

Thanet District Council Statement of Common Ground Birchington - Policy SP14

February 2019

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Statement of Common Ground - Birchington - Policy SP14

Introduction

This Statement of Common Ground relates to Birchington - Policy SP14. This site is scheduled to be discussed at the Examination of the Thanet Local Plan on the afternoon of Tuesday 9th April, Matter 5, Issue 3, Q1-Q13 refer.

There are positive and proactive discussions taking place between the promoters, their agents and the Council regarding the allocation and progression of this site, including site phasing and capacity, infrastructure requirements, masterplanning, and engagement with the local community.

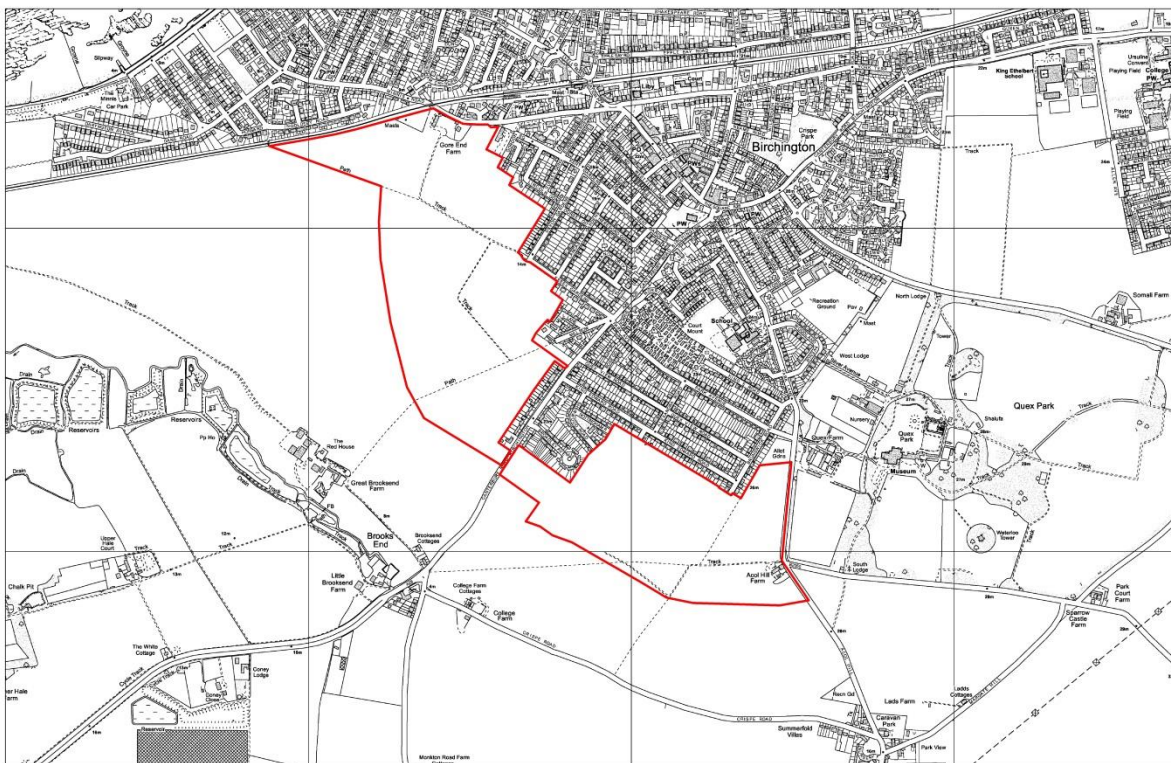
The land promoters, Ptarmigan Land and Millwood Designer Homes have been promoting the site since 2016 and have been working collaboratively to bring forward comprehensive and holistic proposals.

