

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 17/500727/OUT			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Outline application for residential development for up to 50 dwellings with access off Chestnut Street (All others matters reserved) as amended by drawings received 31/05/2017			
ADDRESS Manor Farm Key Street Sittingbourne Kent ME10 1YU			
RECOMMENDATION: Grant subject to the views of the Housing Services Manager; conditions as set out below; the signing of a suitably worded Section 106 Agreement; clarification in respect of open space management; and the resolution of the brick earth issue.			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: Site is allocated for residential development in Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 (Policy A21) and proposal is in accordance with national and local planning policy			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE: Parish Council objection; local objections			
WARD Borden And Grove Park	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Borden	APPLICANT Balmoral Land (UK) Ltd AGENT	
DECISION DUE DATE 13/06/17	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 14/06/17	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE Two separate site visits	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
App No	Proposal	Decision	
SW/04/0095	Application for 27 new dwellings	Refused	
SW/03/0224	Application for 39 new dwellings	Refused	

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The site consists of an open field, which runs alongside the old A249 Chestnut Street, which leads from the Key Street Roundabout. To the north lies the main A2 London Road, with Sittingbourne town centre a little over a mile and a half to the east. To the south there is a sizeable electricity substation; to the immediate east and north are existing residential dwellings found within Cherryfields and Dental Close.
- 1.02 The field appears to have been fallow for some while; I understand that there were originally orchards on the field, which have since been removed. The field slopes downwards quite noticeably from east to west, with a sizeable difference in levels between the eastern and western sides of the field; the lowest point is the northwest corner which has a level of 26.5m AODN (Above Ordnance Datum Newlyn; Sea level); whilst the highest point is on the southern corner, which has a level of 37.3m AODN.
- 1.03 Two public rights of way are found on or adjacent to the field; one runs north/south along the eastern boundary of the field (ZR118), and would not be affected by the proposal. The other runs east/west towards the southern boundary (ZR117), and part of the proposal is the slight re-alignment of that footpath.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 As stated above, this is an outline application for up to fifty residential dwellings, with all matters save for access reserved for future consideration.
- 2.02 The application is accompanied by an indicative site layout which has since been amended; however, it is important in this case to remember that this is illustrative only, as the only matter, barring the principle of development, to be considered here is that of access. Nevertheless, the indicative drawings show a non-linear layout with a mix of dwelling types and sizes, all with private gardens and off-road parking
- 2.03 The dwellings are shown on the storey heights drawing as a mix of single, two and two & a half storey buildings, with illustrative drawings showing one (no.) single storey dwelling; forty-seven (no.) two storey dwellings; and two (no.) two-and-a-half storey dwellings. Fifteen would have two bedrooms; twenty-eight would have three bedrooms; and seven would have four bedrooms. Five dwellings would be allocated as affordable housing.
- 2.04 The proposed access is not the existing access to the field; that access being rather near to a bend in the road leading from Key Street towards Danaway, almost adjacent to the Key Street roundabout itself. The proposed access is situated 150 metres further southwest along Chestnut Street, to enable better sight lines from the site, which would give visibility splays of 2.4m by 53m in a northeasterly direction, and 2.4 m by 90 metres in a southwesterly direction.
- 2.05 The illustrative drawing shows 59 private open parking spaces, 25 private spaces in garages or car barns, and 10 allocated visitor parking spaces.
- 2.06 The site is situated within an area where brickearth extraction is generally required before development. This matter will be discussed later in this report.
- 2.07 The proposal is accompanied by the following documents:
- Archaeological Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment
 - Landscape Assessment
 - Noise Assessment
 - Planning Statement
 - Transport Statement
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Ecology Assessment
 - Topographical Survey
 - Tree Survey

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)
Site Area (ha)	2.02	2.02	Nil
No. of Residential Units	Nil	Up to 50	Up to +50
No. of Affordable Units	Nil	Up to 5	Up to +5

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 4.01 Allocated Site – housing development (Policy A21 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2017)
- 4.02 Site of archaeological interest

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Paragraphs 7 (Sustainable Development), 14 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), 47 and 50 (Delivering a range of high quality housing), 57 (High quality design) and 143 (Minerals extraction).
- 5.02 The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017: Policies ST1 (Sustainable Development), ST2 (Development Targets for Homes), ST5 (Sittingbourne Area Strategy), CP3 (Delivering high quality housing), CP4 (Good design), A21 (Smaller allocation sites as extensions to settlements), DM6 (Transport demand and impact), DM7 (Vehicle parking), DM8 (Affordable housing), DM14 (Development criteria), DM17 (Open space provision), DM19 (Sustainable design and construction), DM21 (Water, flooding and drainage), DM28 (Biodiversity) and DM31 (Agricultural land).
- 5.03 The Swale Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal shows that the site is with the category of the Borden Mixed Farmlands. This suggests that the condition of the area is moderate, and the sensitivity of the land in question is moderate.
- 5.04 The site is allocated for housing under policy A21 of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017. The requirements of the policy will be further discussed later within this report in the 'Appraisal' section.. Policy A21 reads as follows:
 - *“Lies close to the A2 Watling Street. Any planning application for development proposals on these sites will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site.*
 - *Financial contributions include those toward primary education, health and junction improvements at Key Street A249/A2.*
 - *Through an integrated landscape strategy consider:*
 - *The creation of a new attractive urban edge to Sittingbourne, with substantial landscaping to achieve the integration of development in a fashion that minimises its impact upon the separation of Sittingbourne with Bobbing.*
 - *The assessment and, where possible, the retention of remaining orchard trees (a UK BAP priority habitat).*
 - *Determine such matters as the presence of protected species, whilst retention of habitat as far as possible and mitigation will secure a net gain in biodiversity.”*
 - The policy envisages a minimum of 30 dwellings on 2.3 hectares of land
- 5.05 'Developer Contributions' Supplementary Planning Document (2009):.
- 5.06 Clauses 4, 6 and 7 of Policy DM7 of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Twenty-six letters and emails of objection have been received from local residents. Their comments can be summarised as follows:

