

Annex 2 - Initial Statutory Consultee Comments

Transport Consultees

KCC Highways -

(Interim Comment) dated 08/08/23

Transport Assessment (TA)

This application includes the provision of key highway infrastructure required by the Thanet Transport Strategy (TTS), which supports the growth earmarked within the adopted Local Plan, namely two strategic link roads and new supporting junctions within the development site, providing a valuable contribution towards the future capacity, resiliency, and route choice of the local highway network. In time this infrastructure will help to manage traffic pressure at the existing constrained junction of The Square, along the busy A28 Corridor as well as alleviate run running through Acol village. This is facilitated by the redistribution of background traffic on the local highway network as a result of on-site road infrastructure provision. The package of road interventions included within the TTS, are commonly referred to as the Inner Circuit Route

Improvement Strategy (ICRIS), with the currently proposed North Thanet Link (NTL) scheme providing the section between the A28 at Birchington and Manston/Hartsdown Road at Margate, as well as a connection to Columbus Avenue.

Conversely, as anticipated, the development is likely to lead to an increase in traffic movements on the Shottendane Road corridor, largely attributable to enabled redistributed movements rather than new movements that are generated by site-specific trips. Therefore, it is appropriate for this this application to be viewed within the context of the ICRIS, which in time will provide strategic improvements to this part of the network, increasing the capacity of this link and managing increases in traffic flows. As improvements come forward, there is likely to be a marked improvement to highway network resiliency that will benefit the whole District. This application must therefore be considered within the context of the emerging TTS. In this case we would not consider it proportionate or reasonable appropriate to address all the residual impacts of the proposed development in every location, as this would fail to acknowledge the balance with benefits it offers to the network as the Local Plan growth is realised and the wider benefit that this would provide to highway network resilience.

It is worth noting that one potential area of interest that must be balanced is the interim impact of development prior to delivery of the site's Southern Link Road (SLR) and connection to Shottendane Road in order to redistribute traffic away from The Square and Acol village. However, in the view of the Highway Authority, the preferred strategy would be to undertake a single improvement scheme that is compatible with the longer term, at an appropriate juncture. The Highway Authority would not consider it an efficient and prudent use of developer contributions to reactively make ad hoc improvements at this time. It would

be more appropriate to employ such funds flexibly considering the network as a whole and support the emerging NTL.

It is important to highlight that the TA provides a robust assessment as it is modelled on 1,800 homes, not the maximum of 1,600 now coming forward under this proposal and essentially represents a 'worst-case scenario' on which we can make a case for this site to support the Strategy to an appropriate degree.

Taking the above in account, an appropriate Section 106 obligation in the form of a monetary contribution to the ICRIS would be necessary and appropriate in the view of the Highway Authority. We are confident that on balance, given the scale and nature of the development, the combination of an appropriate contribution to ICRIS, the on-site infrastructure and other

transport-based contributions including sustainable transport improvements as offered, constitutes a suitable mitigation package across the network for the proposed development.

It would be essential in our view that any such contributions can be applied flexibly by the Highway Authority to effectively accommodate any changes in local circumstances over the timescale of the proposed development build-out. This acknowledges that the appropriate contributions from this development would support part of a larger framework of measures across the TTS and any ad-hoc improvements that may be required to mitigate the highway impacts, should future needs and residual impacts dictate.

Highway Infrastructure

A28 Signalised Junction

The proposed 4-arm signalised junction providing access into both halves of the development site from the A28 has been modelled to work approaching capacity in the 2031 future year AM and PM peaks, where it should be noted that the modelling has been based on the robust assessment figure of 1,800 dwellings instead of the 1,600 presented for approval. This means that despite the formation of queues at the signals, most notably on the A28 East Ahead and A28 West Ahead/Right lanes, these will usually be able to disperse within the space of one green phase.

Concerns were expressed that forward vertical visibility constraints heading eastbound up Brooksend Hill may potentially cause issues for eastbound traffic approaching the signal junction, but further assessment was carried out showing that visibility to both the primary signal head and back of the mean maximum queue length was acceptable for assumed 40mph speeds.

The Highway Authority (HA) is satisfied that this design offers adequate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate the junction safely and with minimal delay. The proposed 'Quex to Coast Route' intersects this junction, but it is considered that the balance between motorised and non-motorised modes of travel gives suitable priority to this route. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority.

Swept path analysis of the junction indicates that it can accommodate all legal vehicle types, including a 12m rigid axle bus and a 16.5m articulated HGV.

The Illustrative Masterplan indicates potential accesses to the Mixed-use Centre and Primary School in proximity to the signalised junction, which has been raised previously by the Highway Authority. Traffic modelling indicates that the AM peak may see traffic queue back as far as the proposed access locations, which may impact on vehicles turning into these facilities. Although detailed design of the accesses to these uses are subject to a further Reserved Matters application, we would recommend that the Masterplan and the Movement and Access Parameter Plan are annotated to reflect our preference for a potential shared access with right-turn lane set further back from the signalised junction.

Acol Hill roundabout

This proposed roundabout constitutes the primary eastern access to the site and has been modelled to operate well within capacity in the 2031 future year AM and PM peaks. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority. Swept path analysis of the junction indicates that it can accommodate all legal vehicle types, including a 13m refuse freighter and 16.5m articulated HGV.

Interaction with North Thanet Link Scheme

There is some clear synergy between these development proposals and our own NTL scheme, which has recently been subject to public consultation. These proposals and NTL share access points onto the A28, Acol Hill, and both have proposals for the Manston Road/Shottendane Road junction. Our main priority in this regard is to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility in any planning approval and S106 agreement, in relation to form of junction and design, so that the NTL scheme is not precluded. In discussion with the Planning Authority, we are confident that this flexibility can be secured, and that provision can be made within the terms of any planning approval for this development site as the NTL secures consent.

Park Lane Priority Access and Traffic Calming

This proposed priority junction will provide access to an initial Phase 1B for 112 dwellings prior to delivery of the full Southern Link Road (SLR), after which it will offer a secondary means of access into the southern half of the development site, most likely serving some traffic routing to/from Birchington Village Centre. The junction has been modelled to operate well within capacity in the 2031 future year AM and PM peaks. We would recommend, however, that its use be restricted by planning condition to access for Phase 1B only prior to the delivery of the SLR and new roundabout junction at Acol Hill, prior to a proposed 451 dwellings, and that no road connection be made to Phase 1B from within the southern parcel of the development site until said delivery is complete.

The proposal offers an uncontrolled crossing point with a floating pedestrian build out and pass-through for cyclists to allow access to Quex Park and the wider footway network. Given the complimentary traffic calming scheme proposal, this would in our view, be an acceptable

means of crossing Park Lane and continuation of the 'Quex to Coast' route. It should be noted that the continuation of the footway alongside the carriageway of Park Lane as far as the Quex Park access would be subject to a Section 228 process as it does not currently fall within highway land. In the event that this process is sufficiently challenged, we would need to ensure that the indicative footway link from Phase 1B to Brunswick Road is provided at the earliest possible juncture to provide the necessary pedestrian connectivity and is provided to an adoptable standard by the HA.

The visibility splays at the access have been demonstrated to be suitable for the existing 40mph speed limit, but under these proposals this section of Park Lane will have a design speed of 30mph, supported by traffic calming measures and signage for 30mph limit. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority, and we are confident that the scheme can be delivered through the Section 278 process prior to occupations of dwellings accessing Park Lane.

Minnis Road Roundabout Access

Site Policy SP16 of the Thanet Local Plan establishes the need for a northern access to the development site to offer connectivity via a northern link road between the A28 and Minnis Road, allowing coast-bound traffic to circumvent The Square in Birchington Village centre and reduce congestion there. Several options for the form of junction that would constitute the northern access were discussed, which ultimately had to be considered in the light of traffic patterns along Minnis Road and avoiding the need for an over-engineered solution in this primarily residential location. The signalised shuttle-working arrangement under the railway bridge creates queues that have the potential to block a proposed junction within the available land in which it could be positioned. Consequently, options for priority junction arrangements, signalisation and full roundabout were discounted in favour of a mini roundabout. This arrangement was modelled to provide enough capacity to accommodate site and redistributed traffic and provided a means of allowing drivers to establish priority between queuing traffic and traffic seeking to route towards the A28, without blocking the junction or causing severe delay. Any queuing traffic waiting for the lights will be likely be queuing along the link road instead of Minnis Road, as westbound traffic along Minnis Road will have priority at the roundabout. We are confident that as long as the roundabout is used properly by motorists, then westbound traffic should continue to flow at peak times on the network.

Conversely, for eastbound traffic on Minnis Road we recommended that the applicant did some additional traffic modelling to ensure that a 'worst-case' summer scenario would not see eastbound traffic queuing at the junction to the extent that it would cause blocking of the signals at the railway bridge. This modelling was based on observed flows, including one occasion where there had been a large public event at Minnis Bay in the summer of 2021, which in our view would represent a 'worst-case' scenario. Even after adding additional development and redistributed trips, there was not enough queueing to create conditions for potential blocking of the one-way shuttle working arrangement under the bridge.

The Highway Authority (HA) is satisfied that this design offers adequate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate the junction safely. The proposed 'Quex to Coast

Route' intersects this junction, but it is considered that the balance between motorised and non-motorised modes of travel gives suitable priority to this route.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority.

Shottendane Road interim schemes

A package of provisional measures has been submitted to mitigate impacts on the Shottendane Road corridor, in the event that the NTL were not to come forward as anticipated.

Proposals include a new arrangement at the junction of Manston Road/Shottendane Road, providing priority for movements between the two, with Manston Road east of the junction being served off a priority arm with a right turn lane, and the existing Margate Hill arm closed. The junction has been modelled to operate well within capacity in the 2031 future year AM and PM peaks and offers a safer arrangement over the existing staggered junction. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority.

However, in the view of the Highway Authority, this scheme is superseded by the NTL proposals to upgrade this junction to a roundabout and would only be feasibly delivered in our view if this development site were to come forward in isolation. Otherwise, we anticipate that timely contributions to the delivery of the NTL will allow the Highway Authority to deliver the preferred roundabout solution in line with other supporting infrastructure, prior to the occupation of 451 dwellings on the development site.

Further provisional mitigation has been proposed in the event of this site coming forward in isolation to address development impact further along the Shottendane Road corridor. Junction improvements at Minster Road and High Street Garlinge illustrate improvements to capacity and safety that address flow increases along this corridor. Again, we anticipate that delivery of the NTL will negate the need for these works. In the event of any interim between the delivery of the SLR and improvements in relation to the NTL, namely the realignment and widening of Manston Road and new roundabout at the junction of Manston Road /Shottendane Road, then a temporary TRO may be required for restrictions on HGVs. This would need to be funded by the applicant.

St Nicholas Roundabout

The development proposals offer a mitigation package to offer improvements to both the A299 west and A28 east arms of the roundabout. These have been modelled to mitigate development flows in the 2031 future year AM and PM peaks.

It is noted however in the TA that an alternative strategy would be to consider the cumulative impact of development at this junction and take a proportionate contribution towards a larger scheme. A scheme is under consideration and negotiations are ongoing over appropriate contribution.

Minnis Road Cycling Improvements Scheme

The proposals include a scheme to offer enhanced cycling facilities between the development site's northern access on Minnis Road and The Parade at Minnis Bay, as part of the promoted 'Quex to Coast Route'. The scheme design has been drawn up in consultation with various

KCC officers and offers, in our view, a betterment for sustainable modes seeking to access the coast and the wider Viking Coastal Trail. It is acknowledged that a balance had to be found in the scheme design between offering effective infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel, the physical highway constraints, and the needs of other users, presented along the route. It is the view of the Highway Authority that this scheme, alongside the proposed PROW diversion and new bridge over the railway line, will accommodate the anticipated extra demand for walking and cycling journeys the development site will generate.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for the scheme has been submitted and checked by the Highway Authority.

Public Transport

The Highway Authority has proposed a flexibly worded contribution to bus services, along the following lines in the Section 106 Agreement.

An initial contribution of £960,000 is required which may be reduced dependent on the status of the bus network at the time of development, in line with the approach detailed below. At the point at which a trigger point of xxx dwellings is reached, the developer must seek instruction from Kent County Council (KCC) in their capacity as Local Transport Authority (LTA) on the required public transport solution. Based on the status of the commercial and contracted bus network at the time, KCC will determine which of the following contributions is required:

The full contribution, payable to KCC, of £960,000 to fund a service on Mondays – Saturdays (0600 – 2000) between the site and Margate Town Centre for a period of 3 years.

A reduced contribution of £480,000, payable directly to an identified commercial operator, to provide an extension to an existing commercial service operating on Mondays - Saturdays for a period of 3 years.

Upon confirmation of the required solution, the developer is required to make payment by xxx dwellings. Upon receipt of the funding, the Council or operator will start the service within 3 calendar months.

Negotiations are ongoing as to the precise trigger point where these contributions will be reached. We would further seek the relocation of the existing stops and shelter in the vicinity of the junction of the A28/Canterbury Road and Broadley Road, to bring more homes within convenient walking distance of services. This can be dealt with through a Section 278 Agreement with the Highway Authority.

It is generally considered that the provision of sufficient on-site bus infrastructure is readily achievable, although we maintain that in indicative bus stop locations suitable for shelters and raised bus boarders should be included within the masterplan/access parameter plans for the sake of clarity.

Other Documents

Planning Statement Addendum

Understanding that this addendum is the first update to the original Planning Statement, it is noted that there are some new proposals presented in relation to the design of the Southern Link Road (SLR).

The Highway Authority has always maintained that the SLR, forming as it does, part of the Inner Circuit Route (ICR) as laid out in Policy SP47 of the Thanet Local Plan, would need be designed to a standard that is in keeping with its status as a future part of KCC's Major Road Network and its primary function as a movement corridor, which would need to be designed with reference to the DMRB. As such, we have held the view that the most appropriate alignment to facilitate this with minimal impact on the residential amenity of the development site would be along its southern boundary. We have subsequently accepted, in the light of achieving a planning balance against other factors of archaeology, topology and ecology, that the ICR could in principle be served on the proposed alignment, provided it meets the required design standard. In our view, a balance between the SLR's strategic function on the road network and serving the development site can be achieved by minimising the number of minor road junctions (with right-turn lanes included) and providing sufficient controlled crossing opportunities along its residential frontage, aligned with the main desire lines for pedestrian and cycle movement. We have advocated for further detail on this since our first planning response, confirming that these design principles can be met, to justify the proposed alignment.