The Site

The site is located to the south and west of Birchington, adjoining the existing settlement as shown in Fig 1 below:

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

SP14 - Birchington



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Land Parcels

The Birchington Strategic site has been fully assessed within the Council's SHLAA evidence base (Review July 2018 CD4.4) and comprises a number of smaller sites including:

Land at Gore End Farm - SHLAA 004 (S515) - Ptarmigan Land
Land at Street Farm - SHLAA 005 (S498) - Ptarmigan Land
Land at Court Mount - SHLAA 006 (S499) - Ptarmigan Land
Land west of Park Lane - SHLAA 009 (ST3) - Millwood Land
Additional land at Birchington - SHLAA 008 - Ptarmigan Land
Land to the west of Minnis Road - SHLAA 007 - Church Commissioners -

Allocation Evolution

The Preferred Options Draft plan (2015) allocated the site encompassing SHLAA sites 004, 005 and 006 to form a single strategic allocation to accommodate 1,000 dwellings and other uses. Land to the west of Park Lane (SHLAA 009) was allocated as a separate non-strategic site under Policy HO2C for 90 dwellings. At that time, the Local Plan housing target was 12,000 dwellings

In March 2017, representations were submitted in response to the Preferred Options Revisions consultation which demonstrated additional land at Birchington was suitable and deliverable and that a collaborative approach with the Park Lane site (Millwood) was supported. The additional parcel could accommodate an indicative capacity of 400 dwellings alongside the 1,090 existing allocation of SP14 and HO2C to deliver approximately 1,500 dwellings.

Separately, Land to the west of Minnis Road (Church Commissioners) was submitted for consideration. No capacity was specified but the submission stated the area of the site to be 3.1ha (potential maximum capacity of around 108 dwellings at 35 dpha). In their 2017 submission, the Church Commissioners stated '*We consider that the site could be incorporated into the wider development proposals for the draft strategic allocation, as the railway line to the north of the site represents a more logical physical boundary for the development*'.

In January 2018, following the decision by Council to remove the proposed mixed-use allocation at the former Manston airport site, it was necessary to re-allocate the 2,500 dwellings previously identified as part of that allocation elsewhere within the District. A Call for Sites was carried out and representations were submitted which included the additional land at Birchington (as set out in March 2017) with supporting technical evidence and an approximate capacity of 1,500 dwellings.

The Council considered the increase in housing numbers at Birchington was appropriate and based on the submitted information at that time, it was proposed to allocate a total of 1,600 dwellings which included the additional land at Birchington submitted by Ptarmigan and the land west of Minnis Road (Church Commissioners) to accommodate some of the 2,500 dwellings displaced from the airport site.

However, in October 2018, representations were submitted in response to the Pre-Submission Reg 19 consultation, which demonstrated that following detailed capacity analysis, the Ptarmigan/Millwood land could accommodate the full 1,600 dwellings capacity (including all other policy requirements) within their existing boundary and without the need for the Church Commissioners land.

Proposed Modification - amend boundary of allocation

Based on the most up-to-date information TDC consider it acceptable and appropriate to amend the Policy SP14 boundary to remove SHLAA007 (Church Commissioners) and Clause 6 from the strategic allocation SP14. There has been no approach by Church Commissioners to Ptarmigan in respect of any collaboration and the removal of this parcel will further ensure delivery of the site as it reduces the number of parties involved. The promoters support the notion of a modification of this nature.

The Consortium

Thanet District Council
Barton Willmore - Agent
Ptarmigan Land - Promoters
Millwood Homes - Developers

Local Plan Policy Requirements

The following assessments have been submitted by Barton Willmore to demonstrate that the requirements of Policy SP14 have been met:

- Ecological Appraisal (PBA July 2016 and Update October 2018)
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (PBA March 2017 and ETLA Update October 2018)
- Heritage Desk Based Assessment (PBA March 2017)
- Geophysical Survey (CGMS May 2017 and SUMO September 2017)
- Archaeological Evaluation (CGMS August 2018)
- Local Plan Technical Report – Flood Risk and Drainage (PBA October 2018)
- Development Capacity Plan (including allowance for open space, education) (Mosaic October 2018)

Delivery - Phasing

The site will be delivered in accordance with the phasing set out in Appendix B of the draft Local Plan (as amended):

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
			50	100	150	150	200	200	200	150	150	150	100

The delivery trajectory is agreed and is supported by a Delivery Statement contained in Appendix 1 of this Statement. The Delivery statement sets out the likely start on site and anticipated delivery rates and evidences why this trajectory is robust.