- *‘There is a lot of information within all the supporting documents which is extremely time consuming to read, digest and understand. This makes it difficult to provide full comments for objections’*
- The land behind Cherryfields (which adjoins the northeastern corner of the site) is two to three metres higher; this would lead to overlooking and overshadowing
- Would lead to increase in traffic at the Key Street roundabout and on the A249
- Previous applications for less houses on this site were refused
- The proposal site is not in the Local Plan
- Massive increase in vehicle movements
- Increase in pollution from vehicles
- No new infrastructure: roads, schools and surgeries are at breaking point
- Bungalows and affordable homes are needed; not executive homes
- Loss of trees on boundary
- Flooding and subsidence problems
- Access too near to Key Street roundabout
- Bungalows on boundaries would be better
- Will set a precedent for development at Wises Lane
- Loss of countryside gap between Sittingbourne and Newington
- Brownfield sites are preferable for development
- Inaccuracies within the submitted Transport Statement
- Not enough parking or visitor spaces
- Loss of views
- Topography of site is very steep
- Proposed play area in dangerous position close to road
- Increase in use of public rights of way
- No safe cycle route across Key Street roundabout
- Loss of Grade I agricultural land
- Layout too dense – allocated for a minimum of 30 dwellings in Local Plan
- Adverse impact on wildlife
- Development will devalue my property
- Safety concerns regarding electricity station
- Bird and bat boxes are not as good as natural habitat

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.01 Borden Parish Council objects to the application and their comments read as follows:

‘Lack of provision of Schools, particularly Primary Schools, accessible by sustainable transport.

Insufficient provision of Hospitals and GP services

The land itself is Grade 1 agricultural land and should be protected for Agricultural use. Uncertainty about the availability, price and quality of food within the UK arising from climate change, development of the Asian/Chinese economies and population growth has been exacerbated by the recent decision to leave the EU. Further loss of production capacity and the local economic development opportunity to construction would not be prudent.

Environmental pollution: The number of vehicles currently using the Key street junction, A2 and old Maidstone Road create high pollution levels during peak hours. This occurs particularly on Chestnut Street and Danaway where earth banks created to separate the A249 from residential areas now create high pollution zones because of limited air movement and queuing traffic. The development is not sustainable with regard to transport or air quality, since it will lead to further congestion on the A2, A249 and rural lanes Traffic exiting this development onto Chestnut Street will cause further congestion to an already inadequate road system. There are Highways safety concerns arising from parked commuter vehicles and HGV's adjacent to the proposed junction between the new development and Chestnut Street. No figures are supplied for actual peak hours between 05.45 and 07.00 when commuters use the routes. The A249/A2 (Key Street) roundabout is unable to cope with existing traffic at peak times which will only worsen with the Iwade and Sheppey developments. Traffic from the main Sittingbourne town and the Northern residential areas of Sittingbourne i.e. Sonara Fields, Kemsley, Iwade etc. converge on Key Street Roundabout; many drivers use Chestnut Street to try and bypass the congested areas, leading to long delays at the Stockbury roundabout and reduced safety for residents along Maidstone road. Chestnut Street is also used in times of accidents on the A249. As a consequence the whole road systems becomes blocked due to the high volume of vehicles and use of wide vehicles. This is contrary to the statement on Page 21, 6.1.5 of the Transport Statement.

Any designed road exiting onto Chestnut Street will create a rat-run for traffic trying to avoid the current bottlenecks. As a consequence, there will be a detrimental impact on the safety and quality of life for residents/public. Improvements to the Key Street Roundabout and the Stockbury Roundabout should be undertaken before any further development takes place Insufficient parking spaces; appears to be one per property?

In the past KCC Minerals and Waste have raised objections to applications in this area.

The topography of the site means that the land sits much higher than current housing abutting the boundaries. The proposed two storey properties to the rear of existing housing will in fact be the equivalent of a three-storey building.

Loss of valuable wildlife habitat: Should the Borough Council be minded to approve this application we would ask that the following be taken into consideration:

Bungalows should be built to the rear of existing properties in Cherryfields any other properties impacted; this will in effect due land being higher on the site appear as two-storey buildings and will not cut out light.

We would request that an archaeological survey be carried out prior to any development owing to the history of the area.'

- 7.02 The Environment Agency raises no objection.
- 7.03 UK Power Networks raises no objection.
- 7.04 Scotia Gas Networks raises no objection.
- 7.05 The Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board raises no objection.
- 7.06 Natural England raises no objection.