Our attention is therefore drawn to the new artwork submitted under Appendix 5 of the Statement, which illustrate some design features that would require clarification, to ensure we are aligned. It is also noted that the latest Masterplan still presents a high number of minor road junctions along this route, which will impact on the free flow of traffic on this strategic route.

We nevertheless have assurances from the Planning Authority that for our purposes, the Masterplan and drawings are illustrative, and the detailed design of the SLR can be appropriately dealt with under future reserved matters applications. We are of the view that the three phases served off the SLR, could be suitably served off a secondary Local Distributor Road with two points of access north of the SLR and a Major Access Road with two points of access south of the SLR, in accordance with parameters laid out in the Kent Design Guide.

These access points would need to be served by a dedicated right-turn lane to assist in the free-flow of traffic. Separately, we are in the process of laying out design parameters with the applicant to inform future reserved matters.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

In relation to this site's contribution to strategic highway infrastructure, namely the NTL, we have to consider two scenarios. The first is where the outcome of the MRN bid is successful and allows us as Highway Authority to progress to implementing the NTL scheme as a single planning application and subsequent programme of works, albeit delivered in phases. In this scenario, developer contributions for strategic highway infrastructure are reduced, although match-funding the scheme will be required as early as possible in order to meet the requirements of the funding. We are encouraged by agreement to date that this site's match funding for the NTL scheme would come forward upon first occupation on-site, effectively de-risking the bid and allowing us to deliver early.

The second scenario is where the MRN bid is not successful, and the NTL scheme comes forward primarily through developer contributions. Negotiations are ongoing as to the precise trigger points where their increased contributions will be reached. The guiding principle for the Highway Authority is that contributions should be relevant to the development site and specific elements of the NTL infrastructure, in order to deliver tangible improvements to the network.

Framework Travel Plan

We note that this has not been updated from the original submission. Although general agreement has been reached on the mitigation strategy for this development site, we have previously advised on the measures to encourage modal shift away from the private car in line with the principles of sustainable development within the terms of the NPPF. We would still welcome additional commentary on measures such as electric cycle provision, cycle hire, cycle vouchers, electric pool cars or bus vouchers.

Phasing Plan

In light of a planned early delivery of the SLR, the phasing on the southern parcel is considered acceptable, although Phase 2a (which will meet the trigger for SLR delivery at 450 dwellings), should be built out from the western end until the full link is provided, in order to minimise interim impacts to The Square and Acol village. Prior to the full delivery of the link, a secondary emergency access onto the network for the combined Phases 1a and 2a should be provided.

We would recommend this is included in the Phase 1a reserved matters for approval from the Highway Authority.

With regards to phasing on the northern parcel, we note that in order to minimise interim impact, that the Northern Link Road connecting to Minnis Road is proposed to be completed on the first occupation of units accessed off Minnis Road, which is assumed to refer to Phase 3 although this should be confirmed. This also provides secondary access onto the network for this parcel.

Prior to the full delivery of that link, a secondary emergency access will be required. We would recommend this is included in the Phase 2b reserved matters for approval from the Highway Authority.

(Interim Comment) - dated 25/05/21

LAND AT BIRCHINGTON ON SEA – Technical Note (March '21) Comments

The highway authority has the following comments to make in relation to the submitted application documentation and confirmation of agreed points arising from subsequent discussion.

Comments on Chapter 2 TPA Responses:

Canterbury Road (A28) Access Junction

The amendments to the junction are noted, although an initial recommendation is that the LINSIG model is run with the maximum extendable intergreen clearance times used, and that geometric saturation flows be used for all arms in order for us to assess the worst-case scenario. As it stands presently it appears that practical reserve capacity is being approached on Canterbury Road (A28) East and Birchington Link South Ahead and Right with limited headroom to accommodate fluctuating seasonal flows, although we have also accepted that the Transport Assessment may present a robust case and in reality the reserve capacity on these arms are likely to be better than presented. Agreed that LINSIG models are to be forwarded to us for further assessment.

Park Lane (Priority Junction)

The applicant has suggested that the detail of any traffic calming can be deferred to a future Section 278 agreement. Whilst we acknowledge the resubmitted visibility splays at this junction, we are of the view that the nature of the road, including its current geometry and absence of lighting make a simple priority junction inappropriate as a means of access. In order to progress this further, a suitable package of traffic calming/speed attenuation measures should be agreed prior to determination and we would welcome further discussion on this point.

The proposed pedestrian access is also insufficient, as this feeds directly into a car park within the Quex Park site, without linking to the existing footway network on Park Lane. It is understood that the necessary land to link with the existing footway on Park Lane falls outside of both the red line and highway boundary, but we would urge the applicant to pursue that route as the preferred option. Failure to provide this link will lead to additional pedestrian activity on Park Lane to the detriment of highway safety and amenity.

Internal Road Design

We require confirmation of the full highway corridor, including sufficient width for a 7.3 metre carriageway to ensure that the site is appropriately serviced. Direct accesses onto the link roads have been ruled out in the text of TPA's response but we would need to see clear

indication on the Masterplan and Movement & Access Parameter Plan of how the dwellings could be alternatively served. Similarly, we would still need to see indicative crossing locations on these plans, as these matters have significant bearing on access and should not be deferred to future planning applications without first agreeing acceptable parameters for the development. Also agreed that the alignment of the link roads will be reconsidered with respect to comments made by Birchington Parish Council.

We welcome the submitted Road Hierarchy Plan, but we would recommend that the southern link be specified as providing up to 7.3 meters of carriageway width as this will form part of the primary road network.

Swept Path Analysis

The amended swept path drawings showing vehicle tracking for a 13-metre length refuse freighter are generally acknowledged and accepted, without prejudice towards the final agreed form of these respective junctions. I would however suggest that the swept path for the simple priority junction on Park Lane indicates a need to review the form of this junction as per our previous comments, where larger vehicles will be seen encroaching onto opposing lanes.

Potential Care Home Impact

The TRICS analysis of the proposed care home use is noted and with 10 vehicle movements in the AM peak and 8 in the PM peak (or on average one every 6 minutes and 7.5 minutes respectively), its impact on the local network considered small enough to fall within the existing Transport Assessment framework for 1,800 dwellings.

This assumption, however, necessitates further clarification on the application boundary, as discussed later.

Flow Diagrams

The network flow diagrams are welcome, although we are still uncertain as to why modelling in the Transport Assessment is still being presented as with/without Columbus Avenue extension, when it is a scheme integrated with the wider package of measures within the Transport Strategy.

Clarification is required.

Capacity Analysis

Shottendane/Manston Road

The proposed interim mitigation works to this junction are noted, which scheme has been shown to operate within capacity in the 2026 scenario, should the delivery of the new roundabout at the junction of Acol Hill and Manston Road be delayed. Given the nature of this road and the proposed geometry, we have concerns over the lack of a right-turning facility in the proposed design, the incorporation of which would likely require land outside of

the envelope of the designed roundabout. The proposed 40mph section may also prove too short to be implemented by the Highway Authority, which would impact on the achievable forward visibility. For the sake of this application these matters would need to be addressed to be considered a viable scheme, with both the works and required visibility splays contained within land under the applicant's control and supported by a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. The most appropriate approach to mitigation would be to implement a roundabout, commensurate with those required for the Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy. This will avoid any abortive works within the highway, however if viability constraints dictate an alternative approach we would be willing to consider the interim proposal if it meets our criteria, under the strict understanding that this does not prejudice the funding of roundabout proposals planned as part of the ICRIS.

Minnis Road Access Junction

We acknowledge the additional sensitivity test that has been presented at this junction, using the factored up 2016 data. This suggests that the proposed roundabout junction can operate with capacity even with greater flows on Minnis Road, although this model may not take into account the material level of rat-running that takes place through the Garden estate which could place traffic ahead of the survey count location at the junction with Sandle's Road. We need confirmation of the nature of the count at this location and whether these movements were also included. Our main concern from the outset was that the proposed form of junction at this location had the potential to lead to queuing back past the signal head by the bridge; we need to know at what level the junction fails or otherwise we would need to further examine the form of junction proposed – namely the previously designed re-prioritisation. If it transpires that there are discrepancies between traffic passing under the bridge and what we are seeing further up at Sandle's Road that cannot be explained, then additional counts may be required to give us confidence on this issue. Agreed that additional counts would provide the most robust method of determining the required sensitivity testing.

Brooks End Level Crossing

In relation to the additional study carried out at the Brooks End crossing and for the sake of PROW's assessment, we would point out that the TRICS sites in Herne Bay utilised in the assessment are not fully comparable to the proposed development. Both sites are large infill developments lacking in pedestrian permeability, requiring many residents to walk a substantial and meandering route just to join the main footway network, before then walking to the coast. Therefore, we maintain our assertion that pedestrian trips are likely to be much higher than forecast within the original

Transport Assessment.

The principle of proposed additional pedestrian/cycle improvements to Minnis Road are noted and welcomed, although it is disappointing that the proposed scheme is not in fact a fully seamless cycle improvement scheme, given the proximity of the National Cycle Network and the opportunities that presents to encourage sustainable travel. It is however appreciated that the geometrical scope for improvement under the Minnis Road Bridge and its approaches is somewhat limited by existing rail infrastructure. We would therefore

recommend further dialogue with the applicant is pursued on the scheme and that additional infrastructure be considered.

We have the following initial concerns with the scheme concept:

1. The provision of an isolated raised table on Minnis Road may need to form part of a wider package of traffic calming measures for the road. Moreover, there is no formal controlled crossing point provided on Minnis Road which could lead to pedestrian/cycle conflict.
2. It is unclear from the plans whether cyclists will be permitted on the section of footway between the development under the Minnis Bridge to the proposed Raised table, however there is insufficient space to accommodate off road cycle provision. Therefore, cyclists will be required to use the existing carriageway as is currently the case but with consideration as to how this will be better managed. It is also unclear how the proposed cycle lanes on the internal spine road interface with the existing footway on Minnis Road as no details have been annotated.
3. The Zebra Crossing on the Spine Road will need to incorporate cyclists, alternatively a toucan crossing should be considered as well as its positioning as previously mentioned.
4. The Location of existing street tree planting on Minnis Road will need to be reviewed as some of the trees are located at the back of verge and would in effect be in the centre of the proposed cycleway. This could lead to pedestrian/cycle conflict and the tree canopies could impact on cycle safety. Clarification is required regarding the potential impact on existing tree planting, so that this can be discussed with and considered by the KCC landscaping team.
5. The width of the proposed cycle path is proposed at the minimum 3.0metre, however given the presence of on street parking and features such as trees and street lighting, a wider cycle corridor of minimum 4 metre width should be explored. Widening would be particularly recommended outside the local shops to avoid conflict between the different users. This may also necessitate a review of the on-street parking in that location.
6. Careful consideration should be given to the treatment given at junctions with side roads (namely Ingoldsby, Dane and Arthur Road), where cyclists should be given priority. We recommend that LTN 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design be consulted to guide their design, although we would welcome further discussion on this point.
7. The scope for pedestrian improvements on the Northern side of Minnis Road does not appear to have been considered. For example, Gallway Avenue/Grenham Bay Avenue currently has no Tactile paving. A full review of the junction crossing points leading to the coast should be undertaken.
8. The Parade is an extremely wide road, which currently acts as a barrier to access to the promenade therefore a crossing facility to provide enhanced access to the coastal walking and cycle network should be provided.

We have nevertheless progressed what has been offered so far to the relevant highway asset managers for initial assessment. We would also insist that all matters relating to land

availability/highway boundaries be clarified prior to determination of this application as well as providing a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit in due course. We also require swept path drawings for the proposed arrangement under the railway bridge where the carriageway is narrowed.

Other Comments

Application boundary does not match the Allocation Boundary

Although the Technical Note acknowledges that the additional land between the site and the railway falls outside of the development proposals, it still part of the strategic allocation within Birchington and therefore its remaining capacity for additional housing (if any) should be clarified. This will enable us to take an informed view regarding its impact on the 2031 scenarios included within the Transport Assessment and whether it should be included as a further sensitivity test. Further clarification is needed from the applicant and/or planning authority on this point.

Contribution towards off-site Mitigation Works

The forthcoming Viability Report is noted, we maintain our stance that an appropriate level of contribution to the ICRIS is a key element to mitigating this development's impact and would welcome additional discussion in due course once this information becomes available.

Access to the Proposed School

We acknowledge that the majority of design issues surrounding the school is to be determined under future reserved matters applications, although the suggested proximity of the school access (and community hub) to the proposed A28 site access raises valid and present concerns for its interaction with the traffic flows and operation of the junction. We need confidence that the school could feasibly be located there without detriment to the proposed junction, so would therefore maintain that further detail on access to the school and its potential to impact on this link is required.

Southern Link Road Crossing Facilities

As stated previously, crossing locations have significant bearing on access and should not be deferred to future planning applications without first agreeing acceptable parameters for the development. On review it is felt that a more appropriate solution for the southern link road would be to relocate it to the south of the proposed dwellings. This would provide a route much more commensurate with its future function as a relief road for the A28, reducing the number of accesses required on this route and encouraging active travel to nearby school and village centre.

Summary of Outstanding Points to be Addressed from our Initial Response (Additional to the Above:

- CAD drawings for proposed junctions and road alignments
- Realignment of proposed crossing on Northern Link Road

- Further discussion over public transport provision
- Clarification over apparent pedestrian/cycle link to north side of Manston Road
- Consideration of equestrian facilities at A28 junction
- Moving of 30mph limit to south of A28 junction under a TRO
- Confirmation that whole of proposed A28 junction lies within red line
- Further discussion over the delivery timing of the Southern Link Road
- Need for a joint approach with the Westgate Strategic site over relevant contributions to mitigation addressing impact from both developments.
- We note that an additional Technical Note will be supplied addressing Birchington Square and the Park Lane junction.
- Consideration for improved bus and cycle facilities in the town centre and Minnis Bay as destinations for the development.
- Further detail required on the Construction Management Plan
- Clarification over internal access to school site from Phase 3 and Mill Row
- Consideration of combining the parking facilities of the school and community hub
- Potential need for secondary emergency access for phases 1B and 3
- Additional Travel Plan measures as advised

(Initial Comment) - dated 09/02/21

The County Council, as Local Highway Authority, raises a significant number of matters in relation to information submitted. The County Council recommends that a meeting is held with the applicant in order to seek positive resolutions on the matters raised. Until such time that these issues have been clarified or resolved, the Local Highway Authority raises a holding objection to this development proposal.