Highways Contributions

The development of this site will provide for the highway improvements as set out in draft Policy SP14. Further detail is addressed in the Highways SoCG and addressed in Hearing Statements for those sessions.

The District Council and Kent County Council will actively pursue grant funding opportunities to support provision of the key road infrastructure.

Other infrastructure contributions

- 14 ha Open Space
- 2.05 ha to provide a two-form entry primary school - Land has been allowed for this to be delivered. Delivery will be programmed for delivery as agreed by Kent County Council.
- Contribution and land for the expansion of Birchington Medical Centre

Modifications to policy resulting from comments submitted at pre-submission stage

The following changes have been suggested to Policy SP14 and are considered acceptable to be included as Modifications:

Land is allocated for up to around 1,600 new dwellings at a maximum density of 35 dwellings per hectare. Proposals will be judged and permitted ~~only in accordance with a development brief and masterplan for the whole site including provision within the site of~~ in accordance with a development brief and masterplan which delivers the following requirements:

- 1) a new link road to serve the development and extending from Minnis Road and the A28,
- 2) a minimum of 14 ha of open space
- 3) a fully serviced site of 2.05 ha (to be provided at the cost of the developer) for a two-form entry primary school,
- 4) small scale convenience retail provision required to accessibly serve day to day needs of the development.

Phasing of development will be in accordance with Appendix B. The access road and serviced school site shall be programmed for delivery as agreed by the County Council as highway and education authority respectively. Development will be expected to provide an appropriate contribution and land for the expansion of Birchington Medical Centre.

Masterplanning will be informed by and address:

- 1) pre-design archaeological evaluation,
- 2) assessment of the impact of development on the junction of Park Lane and the A28, and the junction of Manston Road/Park Lane and Acol Hill

3) liaison with service providers to investigate the need to upgrade the capacity of any utility services and infrastructure including gas supply,

4) the need to preserve the listed buildings on the site and respect the setting of Quex Park,

5) the need for integration of development and landscaping to enable a soft edge between the site and open countryside.

~~6) appropriate noise mitigation for any development near the northern edge of the site which is adjacent to the railway line~~

Matters Outstanding

- 'An 'average' density of 35 dwellings per hectare, rather than 'maximum'

TDC position - The reference to 35dph is to the site as a whole. This means there can be variation within the site

Agent view – the reference should be to a maximum average density of 35 dph which would allow variation within the site.

Conclusion

The information presented in this Statement of Common Ground is agreed by all parties. All parties will use their reasonable endeavours to ensure the development and the necessary supporting infrastructure is implemented in a timely way.

Signatures

Thanet District Council

Barton Willmore

Ptarmigan Land

Millwood Homes

Birchington – Timescales to first housing delivery

Introduction & Purpose

This paper has been prepared by Ptarmigan Land and Millwood Designer Homes who are the promoters of the Thanet District Council (TDC) Local Plan Strategic Site SP14 in order to provide further evidence to support the achievability of the development trajectory for the site agreed as part of the Statement of Common Ground for Site SP14 with TDC.

The agreed trajectory is set in Appendix 6 of the promoter's Regulation 19 Representations (Respondent ID 493) as reflected in the Statement of Common Ground.

The purpose of this document is to demonstrate that the start date for delivering the first 50 units over the period 2021/22 is both achievable and deliverable and that the trajectory within the initial years of delivery is also achievable.