- 7.07 Southern Water raises no objection, subject to the inclusion of Informatives as noted below.
- 7.08 Highways England acknowledges that the proposal might put pressure on the roundabout at Key Street, although they suggest that the impact would be limited. They encourage the developer to discuss the matter with KCC Highways and Transportation. Their comments are as follows:

'Having examined the above application, while we accept that the development alone will have a limited impact on the Key Street junction (A2 / A249), evidence submitted to and agreed at the Swale Local Plan Examination concluded that at times the junction is operating over capacity and going forwards we are aware that there will be a severe cumulative impact on the junction due to committed, consented and emerging Local Plan development. Therefore now and in to the future there are SRN related safety, journey reliability and operational efficiency issues that need to be addressed.

While it would be open to any applicant to propose individual mitigation, we believe it would be more sensible for there to a single co-ordinated response of the right type delivered at the right time to mitigate the cumulative impacts of all likely development. A cumulative mitigation scheme is being developed by Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council.

We therefore look forward to hearing from the applicant as to which direction they wish to take. They may wish to make their decision based upon a conversation with KCC/SBC regarding the progress of the cumulative mitigation scheme.'

- 7.09 KCC Highways and Transportation comment in full as follows:

'It is acknowledged that the proposed development does form one of the allocated sites within the Local Plan that has now been approved by the Planning Inspector and is due to be adopted within the coming days, so the principle of residential development in this location will be supported by the weight of that Plan. Consequently, the Highway Authority will work with the Applicant to agree what measures are required to accommodate the development and its impact on the local highway network.

I have reviewed the proposed trip rates used in the Transport Statement, and undertaken my own TRICS calculation using selection filters that I consider comparable to the location of this site. My calculations did derive a slightly higher generation of traffic, suggesting a further 6 movements during the AM peak and 3 more during the PM peak to give totals of 32 and 29 respectively. Over the period between 07:00 to 19:00, my analysis indicated a total of 264 vehicle movements. It is not considered that the difference between the two TRICS interrogations is a significant material difference when viewed against the existing traffic on the highway network.

The development is proposed to be accessed from a simple priority junction onto Chestnut Street, and I accept that this would be the correct design approach. The junction matrix in TD 42/95 of the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges recommends this type of road junction is used when accommodating the amount of vehicle numbers travelling along the main road and expected to be generated from the development. The position of the proposed access will be within the current national speed limit section of Chestnut Street, close to the transition point of the 30mph speed limit approaching Key Street roundabout. However, the Transport Statement suggests that the 30mph limit will be extended further south, past the proposed access, and visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m would be appropriate based on that speed. It should be noted that the extension of the 30mph limit will need to be the subject of a Traffic

Regulation Order that requires consultation, and has to be considered in the road environment and other influencing factors. These are described in the DfT circular 01/2013, so it cannot be taken for granted that the proposed extension to the speed restriction will be allowed. I therefore believe that it would be more appropriate to provide sightlines at the proposed junction based on measured speeds at this location.

Notwithstanding the above uncertainty regarding vehicle speeds, it is demonstrated by the drawing provided in Appendix E (of the Transport Assessment) that visibility splays of at least 2.4m by 90m to the southwest, and 2.4m by 87m to the northeast of the junction are generally available, and splays far in excess of these are achievable due to the extent of the highway land that could be used to facilitate longer sightlines. I am therefore content that appropriate sightlines can ultimately be provided for the proposed access, and these can be secured through the technical approval process associated with the Section 278 Highway Agreement that will have to be entered into by the developer to permit construction of the new junction and any other off-site highway works required. The developer will also be expected to fund the costs of processing and implementation of the proposed Traffic Regulation Order.

The vehicle swept path analysis that has been submitted demonstrates that the site can be accessed by a refuse freighter and pantechnicon type removals lorry, although I note that these do utilise the full width of Chestnut Street to carry out their manoeuvres. This section of Chestnut Street does attract on-street parking from commuters and also customers of the nearby Tudor Rose public house, which restricts the width of carriageway. It will also be necessary to consider the introduction of waiting restrictions in this vicinity to protect the movement of vehicles through this section. As before, the cost of funding this Traffic Regulation Order will fall upon the developer.

Although a footway exists along the entire northern side of Chestnut Street, the provision along the southern side from Key Street roundabout stops short of the proposed access. The drawings submitted do appear to indicate that this footway will link all the way into the development, but is beyond the red line boundary and does not indicate whether this is intended to represent an extension to the existing footway. For clarity, it would be appropriate to secure this off-site highway work through a planning obligation, so that it is provided as part of the Section 278 Agreement works.

To accord with the emerging Local Plan, this site is expected to contribute towards improvements of the Key Street/A249 junction. Based on the levy that has been applied to other developments that will send traffic through this junction, it would be appropriate to seek a financial contribution of £51,667. The Section 106 Agreement will therefore need to include for that provision.

Whilst the planning application has been made in Outline, with only access to be considered at this time, I do note that an indicative site layout has been submitted, and reference is made within the Transport Statement to the parking provision within the development. As these are considerations for any subsequent Reserved Matters application, should the Local Planning Authority grant approval to the current application, then those aspects of the proposals will be assessed at that time. Please note that the response being provided by Kent County Council Highways and Transportation now should not be taken as any acceptance of the details submitted beyond those of Access only. However, I would suggest that the parking category that this development will fall in should be Suburban Edge, rather than the Suburban category referred to in the Transport Statement. When assessing those details at the Reserved Matters stage, the development layout and details will be expected to be in accordance with the appropriate design guidance. It should be noted that the parking guidance, IG3, does not count garages towards the parking provision, and independently accessible parking spaces are sought instead of tandem arrangements. This is likely to influence the final design of the development layout.