Draft Heads of Terms for S106 Agreement

The draft Heads of Terms Document has been reviewed and it is encouraging to see that reference is made to the provision of a financial contribution towards strategic highway improvements within the district of Thanet. However, at this stage, there are no monetary figures attached to this document or proposed trigger points for payment. Therefore, at this stage, there is insufficient certainty that the necessary funding will be secured.

Further dialogue will need to take place with the applicant to provide clarity over this issue. It is expected that financial contributions should follow the broad principles outlined within the Technical Note - Strategic Site Allocations Impact (July 2018), which was published alongside the recently adopted Thanet Local Plan, with necessary adjustments made to account for the increased housing delivery on the site when compared to the current allocation and any changes in overall project costs.

Transport Assessment (TA)

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1- The Site Location Plan does not appear to delineate the full extents of the Local Plan allocation. There is a triangular parcel to the northwest that is not included - full access to this land would need to be shown on the Access and Movement Parameter Plan.

1.8 – The strategic modelling that was undertaken by KCC, was produced without prejudice, on the understanding that the final development proposals would also include 1,800 residential dwellings. Whilst it is agreed that the subsequent reduction to 1650 dwellings does mean that modelling outputs will represent a robust assessment, it is necessary to point out that this proposal does not utilise all the land that was included within the adopted allocation. It is unclear whether this additional land will still form part of the strategic allocation (but will come forward later) and as such should be included within 2031 forecast assumptions – clarification is therefore required.

Section 3 – Development Proposals

3.2 – The forecasts made within the TA are purely based upon 1,800 dwellings - 150 more than is being proposed under this application to seek to provide a robust assessment. However, trip generations for the proposed care home are not included, the omission of which challenges this assumption. Notwithstanding this, at face value it is unlikely that the care home will generate an overall traffic burden more than the 1,800 dwelling scenario that has been tested.

3.4 – The proposed specification of the link roads is acknowledged, although it should be noted that there will be a substantial difference between the likely traffic flows and operational demands made on its two sections. The southern link road will form part of the primary road network, whereas the northern link road will be a local distributor road. Consequently, the southern link will need to align with the requirements of the wider Major Road Network (MRN) bid in progress and flexibility built into the scheme to increase the specification as needed. The Masterplan indicates the potential for a significant number of private accesses and road junctions which would inherently cause delay on the southern link. Such an arrangement would also prove cumbersome on the northern link where bus services are proposed.

KCC is seeking the demarcation of a reserved highway corridor through the southern site showing approximate alignment and sufficient land to accommodate a 7.3 metre carriageway, along with the proposed cycle/footways, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other services. The County Council would also need to see a Road Hierarchy Plan, which could form part of a Design Code for any forthcoming reserved matters. Finally, KCC requests that any CAD drawings for the proposed junctions and road alignments are shared to assist with the ongoing development of the KCC promoted MRN bid.

3.6 – It should be noted that a footway width of 1.8 metres would be considered the absolute minimum provision along a secondary road within the hierarchy, but KCC's preference would be 2 metres in line with national guidance. Consideration must be given to offering a wider cycle/footway adjacent to the proposed primary school, where students and parents will be likely to congregate at peak times.

The inclusion of a zebra crossing on the northern link road a little south of the new roundabout junction with Minnis Road appears to be for the purpose of providing continuation along the southern side of Minnis Road. This appears to be too far removed from the pedestrian desire line to be used for that purpose, but could be realigned to serve pedestrians moving between the north-western parcel of the site towards the health centre and the town centre beyond. The need for any additional formal crossings has been assessed in Section 5, although this concludes that none are required based on assumed pedestrian movements. Generally, there are no other crossing facilities indicated for the spine road through the site, either on the Masterplan or the Movement Parameter Plan. The County Council requests details of the indicative locations that adhere closely to existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and likely pedestrian desire lines. Consideration should be given to appropriate crossing facilities serving the school and this should be subsequently reflected on the Access Parameter Plans. The development should ensure it facilitates active travel opportunities to schools and other local community facilities to ensure they can be accessed sustainably.

3.7 – The proposed on-site cycling/walking facilities provide a substantial length of the ‘Quex to Coast’ route, but it must be noted that existing network is not comprehensive and improved links to it should be further explored under this application. Improved cycling facilities on Minnis Road and linkages with the Viking Coastal Trail would maximise the benefits of the internal facilities and enhance the sustainability of the site and these should be explored as part of proposed development infrastructure.

3.9 – The ongoing discussion regarding bus services to the site would also need to include KCC and any diversions or new services would need to be examined in conjunction with the Westgate development site to fully inform the Section 106 Heads of Terms.

To the knowledge of KCC as the Local Highway Authority, no specific discussions have taken place between the applicant to date in relation to future public transport provision, so it is not currently clear whether the diversion of service 34 is feasible and what additional funding might be required to pump prime such a solution.

Clarification is required to inform ongoing discussions over Section 106 Heads of Terms with respect to Public Transport contributions (if deemed necessary). In the meantime, indicative bus stop locations suitable for shelters and raised bus boards should be included within the masterplan/access parameter plans.

3.11 – As in 3.4, it is necessary to agree a secured land corridor for the link roads, allowing for some flexibility of alignment. KCC requires further clarification to inform strategic highway scheme proposals through the Section 106.

Adjacent to the northern link road lies a proposed cricket pitch, so mitigation for stray cricket balls will need to be considered as part of the masterplan/detailed design and this may need to be a consideration when finalising the location of this facility.

3.12-3.14 – The sole vehicular access for Phase 1B of development will be via a priority junction onto Park Lane. This access is proposed to serve at least 112 dwellings prior to the completion of the southern link road. The impact of Phase 1B on Park Lane and the local

road network, especially at Acol and Birchington Square however, has not been assessed. Further clarification is required.

The proposed access on Park Lane for Phase 1B is currently located within a derestricted section of carriageway. Until such time as the proposed extension to the 40mph limits could be enacted via the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, the visibility splays of 2.4mx120m would not be adequate, unless supported by a speed survey to evidence existing vehicle approach speeds. The access also requires swept path drawings for a 13 metre length refuse freighter.

The proposed traffic calming measures on Park Lane as outlined in drawing 1605-27 PL04 are, in KCC's view, unlikely to be effective in managing vehicle approach speeds and self-enforcing the proposed change in speed limit. The scope for excessive speed has been raised within the accompanying Road Safety Audit and is considered self-evident through the existing interactive speed sign in this location. Due to the relatively straight alignment of the carriageway in this location, it is likely that further traffic calming measures will be required, in the form of either traffic prioritisation or vertical/horizontal deflections, along with any required street lighting which may have an impact on light spread close to Quex Park. The plans show a new section of footway linking the site with the entrance of Quex Park, although this is not included in the red line application boundary, so it is unclear whether it is the applicant's intention to provide this link. This footway also falls outside the existing highway boundary. As such a link would form the final leg of the 'Quex to Coast' leisure route and this would ideally support both pedestrian and cycle movements and be in the public domain, where it could then continue northward to link with the existing footway on the northern side of the access via drop kerbs over the bell mouth access to Quex Park. Further clarification is required.

Furthermore, it is assumed that any such schemes on Park Lane are intended to be operational prior to the occupation of Phase 1B, so that residents may benefit from speed attenuation measures and pedestrian/cycle access to the north, although this is not confirmed in the TA.

3.15 - Park Lane /Acol Hill Roundabout - KCC is currently in the process of promoting its own bid for infrastructure funding through the Major Road Network fund and this route/junction forms part of this project. Therefore, an audit of the compatibility of these proposed junction works with this emerging project is necessary. To facilitate this piece of work, the applicant is requested to supply all CAD drawings and junction model files relating to this proposed junction to allow a full compatibility check to be completed. Until this has been completed, it is necessary to reserve the right to provide further technical feedback. Swept paths are also required for a 13 metre length refuse freighter, buses and HGVs showing all manoeuvres at this roundabout.

It is noted that an additional crossing point over Park Lane is proposed adjacent to Acol Hill Farm, although neither the crossing or paths linking it to the development and the indicated footway on the north side of Manston Road are included in the application boundary. It appears to facilitate the continuation of an internal route onto the wider highway network but does not clarify if the applicant intends to provide the new footway on the northern side of Manston Road and the extents of any works, as well as how it ties in with the MRN scheme

in this location.

3.16-3.18 – The principle of the proposed signal-controlled junction on the A28 is noted, although the following comments are made on its design and modelling:

- The pedestrian signals will all need to be positioned on the near side. Toucan crossings (facilitating continuation of the Quex to Coast cycle route) will need to be 4m wide and Puffin crossings will need to be 3.2m wide. Currently the proposed layout shows the crossings as being 2m wide.
- The submitted Stage 1 Road Safety Audit does not consider the future adjacent access to the community centre or primary school. Any queuing at the junction may impact on access to these facilities. Considering that the modelling is purely for 1,800 dwellings and does not include the school, any vehicles heading back to the southern half of the site after drop-off or picking up will add to queuing on the northern arm of the junction. Consequently, this access arrangement should be included in the scope of the Road Safety Audit (RSA) for the proposed junction, as there are very few alternative access locations that could be implemented within the constraints of the current Masterplan.
- KCC notes that provision for horse riders is restricted to the use of advance areas on the northern and southern arms of the junction. These are marked on the plan as advance cycle boxes, which may lead to confusion for cyclists as to where they should position themselves to cross this junction. The KCC preference would be for the provision of Toucan crossings to facilitate cyclists. Problem 4 of the RSA highlights the lack of off-carriageway provision for horse riders that needs to be addressed at this stage. It is suggested that the applicant engages with the British Horse Society to seek their views on potential access arrangements (considering the constraints of the site).
- Taking the above into consideration, the LINSIG model should be re-run with the maximum extendable inter-green clearance times used. To provide a robust assessment, the LINSIG model should be re-run using a 120 second cycle time with the signals single cycled. The LINSIG model currently uses a 240 second cycle time with the signals double cycling. The geometric saturation flows should be used on all arms of the junction, including the exit arms. Finally, KICC requires the LINSIG input file for checking.
- The applicant would need to supply all CAD drawing and junction model files relating to this proposed junction to allow a full compatibility check to be completed.
- It would be necessary to relocate the limits of the exiting 30mph to south of the new junction, which would be subject to the TRO process.
- The proposed left turn filter A28 to northern link road is outside of the red line boundary, which would need to be clarified.
- Further information in relation to forward visibility to signal heads and queues on the

eastbound approach, given the relatively steep nature of the carriageway in this location.

3.19 – Minnis Road roundabout – KCC notes that although swept path drawings have been provided for refuse and buses, the refuse freighter should be 13 metres in length and all manoeuvres should be shown, not just the left-turns. KCC, as Local Highway Authority, would wish for further commentary to be provided regarding the relatively low level of traffic modelled through this junction. It may be necessary for further sensitivity tests to be applied to ensure that it does not lead to blocking back to the Minnis Road Signals.

3.20 – Whilst servicing and delivery access can usually be assessed at the detailed design stage, it is relevant to highlight at this stage that the proposed Masterplan locates the community hub very close to the proposed signal junction with the A28. This could lead to difficulties in identifying a solution to servicing on street, therefore these potential constraints should be considered at this stage to ensure that sufficient space is provided to achieve safe and effective loading and turning provision for this part of the development.

3.21 – It is expected that the parking standards for a Suburban Edge location will be applied to this site when it comes forward to reserved matters.

Section 4 - Policy Context

4.55 - The summary stating that the development is in line with local, regional, and national planning policy will be dictated largely by the level of financial contributions secured towards strategic highway infrastructure. Failure to secure the necessary funding towards such infrastructure would then not accord with site specific policy (SP47) contained within the adopted Thanet Local Plan.

Section 5 – Trip Attraction and Movement

5.5 - Trip rates for the proposed development are agreed and are consistent with those used within recent Local Plan forecast assessments. The vehicle trips associated with the proposed school and community hub do not appear to have been included but are largely assumed to be internal.

5.12 - The pedestrian trip forecasts are noted, however, it is relevant to point out that the trip assessment does not consider the likely pedestrian trip draw from existing residents / communities within reasonable proximity to the proposed development site. Features such as the open space, Quex to Coast route, new school site and community infrastructure will be trip attractors, particularly on foot. Essentially, such trips will be additional to those identified using national trip rate datasets as outlined within this document.

In addition to the above, the TRICS data used to forecast non car trips may not adequately represent the proximity of the site to the coastline and the leisure amenities that exist. Therefore, the presence of walking trips could be higher than those used as a comparable within TRICS. KCC would welcome further dialogue with the applicant regarding this point, particularly as this has a bearing on the use of existing footway and PRoW infrastructure.

5.20 – The assumption is made that the land south of the southern link road will generate mostly leisure trips, whereas the Masterplan indicates that this land is entirely residential. This unspecified number of dwellings will in KCC's view generate pedestrian trips towards

the town centre for business purposes and shopping, as well as Quex Park, so is capable of generating a number of trips commensurate with a formal crossing. Given the future nature of the southern link road as a bypass route around Birchington and Westgate and the nature of traffic likely to use this route on a regular basis, a signalised crossing should be considered within the proximity of PRow TM31 (where it is bisected by the proposed southern link road).