It will firstly focus on the outline planning approval period for the site inclusive of a Section 106 being signed. It will then look at the lead-in time following completion of the outline planning approval period and those steps that lead up to the first fifty housing completions as envisaged within the agreed trajectory. It will then set out the approach to ensuring the site accelerates delivery in the early years of the trajectory.

Key Deliverability Benefits of Birchington

The Birchington site, despite its strategic nature, is capable of delivering homes early in the plan period. This is on the basis that the site is being promoted by experienced development partners with a strong track record of delivery. Furthermore, the site is largely unconstrained by infrastructure, planning, environmental and other technical constraints.

The key aspects that lead to this conclusion are as follows:

- **Available Now** - The allocation land (as proposed to be amended) is controlled by two separate parties (the promoters) that have a legally binding option or promotion agreement in place with all landowners. The parties have been working collaboratively to promote the site through the local plan process and this joint working will continue to the point of delivering homes on-site.
- **Proximity to Existing Facilities** - The location of the site adjacent to the existing settlement of Birchington means that there is excellent access to existing infrastructure and facilities which will be enhanced by development of the Birchington site. A Birchington Facilities Plan is included in Appendix 4 of Ptarmigan Land's Hearing Statement 5.
- **Early Delivery** - Millwood Designer Homes is a highly experienced local house builder and controls land that could deliver a development of c.90 homes. It is anticipated that this parcel will form a key first phase of the development developed at the same time as an early outlet that will have been sold to a house builder on the Ptarmigan controlled land. The strategic position of the remainder of the site, directly abutting the A28 Canterbury Road, means that early 'gateway phases' to the development will be desirable to potential future housebuilders and will represent the opportunity to develop high quality parcels early in the development process that will deliver key elements of strategic highways and social infrastructure.
- **Strategic Highway Context** - the allocation land is bisected by the A28 Canterbury Road and is strategically well located in terms of access to existing key transport infrastructure.

Crucially, the spatial location of Birchington (and the Site) within the wider Thanet context means that the site will deliver the key 'first link' in the Strategic Highway's Inner Circuit early in the plan period. The site is not dependent on the delivery of other sections of the inner circuit and therefore the early delivery of this site will facilitate other allocated developments (such as Westgate) coming forward earlier in the plan period.

- Site Constraints – There are no significant technical or environmental constraints that would prohibit early delivery of the site. Baseline survey work has established any on site considerations including ecology and archaeology. The site is not located within an area at risk from flooding and the topography is relatively flat and it therefore represents an uncomplicated site where it is unlikely that there will be any abnormal costs or complexities that might prohibit early commencement of construction works and housing delivery.

Timeframes

Planning Approval Period

Pre-Application Stage

As set out Ptarmigan Land's Hearing Statement 5, a substantial amount of site survey work has been undertaken that will inform the design and masterplanning of the site as well as any future planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It is therefore proposed that Ptarmigan and Millwood will shortly enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with Thanet District Council to agree a timetable that will see submission of an outline planning application in late 2019.

Outline Planning Determination

A planning application accompanied by an EIA will have a statutory target for determination of 16 weeks and the PPA will be worded to reflect this. However, strategic scale projects of this nature are inherently complex and experience dictates that it is likely to take six months to secure a signed Section 106 agreement such that a decision notice could be issued.

There has been a significant amount of baseline survey work undertaken such that an outline planning application for the full 1,600 homes could be made in **December 2019**. Should this be the case it would then be expected that a Section 106 could be signed and planning permission issued by **June 2020**.

The outline planning application would also include a design code for the site which would allow for early marketing to a house builder on the Ptarmigan controlled land and expeditious preparation of reserved matters applications for both Millwood and Ptarmigan controlled parcels.

Reserved Matters Planning Applications

Following the resolution to grant planning permission it is normal procedure that sites of this scale will then see the preparation and submission of Reserved Matters applications in quick order.

