

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE THANET LOCAL PLAN

**Thanet DC Draft Local Plan
Sustainable Appraisal Addendum Report
Issue 4/ 3rd October 2019**

Representations made on Behalf of Baxter Farms Ltd

Submitted by Courtley Planning Consultants Ltd

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1. General observations:

1.1 The Sustainable Appraisal Addendum Report (SAA) illustrates in Figure 1 an Indicative Constraints Map. As part of this map it identifies the "Haine Road loading" area outlined in purple. Nowhere in this report or in the Councils evidence does the SAA explain how this area was identified or justified?

1.2 Paragraph 1.2 "Appraisal Context" one of the locational considerations state

"That any housing distribution should avoid any additional traffic loading of the Haine Road corridor (as advised by Kent CC highways) and be related to the road network improvements proposed in the draft Transport Strategy, including the Inner Circuit"

1.3 Comments made by KCC highways in Stage 2 Assessment by Kent CC Highways state only that there is "general concern about additional traffic loading on Haine Road Corridor" not any embargo. There is no Highway assessment made by Kent Highways that can justify this statement or what considerations could be made to mitigate development west of Cliffsend as part of the Transport Strategy associated with the delivery of the Parkway Station. Evidence was presented at the Examination by Kent CC that the Parkway Station has now secured funding and will be delivered by Dec 2021.

1.4 The SAA has also failed to identify the Parkway Station as a positive opportunity in changing travel patterns in the district and in particular along Haine Road. The NPPF requires that for a plan to be **justified**- *"the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence."*

1.5 The Council continues to set restrictions in paragraph 1.2 on the reasonable and most appropriate alternatives for housing distribution across the District in particular around the allocated Parkway Station. It restricts this choice arbitrarily by insisting development should be focused at urban areas or the urban edge and larger villages whilst ignoring the strategic implications the Parkway Station will make to the sustainability of new housing nearby e.g. land west of Cliffsend, Minster, Monkton and Sarre.

The following section refers specifically to the site assessments carried out for Land at Walters Hall Farm and land south west of Sarre Business Park in the Councils Sustainable Assessment Addendum.

2. Site 2.49: Land at Walters Hall Farm.

2.1 This site originally formed part of SHLAA Site ST6 which was assessed as a potential housing site. However, only the green field element of the site was taken forward as a site allocation in the pre-submission draft plan. The remaining farm yard (the subject of the current site assessment) was rejected. There is no reason why the green field site was allocated in preference an existing farmyard especially given the permitted development rights that apply to this site.

2.2 The Appraisal Summary paragraph 2.49.4 incorrectly state: *“This site would result in the direct loss of productive Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Allocation of this site is likely to have a negligible effect on Best and Most Versatile land.* Clearly this site is extensively covered in hard standings and existing buildings so there can be NO loss of BMV agricultural land.

2.3 The assessment acknowledge that *“development at this site is unlikely alter the impact on areas of historic archaeological or architectural importance”*

2.4 Although the assessment refers to *“limited sightlines”* the site has a well-established access and is capable of achieving improvements should it be required within its landholdings.

2.5 The proposed site allocation would be unlikely to have a material effect on the existing capacity of health services in Thanet or a material effect on the capacity of education services as evidenced in Table 49 point 2 and 3.

2.6 The proposed site allocation is within a reasonable travel distance from key facilities, though effects are likely to be negligible. (point 5, Table 49).

2.7 Table 49, point 10(a) state that a SA objective is to improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings. The site assessment states that *“The proposed allocation is development on a greenfield site. Although the site does represent infill development along Monkton Street, it is not previously developed land and therefore represents a less efficient land use for development”*. There are significant errors in this assessment. Firstly, the site is **not** green field it is covered with existing buildings and secondly this site must be a more efficient use for development than other green field allocations. This site has existing permitted development rights which would enable the site to be used for either commercial or residential use whilst green field sites do not.

2.8 The SA Objective of point 12 in Table 49 to conserve and enhance the character and quality of the areas landscape suggests *“The proposed allocation may have a negative impact on the character of the surrounding area as it has a strong*

connection to the open countryside in the east". The redevelopment of this site has the potential to enhance the setting of the site at the edge of Monkton village and the Listed Farm House. The site is well contained on its eastern boundary by a mature tree belt. On its southern boundary is an existing brick wall and vegetation. On the sites western border is the planning permission TH/17/0804 for 20 units (housing allocation Policy HO14 that formed part of ST6) which fill in the gap between the green field and Walters Hall farmyard.

2.9 *"The proposed allocation is located in close proximity to bus stops, providing residents of this development with a public transport network..... A number of Key services are within walking distance of the site, reducing reliance on private vehicles for short trips."* (Point 15, Table 15).

2.10 The above statement in Table 49 is contrary to paragraph 2.49.5 **"Other planning considerations"** in the SAA for this site which state:

"A proportionate allocation has been made elsewhere in the village and there would be a cumulative effect on village services if the site were allocated". This statement is inconsistent with the Site Assessment above.

2.11 The other planning consideration related to *"The lack of pedestrian safeguarding would render walking unsafe"*. Again, this is inconsistent with point 15 in Table 49. It is also incorrect as the planning permission west of this site provides for a new footpath which would connect to Walters Hall Farm (see TH/17/0804).