5.23-5.29 – The assessment of the TA with respect to the impact on the Brooks End level crossing suggests that development will not generate a significant increase in pedestrian movements, as most trips are assumed to be for leisure purposes, however this is not the case at this juncture. A national survey is used to show the purpose split of pedestrian trips, but this would vary by location; the percentage of leisure walks in a coastal town would likely be greater than indicated. Also, an equally applicable category would be 'other including just walk', which would increase the percentage share. Leisure walks would also have a larger catchment area as leisure walkers would typically walk further than for commuting, business, or shopping purposes – adjusted walking isochrones would bring a greater proportion of the development within the Minnis Bay catchment. Consequently, further clarification is required on the potential impact of development on the level crossing so that a necessary position can be agreed with KCC and Network Rail.

Section 6 – Potential Impact 6.3-6.5 – KCC can confirm that the strategic modelling of highway impact has been undertaken using the Council's own modelling tools, as such is consistent with those used to consider the impact from the Thanet Local Plan. However, it is important to point out that this is a strategic tool and provides the basis for further detailed analysis of potential highway impact. The proposed model network in figure 6.1 represents the extent of the coded SATURN network, however there are a number of local routes that are not represented within the model. These include the Garden Estate/Park Avenue/Brunswick Road/Stone Barn Avenue, all of which are potential rat run routes that are used when significant delays are experienced at Birchington Square. Therefore, the outputs from the modelling exercise need to be considered within this context. This adds significant weight to the need to manage impact at Birchington Square to discourage overbearing use of these largely residential streets, which will not be reflected within the SATURN modelling.

6.6 – A recent change in the status of the Development Consent Order (DCO) at Manston Airport has ensued and the project is now subject to a further review and decision-making process. Therefore, KCC, as the Local Highway Authority reserves the right to review the requirement for further sensitivity testing should the future of the Airport be clarified between now and the determination of this application.

6.8 – This section is relatively silent over the selection criteria for further detailed capacity analyses at specific junctions. Therefore, further commentary is required in relation to the methodology used to select these junctions for further assessment. A network diagram should be produced which shows the local highway network and where forecast highway impact will be experienced. Given that the Westgate strategic housing allocation has also been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, it is recommended that a joint piece of work is produced to support the combined impact assessment.

6.12 – Whilst it is agreed that the 2031 scenario is likely to represent the worst case scenario in terms of traffic flow through most junctions within the local highway network, it is relevant to highlight that until the full range of highway infrastructure improvements identified within the Thanet Transport Strategy are practically delivered, some junctions such as Shottendane Road/Manston Road and others located along the Shottendane Road corridor may be adversely impacted by the delivery of infrastructure such as the southern link road if left in

their current form (prior to mitigation being introduced). 6.13 –The suggestion that the southern link road should in some way be delayed until 2025 is not adequately evidenced and as such not agreed at this stage. The initial view of the County Council is that this piece of infrastructure is key in managing the impact of the development on the A28 (particularly the Square) and should be provided at the earliest possible juncture, with a review of any complimentary improvements on the Manston Road/Shottendane Road corridor. KCC would welcome further dialogue with the applicant in relation to this point. 6.14 – The assertion that the Columbus Avenue Extension scheme is in some way uncertain at this stage is not accepted. It remains a currently planned infrastructure project that was considered during the recent Local Plan examination. It is currently expected that in line with the Local Plan evidence base, that strategic sites are required to make an appropriate contribution towards the delivery of this link, and this was underpinned by statements of common ground reached with the relevant site promoters. It is unclear whether the applicant is challenging the need to provide funding towards this link and the TA draws no conclusions with respect to this matter. Clarification is therefore required. 6.15 – It is important to highlight that the 2031 model scenario (with development) assumes that all Inner Circuit interventions are delivered, however it is essential that an agreement is reached with the applicant in relation to the apportioned funding as set out in comments relating to the draft Heads of Terms (above). Failure to agree an appropriate level of funding will cast doubt over the delivery of this infrastructure and as such the appropriateness of its inclusion within the modelling forecasts. Clarification is required. 6.21 – 6.22 - Minnis Road (Junction 1) - The modelling outputs suggest that this junction is likely to operate well within capacity in 2031 and as such is unlikely to have an impact on the operation of the Minnis Road signals. 6.23-6.26 A28 - Signal Junction – See comments relating to 3.16-3.18 above. At face value, there are initial concerns over the potential resilience of this junction to accommodate additional traffic growth beyond that has been modelled. 6.29 - Acol Hill/Park Lane Roundabout – the County Council disagrees with the statement that this junction has been overdesigned, instead it is felt that it is being provided with the necessary level of capacity resilience.

6.30 – 6.32 - Shottendane Road/Manston Road. This capacity calculation only assesses the proposed junction as a roundabout, however further sensitivity testing may be required as the nature of this design is currently under review. Whilst this junction model addresses a theoretical scenario where the junction is delivered in 2031 (with sufficient capacity to accommodate whole Local Plan growth), this is dependent on all relevant highway-based contributions being secured from Strategic Sites such as Birchington. Until full clarity has been provided regarding the amount and nature of funding to be provided by the applicant, there is currently insufficient certainty that the funding package will be in place to deliver this improvement at the necessary juncture. This section does not assess the impact of delivering the proposed southern link road in 2025 in a theoretical scenario where a junction improvement has not delivered in this location (i.e. it remains a priority junction). Therefore, further sensitivity tests will need to be provided or further clarification in relation to the provision of necessary funding to deliver junction improvements in isolation, if necessary.

6.37-6.38 – Whilst it is agreed that it is reasonable to place an emphasis on development sites to mitigate their own impacts at this junction, given the fact that Westgate on Sea is also subject to a live planning application, a joint approach to mitigation with the Westgate site should be explored with relevant contributions agreed based on an agreed mitigation package that addresses the impact from both developments. Failure to do this may lead to

there being insufficient funding for the Local Highway Authority to implement the necessary improvements. 6.41 – The Square - At this point, KCC is not convinced that lane simulation is an appropriate modelling tool to accurately assess the complex interactivity between the Miniroundabout at the Square, priority working arrangement on Park Lane, the nearby pedestrian signals (A28) and blocking back from existing bus stop infrastructure located next to the Square (A28). It is necessary for the lane simulation modelling files to be provided to the highway authority to enable additional scrutiny over the stated outputs. Taken at face value, the 2016 baseline outputs appear to show no delay on the A28 north east, whereas in practice this approach often queues back due to vehicle conflict between those travelling towards A28 within the Park Lane. In addition, the queuing on Park Lane appears to be much more severe than officers experience of on-site observations would suggest. In practice, traffic would simply seek alternative routes to the A28 via residential streets such as Stone Barn Avenue/Brunswick Road/Park Avenue (and others). This reduces the confidence in any future forecasts that are produced using this lane simulation model. 6.55 – The outputs suggesting that traffic volumes reduce within the 2026 interim scenario appear to be erroneous given that the development will generate additional traffic within the Local Highway network and no link road will have been delivered to redistribute traffic away from this part of the road network. Further investigation and commentary are required from the applicant regarding the results that have been presented.

Section 7 – Manston Airport DCO Sensitivity Test Whilst KCC notes the outputs provided in this section and agrees in terms of likely impact, as stated previously in 6.6, KCC reserves the right to request further sensitivity tests, dependent on the outcome of the DCO process.

Section 8 – Mitigation 8.3-8.7 – Although this section discusses the provision of the internal link roads and Inner Circuit as mitigation for development traffic, there is no mention of a contribution to the Transport Strategy here. The only clarification on this point is provided within the Section 106 Heads of Terms document. 8.11 – The proposed contribution towards improvements to existing bus infrastructure is acknowledged, although the precise extents of such would need to be agreed for inclusion in the Section 106. KCC recommends the improvement of existing stops on the A28, Minnis Road and Park Lane, as these all have the potential to serve the development site. Consideration should also be given to improving town centre stops where needed as a destination for local bus trips. Although not discussed in this section, it would be appropriate to address here the 164 twoway cycle movements generated by this development, identified previously in Table 5.4. As a significant majority of these trips would likely be either to the town centre or Minnis Bay, consideration should be given to identifying opportunities for additional cycle parking facilities in these locations.

Section 9 – Construction Traffic 9.4 – It is expected that construction access for the majority of the site will be directly off the A28, however routing for Phase 1B (112 dwellings) has been specified as via Spitfire Way/Manston Rd (as confirmed in 9.19). 9.15 – The proposed delivery timings are considered acceptable (0900-1700), although once the proposed school is operational this may need to be adjusted to avoid the school peaks. 9.18 – The proposed Highway Condition Report should be carried out in coordination with the District Highway Manager to fully ascertain existing highway conditions as a baseline and agree a suitable remediation strategy. 9.25 – The proposed construction vehicle numbers for inclusion within the Construction Traffic Management Plan is welcomed, although it would be strengthened by an indication of impact on the local network peaks.

Access to the proposed school site Situated within the proposed Phase 2B, the school generally is well located to enjoy access on foot or cycle from all phases of development, as well as the wider area, with the exception of Phase 3, which does not appear from the Phasing Plan to be connected to the remainder of the site until the section of link road that falls within Phase 4 is complete. Without the submission of a clear schedule for infrastructure delivery at present, details of how Phase 3 is to be linked for other modes requires clarification. Positioned directly on the northern link road that connects the A28 and Minnis Road, the initial specification indicates that adequate walking and cycling facilities will be provided right up to the school land as shown on the illustrative masterplan. However, the link to Mill Row, which is likely to be well used for school access, could be more clearly defined. The Access and Movement Parameter plan simply shows the existing PRow but no additional routes that would accommodate desire lines to the school. The Masterplan shows the upgraded PRow running almost alongside the school but does not establish any direct connections, apparently requiring pedestrians and cyclists to travel via a section of the northern link road, which could feasibly be avoided to reduce journey times. Although this application is for access only, KCC requests that the Access and Movement Parameter Plan to indicate suitable crossing points along the link roads that would facilitate access to the school if approaching from the western side of the development. The vehicular access to the school is positioned to preclude the build-up of cars in any adjacent streets, as long as adequate facility for dropping-off and picking-up are provided within the school land. It would appear that there is potential for staff parking to be moved further into what appears to be a deep plot of land for the school, in order to accommodate this. Given its proximity to the community uses, it may be worth considering combining the parking facilities of the two as the respective peak demand of the different uses are unlikely to occur at the same time and this could reduce the overall land requirement for parking and the number of accesses needed off the future highway. Further clarification is required in relation to bus service provision through the site, however it would be expected that regular bus services would be running within 400m of the school site in order to encourage sustainable travel. Phasing Plan In the absence of an infrastructure delivery schedule, KCC would like to highlight the following in the submitted phasing: Phase 1B (112 dwellings) has the potential to generate additional traffic through Acol and Birchington Square unless the link to the A28 can be completed at the same time, rather than during Phase 2A. Separate emergency access to the development would also be required unless the southern link is completed in tandem.

Phase 3 (268 dwellings) has the potential to generate additional traffic through Birchington Square and the neighbouring residential streets of the garden estate, unless the link to the A28 can be completed at the same time, rather than during Phase 4. Separate emergency access would also be required unless the northern link road is completed in tandem. Consequently, KCC would welcome further discussion on these points. Movement and Parameter Plan In addition to other comments made pertaining to this document, the plan denotes a strategic link road corridor with a deviation limit of +/- 10m, which is acceptable subject to agreement over the requirements of the corridor in line with the KCC MRN process, as well as the inclusion of all adoptable infrastructure within its boundaries. Framework Travel Plan Generally, KCC is satisfied with the scope of the submitted Framework Travel Plan, although subject to further assessment of impact on the highway network, KCC may require it to be monitored. When Travel Plan monitoring is required to offset any adverse impacts on the network, it would be subject to further assessment and a monitoring fee. Furthermore, KCC would welcome the inclusion of any additional 'hard'

measures, notwithstanding the proposed car club spaces (subject to scheme details and locations on-site), to encourage modal shift away from the private car. Typically for larger housing developments sustainable measures such as electric cycle provision, cycle hire, cycle vouchers, electric pool cars, bus vouchers are included and KCC would welcome further dialogue on this point.

KCC Public Rights Of Way

(Initial Comment)

Public Footpaths TM37, TM32 and TM31 are all directly affected by proposed development. Public Footpath TM35 should also be considered in the wider area. The locations of these paths are indicated on the attached extract of the Network Map (Appendix 1), which is working copy of the Definitive Map. The County Council is disappointed that, despite early engagement with the applicant, there are still two main issues outstanding, as addressed below - these must be fully addressed. Once the applicant has provided a satisfactory response to these points raised, the County Council would wish to provide full comment in respect of PRow matters and the development proposals. Public Footpath TM37 TM37 runs from Devon Gardens, through the proposed development, before crossing the railway at its junction with Horsa / Ingoldsby Road. The crossing here is a Network Rail at grade crossing and despite advice provided to the applicant, KCC is unaware of Network Rail's view on the predicted high increase of use on this route and consequently, whether the crossing would therefore be a cause of concern with regard to public safety.

If Network Rail was to take the view that this crossing should be closed, this would entail a diversion/extinguishment of the Footpath and a new alignment approved. Any PRow extinguishment would have to be duly processed before construction of any proposed development could commence and this due process would involve public consultation. The County Council's response to the EIA Scoping Opinion 2019 alerted the applicant to the fact that it is "essential that consideration is given to the likely impact of a development of this size on the nearby rail crossing points and the potential impact that the development will have on increasing use" and to "suggest that early interaction with Network Rail is imperative to encompass the increase of pedestrian, cycle and equestrian use from south of the railway to the popular and well-used coast with its numerous leisure and recreation opportunities for all members of the community". KCC therefore again stresses the importance of urgent engagement with Network Rail or risk considerable delay to any permitted development. As a result of the development, the PRow network in the area will see significant increase of use. Existing community residents together with new residents of any development are highly likely to use the proposed new links into Birchington centre to access facilities and transport links. However, to gain direct access to the coast at Minnis Bay, the more direct leisure route of TM37 and potentially TM35 via TM32 are likely to be preferred. Easy, non vehicular coastal access connections to the Viking Coastal Trail and the newly created National Trail, the England Coast Path are a leisure opportunity of high importance to Thanet and Kent. This route also links to Minnis Bay, a Blue Flag beach considered a prime visitor destination and could be a major draw for the potential new community in this area. Proposed Quex to Coast Route The County Council supports the intention to create a route running from Quex Park to the Coast, however, is disappointed that recommendations made to the applicant to provide this as a Public Bridleway have not been implemented. A Public

Bridleway would give higher user rights to both cyclists and equestrian users, in an area of the county with high use by both groups. This would consolidate off road connectivity across the wider area on various levels, including further proposed developments to the east (Shottendane Road and Garlinge); equestrian facilities at Quex Park to the east; and Plum Pudding Island to the north west. The County Council reiterates its previous advice that the applicant engages with the British Horse Society regarding this route. Transport Assessment Chapter 8 Mitigation 8.2 – states that “equestrian facilities can be accommodated within the Canterbury Road (A28) junction” but that “the provision of these facilities are not considered necessary as part of the development...but will be subject to further discussions with KCC”. The County Council recommends that these facilities are necessary. Clarification is requested on the proposal to upgrade the section of TM31 which is on the same alignment as the Quex route.