Marketing of the gateway parcels adjacent to the A28 Canterbury Road under the control of Ptarmigan will commence immediately upon submission of the outline planning application and will complete in advance of the grant of planning permission. This process will be aided by the certainty that the design code offers of how specific parcels are expected to be delivered and will ensure Reserved Matters applications are delivered in accordance with the timescales below.

The first phases of development would then come forward together under separate Reserved Matters applications whereby Millwood would seek permission for their parcel of land adjacent to

Park Lane and the Ptarmigan appointed developer would apply for the gateway plots adjacent to either side of the A28 Canterbury Road. This would ensure that there were at least two outlets delivering the crucial early phases of development.

It is expected that both Reserved Matters applications could be submitted for the first phases of development by **August 2020** with determination then following in **November 2020**.

Other Consents

Section 278/38 agreements

Prior to Reserved Matters consent being granted works will have commenced on other necessary consents such as those required under Section 278 and Section 38 of the Highway's Act 1980 such that there would be no delay between securing Reserved Matters approval and commencing construction works on site.

Discharge of planning conditions

Following the grant of Reserved Matters approval there would be a period of around three months to go through the process of discharging planning conditions which would be run concurrently with mobilising site contractors. It is therefore anticipated that conditions could be discharged by **March 2021** with construction works then commencing in **April 2021**.

Commencement of Construction Works

Following commencement of construction on site it is then envisaged that the first fifty houses would be delivered on site by **February/March 2022** thus ensuring that the Council's trajectory could be achieved.

This assumes two outlets commencing construction works in April 2021 and then taking 16 weeks from commencement to allow for houses to start coming out of the ground therefore seeing first delivery around **August 2021**. Following that, and based on delivery rates of one unit per week thereafter, it would take one outlet circa 25 weeks from August 2021 to deliver 25 units. This would apply to both the Millwood and Ptarmigan outlets and therefore result in 50 units being achieved by **February/March 2022**

Further Delivery

The two outlets that will see construction of the first 50 units will form part of larger parcels that will be capable of accelerating delivery after the initial site set up. In the case of Millwood at Park Lane they would continue to deliver the remainder of the 90 homes on their site and would be likely to complete a further 50 homes during the period from April 2022 – March 2023.

The first outlet off the A28 Ptarmigan element would also be part of a larger first phase of c.100-150 homes. As with Millwood this outlet would be capable of delivering a further 50 homes during the 2022/23 period. As such the first Millwood and Ptarmigan outlets would be capable of delivering a further 100 units by **March 2023**.

For the period 2023/24 delivery would begin to accelerate with the addition of further outlets on the site. The process of marketing to house builders will be continual and therefore during this period it can be expected that there will be the addition of a further three to four outlets that would begin to deliver housing. These parcels would be at locations that would ensure coherent phasing for delivery of both housing and key infrastructure such as the link road from Minnis Road through to Park Lane.

The additional outlets would be capable of expedient delivery of housing as a result of the early phases of development opening up the site in terms of access and key utilities infrastructure.

With Millwood completing the remaining 15 units from their outlet and the site operating with a further three to four outlets 150 units would be delivered within the period **2023/2024**.

Summary Timeline

In light of the information included above it is anticipated that the timeline that is summarised below is both achievable and deliverable. This is based on Millwood and Ptarmigan developing the first phase as two outlets from Park Lane (Millwood) and Canterbury Road (Ptarmigan) with each outlet delivering the first 25 homes each by February 2022 which would be before the end of the 2021/22 period envisaged within the agreed trajectory.

The simplified timeline is as follows:

- Outline Planning Permission – **June 2020**
- Reserved Matters Submission – **August 2020**
- Reserved Matters Approval – **November 2020**
- Discharge of Planning Conditions – **March 2021**
- Commencement of Construction – **April 2021**
- Delivery of 50 completions – **February/March 2022**