2.12 The final statement in paragraph 2.29.5 which contradicts the site assessment Table 49 is that *"the setting of Walters Hall farmhouse would be compromised on this relatively small site"*. However, Table 49 point 13 clearly state. *"Therefore, development at this site is unlikely alter the impact on areas of historic, archaeological or architectural importance assuming that the effect on Walters Hall farmhouse is duly considered"*.

2.3. Conclusion.

2.3.1 A primary SA Objective is to provide a sustainable supply of housing including an appropriate mix of types and tenure to reflect demand. This can be assisted with the allocation of the **Land at Walters Hall Farm 2.49**.

2.3.2 The Council acknowledge that land at Walters Hall Farm meet all the 23 SA Objectives. There are no significant negative effects relating to the allocation of this site for housing. Rural settlements are considered to have some scope for new housing development in order to meet housing need and offer housing choice. As development of this site is more than 15 dwellings there will be an affordable housing requirement which will contribute to a sustainable mix of types and tenures.

2.3.3 As point 1 of Table 49 state *"the provision of housing in this rural area is likely to directly benefit the small area."*

2.3.4 The arguments in favour of this sites allocation for housing were established under SHLAA ST6 in 2018. The SAA Table 49 adds further support for the allocation of Land at Walters Hall Farm.

2.3.5 The SAA “Other planning considerations” (paragraph 2.49.5) show significant inconsistencies with the Site Assessments carried out in Table 49 for land at Walters Hall Farm. If one was to take the assessments made in Table 49 into account this site would meet the SA objectives which would support the allocation of this site housing.

3. Land south west Of Sarre Business Park 2.50

3.1 The site forms part of a 0.90hectare farmyard at the Elms Farm, Canterbury Rd, Sarre. The site comprises 5 former agricultural buildings consisting of a timber framed stable block; a Tack Room building; a Cart Shed; a grain Store and Agricultural Equipment Building.

3.2 The site obtained planning permission for change of use to employment in 2011(11/0039) and in 2013 (13/0710). Although part of the site was implemented for employment use the cost of conversation and lack of commercial viability left the site undeliverable.

3.3 The NPPF Para 110 states that *“Plans should allocate land with the least environmental amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this framework”*

3.4 This site, due to its existing and consented use cannot *“result in the direct loss of productive Best and Most Versatile agricultural land”* as stated under paragraph 2.50.4 of the SAA.

3.5 The site is Previously Developed Land (brownfield Land) as defined in the NPPF as the planning consent has been implemented.

3.6 **The NPPF para 117** states that: *“Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much as possible of previously-developed or “brownfield land”*

3.7 Planning policies and decisions should:

a) *“encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes”*. One of the proposed option on this site is for mixed use as set out in paragraph 2.50.4 **2.50**.

c) *“give substantial weight (my emphasis) to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes”*.

3.8 The Minister Esther McVey for the Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) wrote a letter on the 8th October 2019 to Milan Radulovic, the leader of Broxtowe BC within which she stated:

“I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the importance this government attaches to maximising the potential of previously developed land for new development... to meet housing need”. The letter sought *“further reassurance that the council will make every possible effort to prioritise redevelopment on previously developed land”* Her letter raised *“ matters that are likely to be applicable to other local authorities.*

3.9 The Summary Site Assessment Table 50 point 2 and 3 suggest the allocation of this site for housing is unlikely to have a material impact on healthcare provision or education services.

3.10 Although there are a limited number of key facilities within walking distance of the site, there is a bus stop within 800m of the site which give access to key facilities within Canterbury and Birchington. (Table 50, point 5).

3.11 The SAA in Table 50 point 7 state *“The proposed allocation is unlikely to impact the levels of employment/unemployment of the population”*. It also states in point 8 that *“the allocation of the site is unlikely, individually, to promote economic development in Thanet”*. Both these points have failed to acknowledge that in the site information set out in Paragraph 2.50.2 of the SAA identify the opportunity for a mixed use scheme *“with some funds retained to convert the tack room and cart shed into B1 employment use.”*

3.12 The SAA suggests the proposed allocation of this site is for development on a agricultural site, with buildings that do not constitute previously developed Land. Consents were granted on this site for commercial use in 2010 and 2013. Permitted development rights would also allow for commercial and residential use of this site. The “fall back” position of this site would allow development which would not necessarily contribute to a sustainable mix of types and tenures for either residential or commercial use.

3.13 Development of the site can be compatible with the size and form of the surrounding buildings it will likely provide a beneficial impact to the surrounding area. The design of any development should be compatible with the size, form, historical character and scale of the local environment. (Table 50 point 12).

3.14 Development would incorporate provision for active use of public transport and utilise other measures to reduce use of private vehicles. This site is immediately adjacent to the Saree business Park and with a mixed use scheme will deliver a sustainable development.

3.2 Conclusion

3.2.1 This sites historic and current use as a brownfield site makes the site an excellent choice for a mixed use allocation. Any proper sustainable planning assessment of the land south west of Sarre Business Park would identify this site as positively prepared, justified and effective housing/employment allocation consistent with national policy.