The applicant must have due regard to the connectivity of the PRow network of the area as a whole and the need for enhancement and mitigation. The County Council requests that the two outstanding issues to be addressed prior to providing detailed comments in respect of the PRow network and management.

Network Rail

(Initial Comment)

Thank you for consulting Network Rail regarding the above planning application, following an internal consultation Network Rail would like to make the following comments.

Impact on nearby level crossings

As part of Network Rail's license to operate and manage Britain's railway infrastructure, Network Rail have the legal duty to protect rail passengers, the public, the railway workforce, and to reduce risk at our level crossings so far as is reasonably practicable.

The proposed development is connected to Brooks End footpath level crossings by Public Right of Way (PRow) TM37 and within close proximity to PRow TM35 which provides direct access to Gap footpath level crossing. Due to the nature of the development i.e. predominantly residential (up 1,650 dwellings and a residential care home) this raises concerns for Network Rail as it could significantly increase the use of these level crossing which increases the risk to the public and rail network. The applicant should already be aware of these concerns following Network Rail's comment on Policy SP14 - Strategic Housing Site – Birchington within the emerging Thanet District Council Local Plan.

It should also be noted that the footpaths are intended for recreational use and join the Thanet Coastal Path which provides access to Minnis Bay. It can therefore be expected that future residents would use these crossings for activities such as dog walking and trips to the beach, both of which adds additional risk with the latter as a result of people being encumbered by carrying things to the beach.

Experience also shows that level crossings can become an area for youths to gather and act irresponsibly adding additional risk to level crossings.

Network Rail note and disagree with section 5.29 of Transport Assessment which states "...it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development would result in a significant increase to the pedestrian movements at the level crossing." Network Rail are of the opinion that this development could significantly increase the usage of the level crossing thus increasing the risk to the public.

As a result, Network Rail would like to holding object to the planning application until a meeting has taken place with the applicant to explore options and funding to mitigate this risk.

One option may be to close one of the footpath crossings and divert the footpath over a new bridge at the other crossing, however, more work is needed to identify whether this is feasible.

Contribution to provide improvements at Birchington Station

Should Thanet District Council be minded to approve this application despite Network Rail's objection, it should be noted that Network Rail would expect a development of this size and nature to contribute to improvements at the nearby stations i.e. Birchington.

As a result, Network Rail request consideration is given to improving facilities at local stations and ensuring any new walkways/ paths to access the stations from any new development have sufficient lighting, CCTV, safe walking routes. If people are going to be encouraged to use new cycle paths, it's noted that at Birchington there is only an uncovered cycle hub, so it would be prudent for the developer to consider enhancing this. The contribution would provide a better station but also encourage future residents and the local community to use one of the most sustainable forms of transport.

Network Rail welcomes further discussions on this matter.

Network Rail remain committed to working with both the applicant and Thanet District council to find a solution that satisfies all parties and provides a good standard of residential amenity and safety to future occupiers of the proposed development.

Environmental Consultees

KCC Biodiversity -

(Interim Comment)

We have compared the current and superseded versions of the illustrated masterplan and it's our understanding that the proposed layout has not changed significantly and therefore we are satisfied that the advise we provided in June 2021 for the development site is still likely to be valid. We have taken this view as the site continues to be actively managed arable fields and although the survey data is over two years old we are satisfied that the conclusions of the results are unlikely to have changed.

However the current consultation provides details of road improvements which are required as part of this application. The plan confirms this includes the removal of vegetation to provide visibility splay or creation of footpaths. Unfortunately no ecological information has been provided clarifying if the impact of the vegetation removal will impact protected/notable species and if further surveys and/or mitigation is required.

We recommend that additional information is provide clarifying the extent of impacts on vegetation to be carried out to enable us to consider if there is a need for updated ecological information to be submitted as part of this application.

(Interim Comment)

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted and we advise that we are satisfied that no further information is required prior to determination of the planning application.

We advises that if planning permission is granted there is a need for the following conditions:

- Detailed ecological mitigation strategy – updated by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment. To be submitted for each phase.
- Outline LEMP – including plan showing the habitat creation phasing.
- Detailed LEMP. To be submitted for each phase.
- Ecological enhancement plan. To be submitted for each phase.
- Lighting Plan

The following surveys have been carried out within the site:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- Wintering bird survey
- Breeding birds
- Reptile
- botanical

The submitted surveys have detailed the following:

- Wintering birds associated with the designated sites recorded within and adjacent to the proposed development site.
- 29 species of birds recorded during the breeding surveys – the majority associated with the vegetation within the site boundaries but ground nesting birds also recorded.
- At least 6 species of foraging/commuting bats recorded.
- Low numbers of slow worms and common lizards recorded.
- Two hedgerows of importance present within the site – majority of the hedgerows to be retained.

We advise that we are satisfied that submitted surveys provided a good understanding of the ecological interest of the wider site however we note that the development area is larger than the survey area. when we previously commented we raised concerns that no information had been provided on the limitations on this issue – we acknowledge that this information was provided within the original submission and we are satisfied that no further surveys are required within the areas which where not covered by the original surveys.

We advise that current management of the site must be maintained to ensure that the species interest of the site does not increase prior to works commencing – if granted.

When we previously commented we raised concerns that insufficient information had been provided on the species mitigation and therefore we were not satisfied that it could be achieved – additional information has since been submitted addressing our concerns.

Reptiles We were concerned that the report had not demonstrated how the proposed precautionary mitigation approach was achievable – however the additional information provided has confirmed that the habitats where reptiles were recorded will not be lost/impacted by the works. Therefore the precautionary mitigation, if required, will only be implemented on the edges of the retained habitat or any subsequently established habitat.

Breeding birds the report has acknowledged that the proposal will result in a loss of ground nesting breeding bird habitat which will result in the birds being displaced to the fields within the surrounding area. To minimise the impact from this it is proposed to create a cereal crop mix along the Western/Southern boundary which will provide additional foraging habitats.

When we previously commented we raised concerns that it was not clear if the area proposed for the crop mix was within the red or blue line boundary. Additional information has been provided confirming that the cereal crop will be within the blue line area and it will be separated from the adjacent field and proposed development by fencing and therefore if managed appropriately will benefit foraging birds. Further comments on the management can be found below.

Bats

The submitted information has confirmed that at least 6 species of bats have been recorded within the site. It's our opinion that the proposed open space is likely to increase the foraging opportunities for bats (if managed appropriately). We advise that there is a need to ensure

that any lighting proposed is designed to minimise the impact on foraging/commuting bats within the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

We do acknowledge that with the exception of wintering bird habitat and ground nesting breeding bird habitat the site could potentially increase the habitat for protected/notable species – however that will depend on whether the site is appropriately managed in the long term (If planning permission is granted). This point is demonstrated within the submitted biodiversity net gain (BNG) metric which indicates that the proposal will result in an anticipated 1% net gain from the current levels – due to such a low net gain proposed we would suggest that the submitted information is suggesting that the proposal (from a habitats perspective) that the proposal will not result in a net loss of biodiversity rather than a gain. From the additional information provided we understand that this calculation is a worst case scenario and it's likely that, if appropriate management is implemented in the long term the BNG metric would demonstrate that larger levels of net gain will be achieved. If planning permission is granted we advise that this is something that would have to be demonstrated through the submission of updated BNG metrics at each phase. This would hopefully encourage the creation of the open space at an early stage of the development to enable the

habitats to establish as soon as possible to enable the subsequent BNG metrics to demonstrate that the proposed habitats are establishing as intended and achieved BNG is higher than the worst case scenario. Alternatively the BNG metrics would demonstrate that works are required on the areas of open space as they are not establishing as intended.

Management Plan

A management plan has not been submitted as part of this application and therefore for the no net loss (habitats) to be achieved there is a need to ensure that, if planning permission is granted, it will be managed appropriately in the long term – particularly as it is anticipated that high levels of recreational pressure are anticipated. When we previously commented we recommended that an outline management plan was required however we accept that information within the submitted documents have provided an understanding of how the site will be managed if planning permission is granted. If planning permission is granted we would expect an outline LEMP to be submitted prior to any works commencing demonstrate how the site is proposed to be managed and clarifying what habitats will be created at each phase. A detailed management plan would then be subsequently produced for each phase. The management plan would have to demonstrate that the cereal mix on the eastern boundary would be managed appropriately in the long term. Our concern is that this area would be forgotten about as it's not within the main site boundary and between two fence lines.

Ecological Enhancement Features

In addition to the creation of new habitats there is a need for the site and dwellings to increase the number of ecological enhancement features within the site – this includes integrated features in to the buildings. Therefore if planning permission is granted a detailed enhancement plan must be submitted to the LPA with each reserve matters application.

Appropriate Assessment

We have reviewed the Shadow HRA and we are satisfied with the information provided which has assessed there will be no adverse impacts on the designated sites. The mitigation and contribution to the Strategic Mitigation and Management Plan must be implemented if planning permission is granted.

Golden Plover were recorded during the wintering bird survey – primarily within the fields nearer the coast. However up to 19 individuals were recorded within the site once (although species unconfirmed) and a peak count of 135 were recorded within the field directly adjacent to the proposed development. The submitted report assessed that as there was only 1 (unconfirmed) sighting of the golden plover within the redline boundary it is unlikely to be used regularly and therefore cannot be considered to provide functionally linked habitat but the field adjacent to the proposed development was used regularly and therefore the submitted information assessed that it does provide functionally linked habitat.

To address the impact the proposal would have on how the golden plover use the adjacent field the submitted HRA has made mitigation recommendations for during the construction and operational phase – with regard to the operational phase the mitigation includes the

following:

Inclusion of green corridors within the development to provide connectivity within and throughout the site not just at the periphery, so reducing effect of physical barrier to movement and negative impacts on connectivity;

- Boundary treatment in the south west of the site, including dog proof fencing located at the periphery of the southern and western site boundaries, but inside of the area of arable field margin planting. This will prevent uncontrolled dog access onto adjacent fields where wintering birds (golden plover) are known in use, and which has been identified as functionally linked habitat. Further within the site, inside the dog proof fencing, prickly planting (hawthorn/blackthorn), use of ditches and bunds to vary terrain and make less passable; and
- Provision of peripheral screens or bird hides (to enable public to enjoy views to the sea while minimising disturbance to birds) and peripheral structural planting will reduce visual disturbance to the adjacent off-site functionally linked habitat and perceived threats of predation by golden plover and other bird species.

We do agree the proposed measures will reduce or minimise impacts from the proposed development however when we previously commented we raised concerns that no information had been provided assessing the impacted the presence of the development will have on how the golden plover use the adjacent field in particular due to the reduction of openness of the surrounding area and therefore discourage the golden plover from actively using the adjacent field regardless of the mitigation that is included – the reference to openness is with regard to the ability for the birds to see predators over a larger area. Additional information has been provided detailing that due to the contours of the area the location of the proposed development is beyond the rise of the hill and largely out of site and the open space creates a buffer between the proposal and the retained arable fields. As long as TDC are satisfied that the land levels mean that the development will be largely out of site from the wider area we are satisfied that no further information is required on the openness point.

The shadow HRA has detailed that the proposal will not have an impact on Stodmarsh SPA, Ramsar or SAC due to increase nutrification as the WWTW will discharge directly into the sea.

Additional information has been provided confirming that the WWTW will discharge in to the sea and therefore we are satisfied that no further information is required on the this point.

(Initial Comment)

We have reviewed the ecological information and we advise that the following additional information is required:

- Information demonstrating that the species mitigation can be implemented
- Outline management plan
- Additional information to inform the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

The following surveys have been carried out within the site:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- Wintering bird survey
- Breeding birds
- Reptile
- botanical

The submitted surveys have detailed the following:

- Wintering birds associated with the designated sites recorded within and adjacent to the proposed development site.
- 29 species of birds recorded during the breeding surveys – the majority associated with the vegetation within the site boundaries but ground nesting birds also recorded.
- At least 6 species of foraging/commuting bats recorded.
- Low numbers of slow worms and common lizards recorded.
- Two hedgerows of importance present within the site – majority of the hedgerows to be retained.

We advise that we are generally satisfied that submitted surveys provided a good understanding of the ecological interest of the wider site however we note that the development area is larger than the survey area. No information has been provided within the submitted documents addressing this point and detailing why the ecologists are satisfied that it is not a limitation to the survey data. We advise that additional information is required addressing this point.

Limited information appears to have been provided on the proposed species mitigation and/or demonstrate if it will be achievable. To demonstrate our concerns we highlight breeding birds and reptiles and advise that additional information is submitted to address these points:

Reptiles it has been proposed to carry out a precautionary mitigation approach and due to the low numbers of reptiles recorded within the site we understand the reasoning for this approach but it's not clear where on site the reptile habitat will be retained during construction – from reviewing the aerial photos and proposed site plans it appears that habitat creation works will have to be carried out within the NW corner of the site and therefore we question how reptiles can be retained on site when there will be some construction work being carried out.

Breeding birds the report has acknowledged that the proposal will result in a loss of ground nesting breeding bird habitat which will result in the birds being displaced to the fields within the surrounding area. To minimise the impact from this it is proposed to create a cereal crop mix along the Western/Southern boundary which will provide additional foraging habitats – from reviewing the submitted plans it appears that the area proposed for the crop mix is not within the red or blue line boundary and therefore we question how the applicants can demonstrate how it will be implemented.