In conclusion, I can confirm that provided the following requirements are secured by condition or planning obligation, then I would raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority:-

- *Provision of construction vehicle loading/unloading and turning facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction.*
- *Provision of parking facilities for site personnel and visitors prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction.*
- *Provision of measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.*
- *Provision of wheel washing facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction.*
- *Completion and maintenance of the access shown on the submitted plans prior to the use of the site commencing.*
- *Completion of the identified off-site highway works*
- *Undertaking to progress the Traffic Regulation Order for the speed limit extension*
- *Undertaking to progress the Traffic Regulation Order for waiting restrictions*
- *Contribution of **£51,667.00** towards junction improvements'*

7.10 KCC Development Contributions Team requests the following contributions (based on 50 dwellings being approved and built under a reserved matters application):

- Primary Education (towards enhancement of Borden Primary School) - **£166,200.00**
- Secondary Education (towards Phase 3 of expansion of Westlands Secondary School - **£117,990.00**
- Community Learning (towards new equipment to support additional Adult Education in the new Sittingbourne Hub) - **£3,021.35**
- Youth Service (towards additional youth facilities and equipment in Sittingbourne) - **£1,879.17**
- Libraries (towards equipment and bookstock costs of new library in Sittingbourne Hub) - **£11,350.00**
- Social Care (towards fit out costs of Sittingbourne Care Hub) - **£3,166.50**
- The Contributions Team also request that one of the affordable homes on the site be suitable for wheelchair access; and that High Speed Fibre Optic Broadband connection be incorporated into any reserved matters proposal for the development.

7.11 The Greenspaces Manager requests a contribution of **£43,050.00** (£861.00 per dwelling) towards the provision of off site play equipment at Grove Park. He also notes that, if the greenspace on site is to be maintained by SBC after completion, a ten year commuted sum will also be necessary. I will update Members at the meeting.

7.12 The NHS Swale Clinical Commissioning Group requests a financial contribution of **£18,000.00** towards expanding existing facilities within the vicinity of the development, in the form of funding for services and staff.

7.13 The Environmental Protection Team Leader requires a contribution of **£4,300.00** (£86.00 per dwelling for a refuse and a recycling bin).

7.14 No response has been received from the Housing Services Manager. I will update Members at the meeting, although I note that five dwellings or 10% of the total dwellings proposed are earmarked for affordable housing.

7.15 KCC Ecology raise no objection, subject to a landscaping condition included below.

- 7.16 KCC Flood and Water Management raise no objection, subject to conditions included below.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 8.01 Application papers and drawings relating to application 17/500727/OUT
- 8.02 Application papers and drawings relating to application SW/04/0095
- 8.03 Application papers and drawings relating to application SW/03/0224

9.0 APPRAISAL

- 9.01 The key issues to consider in this case are those of the principle of development; residential amenity; landscape and visual amenity; highway issues and infrastructure concerns; minerals issues; the use of agricultural land; and the density of development. I will deal with each of these matters in turn.

- 9.02 Principle of Development: A number of objectors have correctly noted that two previous planning applications have been refused on this site. Those refusals resulted from the fact that under both the 2002 and the 2008 Local Plans, this land was situated outside the built up area boundary and was not allocated for housing. However, under the auspices of the newly approved Bearing Fruit 2031: The Swale Borough Local 2017, the status of the land has changed, with the land being allocated for housing under Policy A21 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2017. As such, with the status of the land changing, the principle of residential development on this land also changes, with such a principle now being acceptable and in accordance with Policy A21.

It should be noted that the site is allocated for a minimum of 30 dwellings; up to 50 are proposed in this application. However, the accompanying illustrative drawing would suggest up to 50 could be accommodated on this site, whilst still providing adequate public and private amenity space, parking and high levels of residential amenity. This matter will be further discussed later in this report.

- 9.03 Residential Amenity: In terms of residential amenity, I do agree with the concerns of residents in Cherryfields, which is located directly east of the northeast corner of the site. I have visited two of these residents and viewed the situation from their homes, and it is surprising to note how dramatically and rapidly the ground levels change between the existing rear gardens in Cherryfields and the eastern boundary of the proposal site, with a rapid rise in topography of between two and three metres. This would indeed result in issues of overlooking and possibly overshadowing to certain properties within Cherryfields.

The applicant has helpfully submitted indicative site layouts with the application, although access is the only issue to be decided under this outline application. A number of local residents correctly noted the possible issues which would result should this layout be confirmed. It must again be noted that layout is not an issue for decision in this application, but the applicant is advised to take note of Condition (5) below, recommending that when submitting a reserved matters application (should Members

resolve to approve this outline application), the dwellings on the plots nearest to Cherryfields should be single storey, to minimise harm to the residents of Cherryfields.

I do am not of the opinion that the proposal would raise any other issues relating to an unacceptable erosion of residential amenity.

