined within the NPPF, as demonstrated in the section below :-

Sustainable Development

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision-taking and encourages approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

The proposal meets the following sustainable development objectives as set out in the NPPF :-

1. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

In accordance with the requirements of local planning policy the proposed development will help to consolidate the role of Hawkinge as a rural service centre, through the provision of both market and affordable housing, thus helping to support and maintain local business and other services and providing a potential additional labour supply for locally based businesses.

2. Promoting sustainable transport

The site is located in the village of Hawkinge which that is designated, within local planning policy, as a service centre and as such has a range of shops, services and employment opportunities, that can be readily accessed on foot, by bicycle or by public transport. Development at this location is therefore appropriate and sustainable.

The centre of Hawkinge is accessible within 15 minutes of the site by public transport. The sub-regional town of Folkestone is accessible within 30 minutes and Canterbury and Ashford are accessible within 60 minutes. Local bus stops are within 400m of the

site. The centre of Hawkinge is within 1,200m of the site. The site is therefore in a sustainable location.

3. *Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes – market and affordable*

The proposed scheme will provide 13 high quality new homes in a landscaped setting including 6 affordable homes in accordance with the requirements of local planning policy.

4. *Requiring good design – high quality design in a landscape setting that reflects the nature of the site.*

A detailed analysis of the design and landscape implications of this proposal is set in the Design and Access Statement and the Landscape Visual Appraisal. A summary of the approach taken is set out below, informed by the indicative proposals submitted with the application.

Scale

The overall design reflects a desire to limit impact on the surrounding landscape. The proposed dwellings are of a good size family housing but spatially orientated to ensure that key landscape features are retained and that the overall layout reflects edge of village rather than urban.

The characteristics of the scheme is that of a low density edge of settlement development of mostly detached units in generous front and rear plots, and in a traditional block arrangement. The layout seeks to integrate itself within the existing mature landscape framework by setting the majority of the development back from the site boundaries and within the site, making use of the existing screening vegetation within and around the site. Three pairs of 'workers' type cottages are located along Fernfield Lane directly opposite Fernfield Farm with the intent of providing an 'appropriate' transition from countryside to urban character.

Landscape proposals include reinforcement of the existing landscape infrastructure including the reinstatement of native field hedgerows to the northern boundary and strengthening the eastern boundary through a wider native screen planted tree and shrub belt. This treatment continues along the diagonal tree/hedge line within the site. Further landscape treatments are proposed within the site including: native hedgerow front plot boundaries, informal native tree planting including some large broadleaf

specimens, varied height grass habitats, varied wetland habitats such as swales and wet grass land

The scale of the proposals have been carefully considered in terms of the form and nature the site itself and to tie in with the surrounding context. The buildings have been carefully designed to be of a scale that reflects the size of the plots. The scale of the proposals have also been tested through a landscape visual impact assessment.

Mass

The mass of the proposals have been designed to be sympathetic to both the surrounding buildings and the existing landscaping present on the site. The eaves and ridge height are set at a similar level to those of the surrounding buildings. Gables and catclides have been introduced to reduce the buildings scale and to add architectural interest. The proposed mass of each dwelling is representative of its size in relation to the number of bedrooms and space required for a family dwelling of its nature.

Form

The form of the proposed dwellings draw inspiration from forms seen in the immediate context. There is an eclectic mix of buildings in the surrounding streets. The proposals include various characteristics common to the area to create interesting forms that reflect the nature and style appropriate in the Kent Downs AONB.

Landscape Impact

The site lies in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but is located on the edge of the settlement of Hawkinge in an area that demonstrates very little of the qualities that make up the unique character of the AONB. It sits close to an array of incongruous mid-late 20th century development and with a number of significant detracting urban elements beyond its edge and extending along Fernfield Lane including the energy plant, business park and cluster of housing.

The site is extremely visually contained and surrounded by significant screening and buffer vegetation. The proposals also represent a fairly modest development of 19 units of high quality vernacular design and sensitively laid out in such a way that maximises the use of existing on-site vegetation in order to help it blend into the existing landscape setting. A landscape scheme based on using indigenous species and maximising biodiversity through habitat creation and environmental SuDS solutions is also proposed and incorporates planting mitigation suggested in this

report and the ecological appraisal. The consideration of effects on both landscape and views within the local and wider context has therefore been considered to be minimal.

The one area likely to be significantly affected by the development is the public open space. This impact is reduced through setting units away from the ridge line above the public open space and foreground planting is used to buffer the development. The public open space is currently an undervalued area in a poor condition and as such the development offers an opportunity to improve this amenity landscape element through passive surveillance and landscape and play area enhancements.

5. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The site is located within a Zone 1 (low risk) area and is therefore not exposed to any significant risks from fluvial, coastal or tidal flooding. In addition, the site specific assessment has shown that the risks from surface water run-off, groundwater flooding, sewer flooding and reservoir flooding are low. It has also been demonstrated that a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) can be delivered using either ring or borehole soakaways and that a foul water drainage solution can be delivered.

6. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – landscape/biodiversity enhancements.

An ecological impact assessment has been undertaken that demonstrates that the ecological impact of the development can be mitigated and a number of ecological enhancements provided as summarised below :-

- Enhancements to the ecological value of the site boundaries that are currently species poor and gappy.
- The provision of infill planting with young, native understorey species such as hazel, and hawthorn.
- Increasing the width of the site boundary.
- Maximising the provision of native trees, shrubs, climbers, herbs and grasses within the areas of public open space and garden planting schemes.
- Enhancing the foraging potential of the site for the local bat population.

Open Space Provision

Policy DM27 of the Dover District Land Allocations Local Plan requires that residential developments of five or more dwellings will be required to provide or contribute towards the provision of open space. Given the close proximity to the adjoining open space to the south of the site, which covers 0.6ha and includes a range of children's play equipment, it is proposed that this policy requirement be met in the form of a commuted sum that would allow the space to be improved in accordance with the requirements of the local authority

6. Conclusion

The proposal is for a high quality, landscape led development of 13 market and 6 affordable homes, will make an important contribution to consolidating the growth of the service centre of Hawkinge and meeting the housing needs of Dover District.

The site is located in a sustainable location with a range of local services, employment opportunities and open space provision available within walking/cycling distance of the site or via public transport.

The proposal meets the requirements of local and national planning policy and will make a positive and sustainable contribution to the development of Dover District and the supply of housing for local residents.