We do acknowledge that with the exception of wintering bird habitat and ground nesting breeding bird habitat the site could potentially increase the habitat for protected/notable species – however that will depend on whether the site is appropriately managed in the long

term (If planning permission is granted). This point is demonstrated within the submitted biodiversity net gain metric which indicates that the proposal will result in an anticipated 1% net gain from the current levels – due to such a low net gain proposed we would suggest that the submitted information is suggesting that the proposal (from a habitats perspective) that the proposal will not result in a net loss of biodiversity rather than a gain.

A management plan has not been submitted as part of this application and therefore for the no net loss (habitats) to be achieved there is a need to ensure that, if planning permission is granted, it will be managed appropriately in the long term – particularly as it is anticipated that high levels of recreational pressure are anticipated. We recommend that an outline LEMP is submitted to demonstrate that the intention is to manage the site appropriately.

Appropriate Assessment

We have reviewed the Shadow HRA and we are satisfied with the majority of information which has been included however we advise that additional information is required.

Golden Plover were recorded during the wintering bird survey – primarily within the fields nearer the coast. However up to 19 individuals were recorded within the site once (although species unconfirmed) and a peak count of 135 were recorded within the field directly adjacent to the proposed development. The submitted report assessed that there was only 1 (unconfirmed) sighting of the golden plover within the redline boundary it is unlikely to be used regularly and therefore cannot be considered to provide functionally linked habitat but the field adjacent to the proposed development was used regularly and therefore the submitted information assessed that it does provide functionally linked habitat.

To address the impact the proposal would have on how the golden plover use the adjacent field the submitted HRA has made mitigation recommendations for during the construction and operational phase – with regard to the operational phase the mitigation includes the following:

Inclusion of green corridors within the development to provide connectivity within and throughout the site not just at the periphery, so reducing effect of physical barrier to movement and negative impacts on connectivity;

- Boundary treatment in the south west of the site, including dog proof fencing located at the periphery of the southern and western site boundaries, but inside of the area of arable field margin planting. This will prevent uncontrolled dog access onto adjacent fields where wintering birds (golden plover) are known in use, and which has been identified as functionally linked habitat. Further within the site, inside the dog proof fencing, prickly planting (hawthorn/blackthorn), use of ditches and bunds to vary terrain and make less passable; and
- Provision of peripheral screens or bird hides (to enable public to enjoy views to the sea while minimising disturbance to birds) and peripheral structural planting will reduce visual disturbance to the adjacent off-site functionally linked habitat and perceived threats of predation by golden plover and other bird species.

We do agree the proposed measures will reduce or minimise impacts from the proposed development however no information has been provided assessing the impacted the presence of the development will have on how the golden plover use the adjacent field. It is

possible that the presence of the development reduce the openness of the surrounding area and therefore discourage the golden plover from actively using the adjacent field regardless of the mitigation that is included.

We advise that there is a need for the shadow HRA to be updated to assess if it is likely that due to the lack of openness the golden plover will continue to use the adjacent field less – the reference to openness is with regard to the ability for the birds to see predators over a larger area

The shadow HRA has detailed that the proposal will not have an impact on Stodmarsh SPA, Ramsar or SAC due to increase nutrification as the WWTW will discharge directly into the sea.

We advise that TDC must be satisfied that this is correct as if the proposal will discharge downstream into the Stour the shadow HRA will have to be updated to address this point.

Natural England

(Interim Comment)

Thank you for your consultation. Natural England has previously commented on this proposal and made comments to the authority in our letter dated 11 March 2021.

The advice provided in our previous response applies equally to the amended details (Technical Note, 14 May 2021), although we made no objection to the original proposal. The amended details to the original application are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal.

However, Natural England advise that as the competent authority, you may wish to use the additional information provided in the Technical Note to inform your Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). We reiterate that ultimately it is your role, as the competent authority, to determine if the bird survey conclusions are satisfactory and if a likely significant effect from the potential loss of functionally linked land can be ruled out with sufficient certainty.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again. Before sending us the amended consultation, please assess whether the changes proposed will materially affect any of the advice we have previously offered. If they are unlikely to do so, please do not re-consult us.

(Initial Comment)

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON DESIGNATED SITES

As submitted, the application could have detrimental impacts on Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) as well as potential significant effects on Thanet Coast

Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation. The following information is required:

- The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has not been produced by your authority, but by the applicant. As competent authority, it is your responsibility to produce the HRA and be accountable for its conclusions. Demonstrate that the requirements of regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) have been considered by your authority.
- The competent authority's HRA should consider the potential for impacts on Functionally Linked Land and the potential impact of increased Recreational Disturbance, and if necessary, how these may be avoided and/or mitigated via Appropriate Assessment.

Without this information, Natural England may need to object to the proposal.

Please re-consult Natural England once this information has been obtained.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other issues is set out below.

Additional Information required

HRA

Natural England notes that the HRA has not been produced by your authority, but by the applicant ('Shadow Report to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment', October 2020). As competent authority, it is your responsibility to produce the HRA and be accountable for its conclusions. We provide the advice enclosed on the assumption that your authority intends to adopt this HRA to fulfil your duty as competent authority. The 'Shadow' Appropriate Assessment concludes that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of the sites in question. Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for any adverse effects, it is the advice of Natural England that it is not possible to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the sites in question. Natural England advises that the assessment does not currently provide enough information and/or certainty to justify the assessment conclusion and that your authority should not grant planning permission at this stage. This uncertainty is due to the potentially insufficient bird survey data, as discussed further below. Natural England is a statutory consultee on the Appropriate Assessment stage of the HRA process, and a competent authority should have regard to Natural England's advice.

Functionally Linked Land (FLL)

Natural England generally advise that planning applications with the potential to affect large areas of FLL should be supported by two years of survey data (with full coverage of the appropriate season), which can help to account for changes in relevant factors such as weather conditions and cropping regime. It appears that wintering bird surveys for this

development have only covered one full season, between December 2016 and March 2017 inclusive and September 2017 and November 2017 inclusive.

As detailed in the Winter Bird Survey Baseline Report (March 2020), Natural England acknowledge that the survey data did not show any pattern of regular use, and indicated at most only occasional use of the development site by golden plover (the key SPA species to consider). As a result, the report concludes that the development site is not considered to be FLL for the SPA population of this species. Whilst we agree that FLL appears unlikely so far, we wish to reiterate Natural England's stance that two years of survey data would provide greater certainty on this matter. Ultimately, it is for your role, as the competent authority, to determine if the survey conclusions are satisfactory and that likely significant effects from this impact pathway can be ruled out.

Recreational Disturbance

Since this application will result in a net increase in residential accommodation, impacts to the coastal SPA and Ramsar Site may result from increased recreational disturbance. Your authority has measures in place to manage these potential impacts through the agreed strategic solution which we consider to be ecologically sound. Subject to the appropriate financial contribution being secured, Natural England is satisfied that the proposal will mitigate against the potential recreational impacts of the development on the sites.

Notwithstanding this, Natural England's advice is that this proposed development, and the application of these measures to avoid or reduce the likely harmful effects from it, should be formally checked and confirmed by your authority, as the competent authority, via an HRA.

Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

Other advice

Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land

Although we consider that this proposal falls outside the scope of the Development Management Procedure Order (as amended) consultation arrangements, Natural England draws your Authority's attention to the following land quality and soil considerations:

1. Based on the information provided with the planning application, it appears that the proposed development comprises approximately 78.35ha of agricultural land, classified as BMV (Grades 1, 2 and 3a land in the Agricultural Land Classification system).
2. Based on Regional Agricultural Land Classification map ALC007, this development site falls within Grade 1 ('Excellent'). However, these maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields or development sites and should not be used other than as general guidance. The applicants own soil surveys, as outlined in Environmental Statement

Volume 2: Technical Appendices - Appendix: Agriculture - Annex 1: Agricultural Land and Soil Resources (November 2019), demonstrate a range of soil quality from 2 (Very Good) to 3b (Moderate), with 61% falling into Grade 3a (Good).

3. Government policy is set out in paragraph 170 and 171 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that:

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'

And

Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework¹; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

In order to safeguard soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the development, it is important that the soil is able to retain as many of its many important functions and services (ecosystem services) as possible through careful soil management.

6. Consequently, we advise that if the development proceeds, the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make best use of the different soils on site. Natural England acknowledge that Chapter 4 of the Environmental Statement briefly mentions that soils within the site will be retained for their re-use in the design of the green infrastructure, to ensure that topsoil is not lost, and we encourage this approach. Further guidance is available in Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites and we recommend that this is followed.

Heritage Consultees

KCC Archaeology

(Initial Comment)

From a heritage perspective, the County Council has been involved in discussions with the applicants and their archaeological / heritage consultants since early 2017 in respect of the site allocation within the Thanet District Council Local Plan and the scope of the

assessment, survey and evaluation work to inform the allocation considerations. KCC was involved in agreeing the scope of the evaluation fieldwork and monitored it during its implementation. The County Council's Principal Archaeological Officer provided advice on

the Scoping Report and subsequently met with the applicant's heritage consultants to clarify that advice.

The County Council has provided detailed comments direct to Thanet District Council (Appendix 6) summarised below:

The application

The County Council welcomes the updates made to the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) and the inclusion of an Archaeological Statement in the submitted material – following KCC comments on the Scoping Report.

Archaeological Baseline

The baseline for archaeology includes a DBA that has been updated to combine the results of geophysical survey work, targeted archaeological trial trenching and additional crop mark evidence seen on aerial photographs. It is important to note that this study and accompanying surveys / trenching have been specifically aimed at assessing the archaeological potential of the site to inform its consideration in an outline application. The work was targeted to identify archaeological assets that would influence the principle of development, parameters to be agreed for an outline application and the initial development of the masterplan. Given the richness of the archaeology for this site, its surroundings, and for Thanet in general, it is likely that presently unidentified but highly significant archaeology would emerge - with more detailed evaluation required to inform reserved matters applications.

The programme of pre-application assessment and survey has been developed in consultation with the County Council's archaeologists and KCC is satisfied that sufficient work has been undertaken to provide an appropriate baseline understanding of the site to inform the outline application. The cropmark evidence, which is particularly rich to the south of the site (where conditions possibly favour cropmarks), in combination with the geophysical results, have enabled the principal buried features that are legible to be mapped. KCC welcomes the inclusion of the combined figure (Figure 6 in Annex 6 Archaeological DBA) that helps to appreciate the results of the combined cropmarks and geophysical works and illustrates the rich landscape that the site sits in. The geophysical survey has itself covered the majority of the application site other than a limited area where access was not possible due to the crop.

Evaluation trenching was aimed at targeting features that were firmly located and appeared to be interpretable on the geophysical survey.

For understanding impacts in more detail as discussions move forward, KCC recommends that it would be helpful if Figure 6 could be overlain onto the development master plan. KCC would also welcome receiving the data used to compile this figure and the masterplan in a format to be used in GIS.

The desk-based study updated in 2020 is very much a broad overview of the archaeology of the site rather than a detailed account of the assets. KCC does not intend to provide a

detailed commentary on the desk-based study but have made a number of comments in appendix. In particular, KCC would like to highlight that the study would benefit from further discussion and mapping of the topography of the site and its surroundings and phased maps of the archaeological assets in relation to that topography. In addition, the baseline would benefit from further description of the medieval landscape which is an important aspect.

Significance of Archaeological Remains

The County Council is pleased to see that an 'Archaeological Statement of Significance' has been included as Annex 7 to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Vol II Cultural Heritage Appendix in response to KCC advice provided at scoping stage. The County Council is seeking a thorough assessment of the significance that takes account of all the heritage assets modelled within the site. Annex 7 provides an assessment that focuses on a limited set of heritage assets that have been considered to be of 'national significance'. Other heritage assets are dismissed as local to regional importance (paragraph 5.2) and are not dealt with. The County Council considers that this approach is too limited. All archaeological heritage assets (or at least appropriate groups of heritage assets) within the site should be identified and described and their significance and the impact on that significance assessed as per the stepped approach in 4.6. The County Council would not expect every individual feature within the site to have been assessed, however, a number that KCC considers should be assessed are set out and discussed in the appendix. Chapter 6 of the Desk Based Assessment assesses the contribution of the setting of the Scheduled Monuments to their setting. The County Council expects Historic England to lead on advising on how the development affects the setting and significance of the Scheduled Monuments and associated undesignated archaeological features.

Safeguarding of Archaeological Remains and Informing Development Planning

The County Council welcomes the inclusion of the five areas that have been proposed for preservation in situ of archaeological assets in the development plans. These represent areas that were identified for preservation at an early stage following review of cropmarks and the geophysical survey. Consequently, they were not tested through evaluation survey. With respect to other heritage assets, the Statement of Significance (paragraph 5.2 & 6.6) proposes that remains that could be considered of local to regional importance can be mitigated through archaeological excavation and record. For remains of regional significance at least, the first consideration should be to look at options for preservation in-situ. However, the study has not assessed the significance in detail of those archaeological assets other than those where preservation has been identified. As a result, the potential impact and consideration of mitigation options has not been set out for other significant assets.

Several significant features that should be considered are suggested in the appendix. In particular more consideration should be given to the alignment of medieval settlement along the footpath in the north of the site. KCC recommends that the alignment of the footpath is retained as this is an important feature within the historic landscape of the site and reflects the line of the medieval trackway. There is some open space included in the illustrative masterplan flanking the pathway – the County Council would welcome exploration as to whether this could be adjusted to accommodate a degree of preservation of what is the best preserved part of the medieval landscape identified on the site.

Those areas that have been identified in the application for preservation in situ of archaeology fall within areas set out in the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan. The Landscape Character Area illustrations in this are helpful and provide a good basis for more detailed discussions on how preservation will be achieved taking account of the landscape proposals. KCC considers that there are further opportunities for enhancement - for example, by the use of carefully designed earthworks to reflect the archaeology within the landscape areas and mounding in the areas of the known ring ditches on the southern boundary.

The County Council notes the recommendation for a Conservation Management Plan (Desk Based Study paragraph 6.25) to ensure the ongoing and future preservation of the Scheduled Monuments and the highlighted risk of erosion through footfall. The County Council supports the recommendation for a Conservation Management Plan that considers the preservation and management of all areas of the archaeology that are agreed for preservation in situ.