9.04 Highway Issues: A number of concerns have been raised with regard to highways issues and the impacts upon same from the development. I note the response received from KCC Highways and Transportation, which I included in full earlier in this report, for Members' information. That response suggests that the impact of the proposal upon highway amenity would be limited, and this would be negated further by the proposed changes to the Key Street Roundabout. I am happy to accept the expert opinion of KCC Highways and Transportation; much thought has obviously gone into their response, and the concerns raised have been carefully addressed by their findings.

9.05 Infrastructure Issues: A number of concerns have also been raised with regard to infrastructure issues, with particular reference to schools places, medical services, etc. Whilst I understand these concerns, I note the requests for contributions towards schools and facilities, libraries, NHS services, highways improvements, greenspaces, etc. so would argue that suitable financial recompense would be obtained via a s.106 to improve services in the area. As such, I consider that the impact of the development would be substantially negated by these improvements paid for by the developer, and as such, I deem this objection to have been answered. The amounts required are as follows:

- **£51,667.00** towards junction improvements'
- Primary Education (towards enhancement of Borden Primary School) - **£166,200.00**
- Secondary Education (towards Phase 3 of expansion of Westlands Secondary School) - **£117,990.00**
- Community Learning (towards new equipment to support additional Adult Education in the new Sittingbourne Hub) - **£3,021.35**
- Youth Service (towards additional youth facilities and equipment in Sittingbourne) - **£1,879.17**
- Libraries (towards equipment and bookstock costs of new library in Sittingbourne Hub) - **£11,350.00**
- Social Care (towards fit out costs of Sittingbourne Care Hub) - **£3,166.50**
- **£43,050.00** (£861.00 per dwelling) towards the provision of off site play equipment at Grove Park.
- **£18,000.00** towards expanding existing NHS facilities within the vicinity of the development.
- £223.58 per dwelling, or **£11,179.00** for 50 dwellings is required to mitigate potential impacts on the Swale Protection Area.
- A 5% administration and monitoring fee.

- 9.06 **Minerals Issues:** The site is identified for brick earth extraction prior to development in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP) Adopted April 2017, and the KCC Minerals Extraction Team have registered a holding objection. The developer has argued that the site should be exempt under Criterion 7 of Policy A21 of The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017, as follows:

'Policy DM 7 Safeguarding Mineral Resources states 'Planning permission will only be granted for non-mineral development that is incompatible with minerals safeguarding, where it is demonstrated that either 7. it constitutes development on a site allocated in the adopted development plan'.

Whilst we appreciate the Local Plan has not been adopted, it can be given significant weight as it is at an advanced stage. As the application site is included in the draft Local Plan in Policy A14- Sittingbourne 2. Manor Farm we believe the application can be permitted as it will adhere to #7 in Policy DM 7.

In addition to this, Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 proposed a number of amendments. In 6.5 Proposed housing allocations there is no reference of concern relating to safeguarding minerals which might be present on site, therefore requiring a Minerals Assessment.

This has been recognised on other proposed housing sites (but importantly not on Manor Farm) where Main Modifications have been included, Minerals Assessments on the followings proposed housing allocations have been proposed:

Larger Allocations

*Stones Farm, Sittingbourne
Land at the Western Link, Faversham
Preston Fields, Faversham
Iwade Expansion
Land north of High Street, Newington*

Smaller Allocations

*Ham Road, Faversham
West of Brogdale Road, Faversham*

Due to the forthcoming allocation of the site for housing and no representations or main modifications being proposed relating to a Minerals Assessment being required, we believe the site meets exemption #7 in Policy DM 7 and can therefore be supported.'

- 9.07 Policy A14 doesn't specifically highlight mineral safeguarding as an issue on this site as it does others, nevertheless the LP makes it clear (Section 4, paras 4.1.65 – 4.1.67) that where reserves are identified on site allocated for development we will ensure the developer works with the Minerals Planning Authority to ensure timely working of the site, provided that there is a suitable and viable outlet for the resource and without it creating an unreasonable impact on the viability and therefore affecting the development coming forward.

Regarding the developers' interpretation that they would be exempt because the site would be within an adopted development plan, the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority does not share this interpretation and considers that it is contrary

to national planning guidance, the KMWLP and runs counter to the views of the Inspector who found the KMWLP sound in 2016.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that the responsibility for facilitating the sustainable use of minerals applies to all planning authorities. The NPPF is crystal clear that development needs to take account of minerals and not needlessly sterilise resources.

Specifically looking at this site – it is very small (50 dwellings) and therefore not likely to yield any amount of resource that would be practical or of economic value. Furthermore any extraction, given the small size, is likely to affect viability to such an extent as to render the whole scheme a non-starter. I would imagine that it why the LP Policy A14 doesn't explicitly specify a minerals assessment is needed. The developer has therefore been advised to have discussions with KCC without the need to do a minerals assessment.

The applicant's agent has heeded the above advice and discussed the matter at length with colleagues at KCC Minerals, who are in the process of preparing a response. I will update Members on this situation at the meeting.

- 9.08 Development on Agricultural Land: Policy DM 31 of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 states that development on best and most versatile agricultural land (the land in question is Grade 1 Agricultural land) will only be permitted when there is an overriding need that cannot be met on land within the built-up area boundaries. An overriding need in this case is considered to be the housing need of this Borough. Policy DM 31 states that development on best and most versatile agricultural land will not be permitted unless the site is allocated by the local plan. In this case, the site is included as an allocation in the Local Plan. Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality. In this case I consider that the overriding argument in respect of the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land is that the need for housing outweighs the need for agricultural land and the fact that this site is included as an allocation site is of overriding significance.
- 9.09 Landscape Impact and Visual Amenity: The Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011 indicates that the surrounding landscape is of moderate quality with moderate sensitivity to change. The application site is not within a designated landscape area and is not noted for its special quality or character. I therefore conclude that the development of this site for housing would cause no significant harm to the character or appearance of the countryside/landscape and that any harm can be adequately mitigated against through retention and reinforcement of vegetation along the boundaries of the site.
- 9.10 Density of Development: It will be noted that Policy A21 of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 states that the site is allocated for a minimum of 30 properties. The present outline application allows for up to 50, which would amount to a density of 24.8 dwellings per hectare. However, the indicative layout drawings do appear to show that the site can accommodate fifty dwellings whilst allowing for public and private amenity areas and parking, as previously noted above. Although it must be remembered that details of layout would be dealt with under a Reserved Matters application, should Members be inclined to support this Outline application, the indicative layout has shown that the site could comfortably accommodate up to fifty dwellings, and I consider that level to be acceptable in principle.

Policy A21 of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 states that one issue to be addressed on this allocated site would be ‘The creation of a new attractive urban edge to Sittingbourne, with substantial landscaping to achieve the integration of development in a fashion that minimises its impact upon the separation of Sittingbourne with Bobbing.’ Having carefully studied the illustrative site layout, I am of the opinion that sufficient space along the western and southern borders has been provided to ensure that this is the case.

- 9.11 I note the points raised by objectors, but I believe that the matters noted above address those points.
- 9.12 In terms of surface and foul drainage, I note the comments of relevant consultees (see paragraphs 7.07 and 7.16 above) and have included conditions to ensure that any issues raised are adequately addressed.
- 9.13 With regard to any implications for the Special Protection Area, a contribution of £11, 179.00 is sought in mitigation.

10.0 CONCLUSION

10.01 As such, and on balance, I therefore recommend that this outline application be approved, subject to the conditions below.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to clarification in respect of open space management; the views of the housing Services Manager, the resolution of the brick earth issue; the signing of a suitably worded Section 106 Agreement; and the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

- (1) Details relating to the layout, scale and appearance of the proposed buildings, and the landscaping of the site, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any development is commenced.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) Application for approval of reserved matters referred to in Condition (1) above must be made not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of outline planning permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (3) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (4) Pursuant to Condition (1) above, the reserved matters application shall show no more than a total of 50 dwellings, and the dwellings shall be no more than 2.5 storeys in height

Reason: In order to comply with Policy A21 of The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 and in the interests of safeguarding the local landscape.

- (5) Pursuant to Condition (1) above, the reserved matters application shall show only single storey dwellings in the north east corner of the site (marked on the illustrative site layout drawing no. DHA/11507/06 Rev A and the illustrative proposed storey heights plan no. DHA/11507/04 Rev A as plot numbers 35 - 39 inclusive), adjacent to the existing properties in Cherryfields

Reason: In view of the rise in the topography of the land, which would result in issues of overlooking and overshadowing to existing properties in Cherryfields, if those new properties were to be of more than one storey

- (6) The details submitted pursuant to condition (1) above shall provide full details of how the residential part of the development will meet the principles of 'Secure by Design'. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of public amenity and safety.

- (7) The details submitted pursuant to condition (1) above shall include cross-sectional drawings through the site, of the existing and proposed site levels. The development shall then be completed strictly in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: In order to secure a satisfactory form of development having regard to the nature of the site.

- (8) The landscaping details submitted pursuant to condition (1) shall include full details of both hard and soft landscape works including existing trees, shrubs and other features, planting schedules of plants, noting species (which shall be native species and of a type that will encourage wildlife and biodiversity), plant sizes and numbers where appropriate, means of enclosure, hard surfacing materials, and an implementation programme. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Upon completion of the approved landscaping scheme, any trees or shrubs that are removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced with trees or shrubs of such size and species as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, and within whatever planting season is agreed.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and encouraging wildlife and biodiversity.

- (9) No development approved by this planning permission shall take place until a remediation strategy that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

1. A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
 - a) All previous uses

- b) Potential contaminants associated with those uses
 - c) A conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
 - d) Potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
2. A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
 3. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
 4. A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To prevent pollution of controlled waters and comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- (10) No occupation of any part of the permitted development shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a “long-term monitoring and maintenance plan”) for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To prevent pollution of controlled waters and comply with the NPPF.

- (11) If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To prevent pollution of controlled waters and comply with the NPPF

- (12) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of the method of disposal of foul and surface waters as part of a detailed drainage strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This detailed drainage scheme shall demonstrate that the surface water generated by

this development (for all rainfall durations and intensities up to and including the climate change adjusted critical 100yr storm) can be accommodated and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. The risk of ground instability associated with discharge of surface water into the underlying soils should be assessed and the infiltration rates confirmed with a suitable ground investigation.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions.

- (13) No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until details of the implementation; maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Those details shall include:

- i) a timetable for its implementation, and
- ii) a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage system throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions.

- (14) No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted other than with the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority (in consultation with the Environment Agency); this may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approval details.