The County Council would welcome further discussion on the scope and design of archaeological preservation in situ and the development and agreement of a Conservation Management Plan for Archaeology. Historic England should be included in such discussions given the Scheduled Monuments and associated archaeology. The Conservation Management Plan and preservation measures can be secured through condition. Archaeological Mitigation (evaluation, investigation and recording)

Where preservation in-situ has not been identified, (taking into account the comments above about additional considerations than those proposed), the County Council agrees that the remaining archaeological mitigation can be secured through a condition on the consent. Further, more detailed evaluation may be required to understand the archaeological potential to inform more detailed mitigation strategies and potentially identify features that may warrant preservation, though given the development parameters such opportunities are likely to be limited.

Given the scale of development in what is a rich archaeological landscape it is inevitable that substantial areas of investigation will be needed to mitigate development impacts. Such archaeological investigation would need to be undertaken to an appropriately high archaeological standard and make provision for publication and archiving of the results. Given the extent and value of the archaeology that is likely to be excavated, an Archaeological Framework should be developed that sets out a research design, strategy, phasing and methodologies for the archaeological work. Specific Written Schemes of Investigation would be developed from such a framework and agreed.

A programme of post excavation assessment, analysis, reporting and publication would be agreed through the Framework and Written Schemes. Such a programme is likely to be substantial and result in technical, academic and popular reports.

Widescale archaeological excavation is likely to result in a large archaeological archive of finds, environmental assemblages and documentation. Provision should be made for archiving the findings in a suitable museum or archive. Such provision is likely to require

funding for deposition with the receiving body for storage.

The County Council would welcome discussion on the development of an Archaeological Framework with the applicant's archaeological consultants and advise further on appropriately worded conditions to secure it and archaeological mitigation work including publication and archiving.

Enhancement, Interpretation and Community Archaeology

As noted above, the scheme can provide opportunities for enhancement of the archaeology through preservation by scheme design and a Conservation Management Plan. In addition, there are opportunities for onsite interpretation, and KCC would welcome the proposals for reflecting the henge in the design of the pocket park and an interpretation trail. Details for enhancement and interpretation should be agreed through the Conservation Management Plan.

The archaeological investigations associated with this development offer a very significant opportunity for the local community to engage with their heritage, enhance their understanding of their history and their place. Community archaeology including active participation in investigations, public access and engagement events, engagement with schools and colleges and online resources can provide a public benefit from the scheme. A Community Archaeology Strategy should be agreed as part of the Archaeological Framework and can be implemented as part of the archaeological mitigation works.

Built Heritage

The effect of the development and its mitigation on built heritage assets will be primarily a matter for Thanet District Council's Conservation team to advise on. The County Council Scoping response noted the need to consider the relationship of the Grade II Listed Upper Gore End Farmhouse and Gore End Barn and the farmland that the site falls within. The submission includes a Built Heritage Statement that describes the historical development of the site, the farmhouse and the barn. The report acknowledges that the farmland of the site contributes to the significance of the two listed buildings. The County Council welcomes the proposal to include an area of green space to the south of the historic farmstead that preserves an element of the setting and sets new development away from the Listed Buildings.

Summary of Recommendations

In summary the County Council recommends that:

- To assist discussions on mitigation, the archaeological baseline information should include a figure that overlies the archaeological findings (Figure 6 in the Desk Based Assessment) on to the Illustrative Masterplan.
- The baseline should include mapping of the archaeology on to the topography of the site to assist in understanding its relationship with the landscape and the setting of key features.
- The Archaeological Statement of Significance should provide more detailed

assessment of heritage assets and groups of heritage assets within the site that have been broadly grouped as of regional and local importance.

- Historic England advice should be sought with regard to how the development will affect the setting and significance of the two Scheduled Monuments and associated undesignated archaeological features.
- The areas proposed for preservation in situ of archaeology are welcomed and supported, however, consideration should be given to whether other regionally important archaeological assets could be preserved in the site. The medieval settlement and trackway along the footpath in the north west of the site has been highlighted.
- The County Council would welcome further discussion on the scope and design of archaeological preservation in situ.
- A Conservation Management Plan for Archaeology developed and agreed. Historic England should be included in such discussions given the Scheduled Monuments and associated archaeology. The Conservation Management Plan and preservation measures can be secured through condition.
- An Archaeological Framework should be developed and agreed that sets out a research design, strategy, phasing and methodologies for the archaeological work. Specific Written Schemes of Investigation should be developed from the framework and agreed. KCC would welcome discussion on the development of an Archaeological Framework with the applicant's archaeological consultants and advise further on appropriately worded conditions to secure it and archaeological mitigation work including publication and archiving.
- A scheme for the onsite interpretation of the archaeology should be agreed. This could be agreed through the proposed Conservation Management Plan for Archaeology.
- A Community Archaeology Strategy should be agreed and implemented as part of the archaeological mitigation.
- Thanet District Council's Conservation team should lead on advice concerning the effects of the scheme on built heritage assets.

The County Council would welcome further discussions on the comments raised and is willing to provide further advice with respect to the wording of appropriate conditions.

Historic England

(Interim Comment)

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 2021 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

We would like to thank RPS for their Technical Note. We are glad to see that this Note shows a good understanding of Historic England's previous advice and position (letter attached). Within our previous advice, we recommended that further archaeological, heritage and design works would be needed and should be conditioned as part of any planning

permission granted. We are therefore also glad to see that RPS accept these recommendations and would welcome a planning permission with appropriately worded conditions to this effect.

Impacts to Setting

The main point discussed within RPS' Technical Note relates to the setting of the scheduled (and undesignated) archaeological features on and near the development site, and the development's impact upon that setting.

Within our advice, we stated that we thought the Environmental Statement had downplayed the importance of the setting of these remains, and the development's impact upon that setting (an impact stated as "negligible" within the ES). We argued that impact to setting would be greater, given the degree to which the development would divorce the scheduled barrows from the wider cemetery and funerary landscape in which they sat.

RPS' Technical Note argues that their conclusions (i.e. that the development would have a "negligible" impact upon setting) are correct. They argue that this is primarily because these remains survive only as buried features and are not visible aboveground. They state that this means that this funerary landscape cannot be understood from standing at and experiencing the site, but rather from reading documentary records. They argue that the features are not legible on site and that being on site does not in itself therefore give one the ability to appreciate or understand them.

We do acknowledge that upstanding or earthwork features are more legible than buried ones; and that setting can and often does contribute more to visible archaeological remains than ones which survive purely as buried deposits. We would however note that buried features can and often do have a setting. As explained within our Guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets: although "buried remains may not be readily appreciated by a casual observer, they nonetheless retain a presence in the landscape and, like other heritage assets, may have a setting....It does not necessarily follow that the contribution [made by setting to heritage significance] is nullified if the asset is obscured or not readily visible."

Although it is true that a casual observer passing the site would not be able to read or interpret the past use of this site (as a cemetery) from observation alone, anyone with an interest or knowledge may easily learn about the site's past use (using documentary and online resources) and will henceforth be able to appreciate the site with this knowledge and understanding. Under these circumstances, the setting of these remains becomes far more important; as the informed observer will be able to appreciate the site's significance, and also gain further understanding and appreciation of it as they experience its place within the wider landscape and in relation to certain topographic and geographic features (e.g. the Wantsum).

For these reasons, our position remains the same. We continue to think that the setting of the scheduled monuments (and associated archaeological remains) is more important than conveyed in the Environmental Statement; and that the development's impact upon this setting has been downplayed to some degree.

Minimising Harm

We previously recommended that the applicant be asked to consider possible ways of reducing harm to heritage significance; in particular by considering whether they could reduce the quantum of development. This is in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan and with paragraph 190 of the NPPF which states that any conflict between heritage assets' conservation and any aspect of a proposal should be avoided or minimised.

We stated that reducing the quantum of development could minimise harm as it should allow for larger buffers and more green spaces connecting related features; create opportunities to preserve more of the historic landscape; and retain and enhance views. It is important to note that it would also preserve a greater proportion of undesignated archaeological remains, many of which are nevertheless of high importance.

RPS have, in line with our advice, given some consideration to the possibility of reducing the quantum of development. Specifically they have explored the possibility of reducing the development from 1650 to 1600 (the allocation number) units.

They state that this would result in a negligible benefit to setting, as it would increase the development's distance from the scheduled monuments by such a small amount (from 195m to just 197.5m). Whilst we tend to agree that this would create fairly little appreciable improvement to setting we note that it would preserve a greater proportion of undesignated archaeology, a fact that is not recognised within the Technical Note.

We also note that RPS has not explored lower quantum of development (i.e. less than 1600 units); whether this would make an appreciable difference to heritage impact; and indeed if lower quantum of development on this site would be viable. It may be that - in order to make an appreciable difference to heritage impact - the development would have to be of such a size that it would no longer be viable. However the onus is on the developer to demonstrate this.

Whilst we acknowledge that the Strategic Allocation within your Local Plan does allocate the site for up to 1600 units, we note that within our response to the Local Plan consultation we were not able to confirm whether this was an acceptable quantum of development for this site, in heritage terms. This was because the allocation site had not seen sufficient prior assessment to be confident of the site's heritage significance or the impact of a development upon it.

Within our previous advice letter, we therefore stated that - despite the allocation - there was a need to understand whether the proposed quantum of development was sensitive to heritage significance in ways which meet the requirements of the NPPF. We therefore think that consideration of developments with less than 1600 units is not unreasonable, and is in accordance with the NPPF.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our position regarding the development's impact upon the setting of scheduled (and undesignated) archaeological features remains unchanged. We continue to think that this impact has been downplayed to some degree within the Environmental Statement.

We are glad that RPS has given consideration to the possibility of reducing the quantum of development, although we note that they have not considered development options which deliver less than 1600 units. The onus is on the developer to demonstrate whether less harmful viable development options may exist (NPPF, para. 190). If such options are not viable or will not meet public demands and needs, it is up to the developer to demonstrate these points.

If you are convinced that harm to heritage significance has been minimised (and that the developer has submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate this), then you should determine the application by weighing the proposal's harm to heritage significance against the public (and heritage) benefits of the scheme.

If your authority decides to grant permission for the proposal in its current form, we continue to recommend that permission should be conditional on the following requirements (these are explained in more detail within our original advice letter):

- Provision of a Conservation Management Plan
- Detailed protection measures
- A programme of archaeological mitigation
- Detailed design of all green spaces containing nationally important archaeological remains; and of site boundary treatment

If you consider that you need further information to understand whether harm has been minimised, you should request such from the developer. If you consider that a less harmful viable development option does exist, you should request the applicant to consider this.

In assessing whether the development could or should be reduced from 1650 down to 1600 units, you might consider whether the reduction in harm which results from the loss of 50 houses (a reduction which we generally agree is not readily appreciable) will outweigh the loss of public benefit which results from losing these 50 houses.

(Initial Comment)

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2021 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

Historic England considers that the development would cause harm to heritage significance; both through impact to the setting of heritage assets, and through direct harm to undesignated archaeology. In particular, the development would damage and disrupt a rich palimpsest of archaeological remains and disjoin a once integrated prehistoric funerary landscape.

We would recommend that the applicant be asked to consider possible ways of reducing harm to heritage significance. Possible means by which to do so are discussed further within our letter below.

However, if the Council is minded to grant planning permission for the proposal in its current form, we recommend that it should be conditional on the following:

- A Conservation Management Plan for all nationally important assets within and adjacent to the development site.
- Detailed protection measures for all nationally important assets (within and adjacent to the development site) during construction and enabling works.
- A programme of archaeological mitigation to record and advance understanding of undesignated archaeological assets to be lost.
- Provision within green spaces for the preservation of nationally important buried Remains
- Preservation of key views across the former prehistoric funerary landscape.

You should also consult the KCC County Archaeologist and your own Conservation Officer with regards to impacts upon undesignated archaeological remains and the setting of listed buildings, respectively.

Historic England Advice

Scheduled Monuments

There are two scheduled monuments outside the development site, each of which (List Entry Refs: 1004207 & 1005489) encompass a group of ring ditches. These are considered to represent the remains of a Bronze Age barrow cemetery.

Since the two areas were scheduled, it has become clear - through geophysics, test pitting and aerial photography - that the barrow cemetery is not restricted to the two scheduled areas and certainly does not sit in isolation within the landscape. Rather, the scheduled barrows are part of a single more extensive cemetery along the valley side. They also sit within a much wider and very rich Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary landscape.

As correctly identified within the Archaeological DBA produced by RPS (Sep 2020; Figure 22), some of this associated (but undesignated) archaeology (e.g. further ring ditches, a possible late Neolithic/early Bronze Age henge) - both within and outside the development site - is of equivalent (i.e. national) significance to the scheduled areas.

a) Setting Assessment

It is therefore disappointing that the setting assessment (Archaeological DBA by RPS, Sep 2020) for the two scheduled areas fails to assess the setting of the barrow cemetery as a whole, and instead assesses the scheduled monuments very much as distinct and separate units.

The setting assessment is also disappointing in that it does not respond to advice and recommendations we gave during the Scoping stage. In particular it provides no

visualisations of the scheme in key views from and to the barrow cemetery in support of its conclusions.

b) The Development's Impact upon Setting

We agree that the development will impact upon the setting of the scheduled monuments, and that of the wider barrow cemetery and prehistoric funerary landscape. Whilst key views from the cemetery south to the Wantsum will be preserved, the development will still encroach upon the cemetery's previously open surrounds, which would originally have contributed to its dominance within the Landscape.

Most importantly, the development will interrupt the integrity of this funerary landscape and divorce different elements of it from each other. For example, whilst we are happy that the buried remains of a possible henge will be preserved within the site as a 'pocket park', it will be completely encircled by development. It will therefore become difficult if not impossible to appreciate its original connection with other funerary features in the landscape; or how it would have gained significance as part of a wider ceremonial landscape.

We acknowledge that this impact upon setting will be downgraded to some extent by the fact these funerary features are no longer visible on the ground. However, we consider that the impact of the development upon setting of the scheduled (and other nationally important) features has been downplayed.