Reason: To protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- (15) Development shall not begin until a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The detailed drainage scheme shall demonstrate that the surface water generated by this development (for all rainfall durations and intensities up to and including the climate change adjusted critical 100 year storm) can be collected and disposed of via infiltration features located within the curtilage of the site.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions, and to protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- (16) Development shall not begin until details are submitted to and approved in writing by Local Planning Authority (in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority) of measures within the drainage scheme that ensure silt and pollutants resulting from the site use can be adequately managed to ensure there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters as a result of infiltration of surface water from the development. The details shall only then be implemented in accordance

with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions, and to protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- (17) Prior to the commencement of the development, a Code of Construction Practice shall be submitted to and approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction of the development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved Code of Construction Practice and BS5228 Noise Vibration and Control on Construction and Open Sites and the Control of dust from construction sites (BRE DTi Feb 2003) unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The code shall include:

- An indicative programme for carrying out the works
- Measures to minimise the production of dust on the site(s)
- Measures to minimise the noise (including vibration) generated by the construction process to include the careful selection of plant and machinery and use of noise mitigation barrier(s)
- Maximum noise levels expected 1 metre from the affected façade of any residential unit adjacent to the site(s)
- Design and provision of site hoardings
- Management of traffic visiting the site(s) including temporary parking or holding areas
- Provision of off road parking for all site operatives
- Measures to prevent the transfer of mud and extraneous material onto the public highway
- Measures to manage the production of waste and to maximise the re-use of materials
- Measures to minimise the potential for pollution of groundwater and surface water
- The location and design of site office(s) and storage compounds
- The location of temporary vehicle access points to the site(s) during the construction works
- The arrangements for public consultation and liaison during the construction works.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity, highway safety and amenity.

- (18) No development shall take place until:
- a) a site investigation has been carried out to determine the nature and extent of any reptile or bat population within or adjacent to the building in accordance with the advice of Natural England
 - b) a written report of the site investigation has been prepared by a competent person. The report shall include the investigation results and details of a scheme to ensure the long-term health and well being of any reptile or owl population within or adjacent to the building. The report shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing.
 - c) the development shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme

Reason: In order to safeguard protected species that may be present within or adjacent to the building.

- (19) The details submitted in pursuance of condition (1) shall show adequate land reserved for parking in accordance with the Approved County Parking Standards and, upon approval of the details this area shall be provided, surfaced and drained before any building is occupied and shall be retained for the use of the occupiers of, and visitors to, the dwellings. Thereafter, no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order), shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to the reserved vehicle parking area.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and detrimental to highway safety and amenity.

- (20) None of the dwellings shall be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with details to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for cycles to be securely stored and sheltered.

Reason: To ensure the provision and retention of adequate off-street parking facilities for cycles in the interests of sustainable development and promoting cycle visits and to ensure that such matters are dealt with before development commences.

- (21) The proposed estate roads, footways, footpaths, verges, junctions, street lighting, sewers, drains, retaining walls, service routes, surface water outfall, vehicle overhang margins, embankments, visibility splays, accesses, carriageway gradients, drive gradients, car parking and street furniture shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with details to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing before their construction begins. For this purpose, plans and sections, indicating as appropriate, the design, layout, levels, gradients, materials and method of construction shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the roads are laid out and constructed in a satisfactory manner and to ensure that such matters are dealt with before development commences.

- (22) No impact pile driving in connection with the construction of the development shall take place on the site on any Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday, nor on any other day except between the following times :-
Monday to Friday 0900 - 1700 hours unless in association with an emergency or with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

- (23) No demolition or construction work in connection with the development shall take place on any Sunday or Bank Holiday, nor on any other day except between the following times :-
Monday to Friday 0730 - 1800 hours, Saturdays 0830 - 1300 hours unless in association with an emergency or with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

- (24) Prior to the commencement of development a programme for the suppression of dust during the construction of the development shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures approved shall be employed throughout the period of construction unless any variation has been approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to ensure that such matters are dealt with before development commences.

- (25) Prior to the first occupation of a dwelling the following works between that dwelling and the adopted highway shall be completed as follows:
- (A) Footways and/or footpaths shall be completed, with the exception of the wearing course;
 - (B) Carriageways completed, with the exception of the wearing course, including the provision of a turning facility beyond the dwelling together with related:
 - (1) highway drainage, including off-site works,
 - (2) junction visibility splays,
 - (3) street lighting, street nameplates and highway structures if any.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- (26) Within 6 months of construction commencing a detailed landscaping plan and management plan must be submitted to the LPA for written approval. The submitted information must include the following:

- A landscape plan incorporating the ecological enhancement measures detailed within chapter 9 of the Ecology Assessment, Ethos Ecology (December 2016)
- Details of how the proposed planting will be established
- A five year rolling management plan for the site
- When habitat monitoring will be carried out
- When management plan reviews will be carried out

The measures shall be implemented in full accordance with the submitted information prior to the occupation of development.

Reason: In the interests of preserving biodiversity and visual amenity

Council's Approach to the Application

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering pre-application advice

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

INFORMATIVES:

- (1) It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure , before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the road. This is called 'highway land'. Some of this land is owned by The Kent County Council (KCC) whilst some are owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil. Information about how to clarify the highway boundary can be found at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/highway-land>
The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.
- (2) A formal application for connection to the public sewerage system is required in order to service this development. To initiate a sewer capacity check to identify the appropriate connection point for the development, please contact Southern Water, Sparrowgrove House, Sparrowgrove, Otterbourne, Hampshire, SO21 2SW, (Tel: 0330 303 0119 or www.southernwater.co.uk).
- (3) Safe digging practices, in accordance with HSE publication HSG47 "Avoiding Danger from Underground Services" must be used to verify and establish the actual position of mains, pipes, services and other apparatus on site before any mechanical plant is used. It is your responsibility to ensure that this information is provided to all relevant people (direct labour or contractors) working for you on or near gas plant.
- (4) KCC wishes to make the applicant aware that Superfast Fibre Optic Broadband 'fibre to the premises' should be provided to each dwelling of adequate capacity (internal minimum speed of 100mb) for current and future use of the buildings.
- (5) All nesting birds and their young are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and as such any vegetation must be removed outside the breeding bird season, and if this is not possible an ecologist must examine the site prior to works starting and if any nesting birds are recorded all works must cease within that area

- NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

APPENDIX: HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

Context

SPAs are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species. Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) requires *Member States to take appropriate steps to avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats or any disturbances affecting the birds, in so far as these would be significant having regard to the objectives of this Article.*

For proposals likely to have a significant effect on a European site, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) requires the Council to make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site. Para. 119 of the NPPF states that *"The presumption in favour of sustainable development ... does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined."*

Given the scales of housing development proposed around the North Kent SPAs, the North Kent Environmental Planning Group (NKEPG) commissioned a number of reports to assess the current and future levels of recreational activity on the North Kent Marshes SPAs and Ramsar sites. NKEPG comprises Canterbury, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale local authorities, together with Natural England and other stakeholders. The following evidence has been compiled:

- Bird Disturbance Study, North Kent 2010/11 (Footprint Ecology).
- What do we know about the birds and habitats of the North Kent Marshes? (Natural England Commissioned Report 2011).
- North Kent Visitor Survey Results (Footprint Ecology 2011).
- Estuary Users Survey (Medway Swale Estuary Partnerships, 2011).
- North Kent Comparative Recreation Study (Footprint Ecology 2012).
- Recent Wetland Bird Surveys results produced by the British Trust for Ornithology.
- Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries – Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (Footprint Ecology 2014).

In July 2012, an overarching report summarised the evidence to enable the findings to be used in

the assessment of development. The report concluded (in summary):

- There have been marked declines in the numbers of birds using the three SPAs.
- Disturbance is a potential cause of the declines. The bird disturbance study provided evidence that the busiest locations support particularly low numbers of birds.
- Within the Medway, the areas that have seen the most marked declines are the area north of Gillingham, including the area around Riverside Country Park. This is one of the busiest areas in terms of recreational pressure.
- Access levels are linked to local housing, with much of the access involving frequent use by local residents.
- Bird disturbance study - dog walking accounted for 55% of all major flight observations, with a further 15% attributed to walkers without dogs along the shore.
- All activities (i.e. the volume of people) are potentially likely to contribute to additional pressure on the SPA sites. Dog walking, and in particular dog walking with dogs off leads, is currently the main cause of disturbance.
- Development within 6km of the SPAs is particularly likely to lead to increase in recreational use.

Natural England's advice to the affected local authorities is that it is likely that a significant effect will occur on the SPAs/Ramsar sites from recreational pressure arising from new housing proposals in the North Kent coastal area.

The agreed response between Natural England and the local authorities is to put in place strategic mitigation to avoid this effect – a 'strategic solution.' This provides strategic mitigation for the effects of recreational disturbance arising from development pressure on international sites and will normally enable residential development to proceed on basis of mitigation provided avoiding a likely significant effect.

This strategic approach is set out in the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries – Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (Footprint Ecology 2014). It will normally require the creation of on-site mitigation, such as the creation of open space suitable for dog walking and, secondly, via payment of a dwelling tariff for off-site impacts. The money collected from the tariff would be used by the North Kent Councils and its partners for mitigation projects such as wardening, education, diversionary projects and habitat creation. The policy context for such actions is provided by policies CP7 and DM28 of the Local Plan 2017.

Associated information

Natural England's email to SBC dated 6th April 2017 has also been considered; in particular that they have raised no objections subject to contributions towards strategic mitigation.

The Assessment of Land at Manor Farm, Sittingbourne

The application site is located approximately 2km to the southeast of The Swale SPA. Therefore, there is a medium possibility that future residents of the site will access footpaths and land within these European designated areas.

Measures are to be taken to reduce the impact on the SPA and these would be built into the development in respect of the provision of public open space.

This assessment has taken into account the availability of other public footpaths close to the site and to a lesser extent, the open space proposed within the site. Whilst these would no doubt supplement many day-to-day recreational activities, there would be some leakage to the SPA. However, the commitment of the applicant to contribute £223.58 per house to address SPA recreational disturbance towards through strategic mitigation in line with recommendations of the

Thames Medway and Swale Estuaries SAMM as detailed above, will off-set some of the impacts. This mitigation will include strategies for the management of disturbance within public authorised parts of the SPA as well as to prevent public access to privately owned parts of the SPA.

Conclusions

Taking the above into account, the proposals would not give rise to significant effects on the SPA. At this stage it can therefore be concluded that the proposals can be screened out for purposes of Appropriate Assessment.