For example, the Environmental Statement (Chapter 12, Heritage Assessment) states that the development would have only a "negligible" impact upon the monument's setting (12.97). Given the degree to which the development will divorce the scheduled barrows from the wider cemetery (and funerary landscape) in which they sat, we think these assessments are unjustified.

We acknowledge that efforts have been made to reduce impact upon setting, through design. For example, green spaces on the southern boundary will provide a small buffer to the scheduled areas. Areas of national archaeological importance are also being preserved within green areas within the development site.

Where possible, a visual connection between these areas and the scheduled monuments is also being retained, e.g. through the use of soft borders and boundary treatments. It will be very important that the development's green spaces and boundary treatment are very sensitively designed in order to achieve this.

We note that impact to setting could be reduced further by reducing the quantum of development - as this would allow larger buffers and more green spaces connecting related features. This would create opportunities to preserve more of the historic landscape; and retain and enhance views.

We also note that this planning application is for 1650 dwellings, thus has already exceeded the maximum number of units that the site was allocated for within the Local Plan.

c) Conservation Management Plan

We support the proposal to produce a Conservation Management Plan for managing the adjacent scheduled monuments into the future. This will be very important for maintaining them in an optimum state. It will also help avoid and mitigate harm that might be caused as a result of the development (e.g. increased footfall and erosion). We advise that the Conservation Management Plan should also encompass any other nationally important areas of archaeology that have been preserved in-situ within the development; or any such areas outside the development which could similarly be indirectly impacted by it. Figure 22 within the Archaeological DBA (RPS, Sep 2020) helpfully highlights areas of national archaeological importance in and around the development site, so would be a useful guide.

d) Protection of nationally important assets during construction

It is also very important that all areas containing nationally important archaeology (both scheduled and unscheduled) are protected during construction and enabling works. This is particularly important given the proximity of some of these areas to the development boundary; and because some lie within the development itself.

Undesignated Archaeology

Your main source of advice for undesignated archaeology has been the Heritage Conservation Team at Kent CC (Simon Mason). We think they should retain this lead role and we would defer to the detailed comments and advice they have given in response to this planning application, with regard to undesignated remains.

a) Archaeological Recording

We agree that, where undesignated remains are to be preserved by record, this will need to be done to a very high standard; and in accordance with an Archaeological Framework that allows for an iterative investigative and recording process.

b) Geoarchaeological Remains

We also note the potential for this site to contain (undesignated) Brickearth deposits (as found on nearby sites in Thanet) which are potentially of Palaeolithic interest and high (even national) importance. As such, we also agree with Mr Mason's comments that the assessment would have benefited from the mapping of the geology and Palaeolithic characterisation studies for the area.

In preparing an Archaeological Framework (and more targeted Written Schemes of Investigation within this Framework) we think careful consideration should thus be given to the potential for encountering such remains; and to the techniques that will be required to properly assess, record and investigate them if encountered.

Geoarchaeological assessment and recording can take a very different form to that

usually employed for more recent deposits, and thus will likely require specialist geoarchaeological expertise and input. Please note that Historic England's Science Advisor - Jane Corcoran - is available to advise the applicant or County Archaeologist on this matter.

c) Preservation in-situ

We are pleased to see that (undesigned) areas of national archaeological importance have been carefully identified, and that where they sit within the development site they will be preserved in-situ within green spaces.

It is very important that the design (and maintenance) of these green spaces are very carefully considered; to ensure both optimal preservation and that the remains are interpreted and 'presented' as well as possible. Careful consideration will thus need to be given during the design process to matters such as planting, paths, and interpretation devices (e.g. interpretation boards/earthworks).

We note that a number of water and drainage features - e.g. SUDs, ponds and wetlands - have been proposed adjacent to a number of the archaeological areas that will be preserved in-situ. It is important to understand that such features can alter drainage patterns and preservation conditions within the surrounding area.

It is therefore very important when designing the scheme that the developer undertakes proper assessment of the current burial environment, and any potential changes to this situation which might be brought about by the drainage/water features proposed. The design of these green spaces should be carefully informed by these Assessments.

In this regard, we would refer you to our guidance on Preserving Archaeological Remains (<<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/preserving-archaeological-remains/heag100a-preserving-archaeological-remains/>>). Our Science Advisor is also available to provide advice on this matter to the applicant, or County Archaeologist, if needed.

Listed Buildings

There are also grade II listed buildings close to the development site. For this aspect, we think that your in-house conservation adviser should lead for consideration of the settings of these.

Policy

a) NPPF

The NPPF states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para. 184), and that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (para. 193).

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (para. 194).

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 196).

It is also important that non-designated archaeological assets, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (footnote 63).

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should also be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (para. 197).

Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible (para. 199).

b) Thanet Local Plan

We note that this proposal is for land forming a Strategic Allocation within your Local Plan and thus that the principle of some development (up to 1600 residences) here is established. However, we draw your attention to our letter of 28 th September 2019, in response to your consultation, in which we said that strategic housing allocation sites had not seen sufficient prior assessment to be able to be confident that development there was possible without harm to heritage significance.

Further assessment regarding impact to heritage significance has now been submitted in support of this planning application, and we agree that in general a good baseline understanding of heritage significance and impact has been achieved. The need now is therefore to understand whether the quantum and form of the proposed development is sensitive to heritage significance in ways which meet the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan.

Policy SP36 of the Local Plan states that the Council will support, value and have regard to the historic or archaeological significance of Heritage Assets by protecting the historic environment from inappropriate development.

Policy HE01, Chapter 14 states that:

The Council will promote the identification, recording, protection and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and historic landscape features, and will seek to encourage and develop their educational, recreational and tourist potential through management and interpretation.

Development proposals adversely affecting the integrity or setting of Scheduled Monuments or other heritage assets of comparable significance will normally be Refused.

Where the case for development which would affect an archaeological site is accepted by the Council, preservation in situ of archaeological remains will normally be sought. Where this is not possible or not justified, appropriate provision for investigation and recording will be required.

Policy HE03 states:

Proposals that affect both designated and non-designated heritage assets, will be assessed by reference to the scale of harm, both direct and indirect, or loss to, the significance of the heritage asset in accordance with the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Position

The development will cause (less than substantial) harm to heritage significance, through impact upon the setting of heritage assets; and through direct impact to numerous undesignated archaeological remains from a range of periods. Overall, the ability to appreciate what was once a single integrated prehistoric funerary landscape will be lost.

Recommendation

Although the development poses less than substantial harm, we think there may be ways in which this could be minimised (in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan). We would therefore recommend that the applicant be asked to consider ways of reducing harm to heritage significance where possible (e.g. by reducing the quantum of development).

If however your authority decides to grant permission for the proposal in its current form, we recommend that permission should be conditional on the following Requirements:

- Provision of a Conservation Management Plan. This is required to ensure the long-term preservation, presentation and interpretation of all nationally important assets (scheduled and unscheduled) within and adjacent to the development site (Policy HE01, Local Plan). This should be developed in consultation with the County Archaeologist and Historic England.
- Detailed protection measures to be put in place during construction and enabling works; for all nationally important archaeology in and adjacent to the site. This should be developed in liaison with Historic England and the County Archaeologist.

- A programme of archaeological mitigation to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets to be lost (NPPF, para. 199). Our Science Advisor would be available to advise on deposits of geoarchaeological interest.

- Detailed design of all green spaces containing nationally important archaeological remains; and of site boundary treatment. This should be developed in liaison with the County Archaeologist and Historic England.

Utilities and Infrastructure Consultees

KCC SUDs

(Initial Comment)

The County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority has reviewed the Flood Risk Assessment and the Drainage Strategy prepared by Stantec dated 5 November 2020 and agrees in principle with the proposals.

The current Surface Water Strategy proposes that surface water will be managed within the parcels of allocated land through a series of piped networks and swales with pollution control devices prior to discharging into an infiltration basins or soakaways. KCC appreciates that the drainage strategy is integrated into opens spaces throughout the development.

The information submitted to support the outline component of the planning application has demonstrated how surface water may be managed within an indicative layout. Given the high-level strategy presented, KCC makes the following comments:

KCC agrees that the approach as outlined within the Flood Risk Assessment with attenuation of surface water within infiltration basins or soakaways is appropriate and demonstrates that surface water can be accommodated within the proposed development area.

Drainage Strategy (page 74 of 194) includes the Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy (Stantec, Drawing 39862/4007/004), which includes general direction of phase drainage with indicated location of infiltration basins. It is understood that the scale of drawing a development of this size makes it difficult to clearly show appropriate separation distances and spatial allowances for some linear features, particularly connecting swales. Given the density and proximity of development there are some locations which require protection to ensure sufficient space is provided for surface water management. These locations include Basin R8A, B & C, R10, R16, and swale for R11 and R18. Reserved matters will need to assess the spatial arrangements for surface water management within open space.

The KCC pre-application meeting of 6 February 2020 noted that the overland flow path should be accommodated within the layout. The development layout as presented in the Parameter Plan does not appear to reflect the extent of surface water flood risk. It is understood at this level of strategic planning the scale may not be sufficient to demonstrate such detail. However, there is a concern that not taking account of this within the land use blocks will limit later accommodation within the planning layout.

KCC would refer the applicant to information within KCC's Drainage and Planning Policy Statement which describes policy in relation to drainage operational requirements and consideration of other matters in relation to layout and design.

KCC notes that if permeable paving is proposed then the County Council would recommend that other underground services, such as foul sewers, are routed outside of areas of permeable paving or cross it in dedicated service corridors, particularly where sewers will be offered for adoption.

KCC also notes that although the overland flow path at the north east of the site has been examined through scrutiny of the area and any possible impact from the development shall be demonstrated with justification, the overland flow of any surface water will be accommodated such that no flooding on or off site shall occur.

The incorrect rainfall data has been used. At the detailed design stage for each phase, KCC would expect to see the drainage system modelled using 2013 FeH rainfall data in any appropriate modelling or simulation software. Where 2013 FeH data is not available, 26.25mm should be manually input for the M5-60 value, as per the requirements of our latest drainage and planning policy statement (November 2019); the FSR dataset should not be used.

Where swales and basins are proposed, they should be designed with side slopes of 1 in 4, or where space is limited the slopes, the slopes should be no greater than 1 in 3. The design of these features should also consider access and maintenance arrangements of these features.

KCC recommends the depth of basins/ponds within developments are not considerably deep (greater than 1.2 m deep). Whilst this would limit the amount of storage within the basin, KCC would recommend consideration of other approaches to design, for example that geocellular tanks may be installed beneath the basin to provide any additional storage needed.

KCC would recommend that full consideration is given to the landscaping of the basins and promotion of multi-functional design. The current basin arrangement may not maximise the open space and biodiversity opportunities available.

Given the level of detail provided for this outline approval, KCC would recommend that any reserved matters applications will also require a strategic assessment of surface water provision for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year climate change adjusted event to ensure sufficient space is provided for drainage basins and swales.

The County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, recommends that if permission is granted for the proposed development, safe guarding conditions attached.

Sports, Recreation and Open Space Consultees

Sport England

(Initial Comment)

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities>

This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to a residential development of 300 dwellings or more and the creation of a site for one or more playing pitches.

Sport England assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England's planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand. Further information on Sport England's planning objectives can be found here: <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/>

The occupiers of new development, especially residential, will generate demand for sporting provision. The existing provision within an area may not be able to accommodate this increased demand without exacerbating existing and/or predicted future deficiencies. Therefore, Sport England considers that new developments should contribute towards meeting the demand that they generate through the provision of on-site facilities and/or providing additional capacity off-site. The level and nature of any provision should be informed by a robust evidence base such as that provided by your Council's up to date Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy.

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

Indoor Sports Provision

The future population of the proposed development is estimated to be 3630 based on the district's 2011 average household size of 2.2 people. This additional population will generate additional demand for sports facilities. If this demand is not adequately met then it may place additional pressure on existing sports facilities, thereby creating deficiencies in facility provision. Therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, Sport England seeks to ensure that the development meets any new sports facility needs arising as a result of the development. You may be aware that Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) can help to provide an indication of the likely demand that will be generated by a development for certain facility types. The SFC indicates that a population of 3630 in Thanet would generate a demand for 0.24 sports halls (£662,103 at June 2020 prices), 0.17 swimming pools (£707,478), 0.1 Artificial Grass Pitch (£106,052 for 3G surface or £96,460 for sand based surface) and 0.3 indoor bowls (£122,114). The attached document and our website <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/sports-facility-calculator> provides more detail of the calculations and the SFC tool.

The Council's Sports Facility Strategy (SFS) 2017 – 2031 published September 2018 <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Indoor-Sports-Facilities-Strategy-Main-Report.pdf> identifies that there is a need to provide for the sports needs arising from population growth in the district, and also a need to address existing unmet demand for swimming pool and sports hall provision. Recommendations 2 and 3 of the SFS are to prioritise investment into additional swimming pool and sports hall provision. Recommendation 9 refers to facilitating club led development of additional bowling facilities by 2031.

No reference is made in the planning application to how indoor sports provision would be made on site although the sustainability audit in the Design and Access Statement identifies that the application site currently has 'weak accessibility' to indoor leisure facilities and that this will remain the case once built out. As indoor sports facilities are strategic facilities that serve large populations and as the population generated by the proposed development in isolation would not be sufficient to justify the provision of a conventional facility on-site (see above Sports Facility Calculator figures), it is considered that off-site provision in the form of a commuted sum towards the provision or improvement of off-site facilities would however be the most suitable form of provision on this occasion. The proposed solutions should be informed by the Council's SFS referred to above. Consideration should be given by the Council to using the figures from the Sports Facility Calculator to informing the level of a financial contribution to be secured through a s.106 agreement.

No detail of the facilities that might be provided within the proposed primary school are given in the application and it is understood that the school would be delivered separately by the education authority if required, with the applicant providing the land and a financial contribution towards that. However, if delivered, the primary school would be expected to provide some sport and recreation facilities for meeting educational needs that could also be used by the community outside of school hours such as the playing field and the school hall. While these facilities are principally for school use and would be designed for primary school aged children and should not be considered as a substitute for dedicated community facilities, they would offer potential to complement provision made for improved sports facility provision off-site. While there is limited detail of what would be provided on the school site, to ensure that the school's facilities are secured for community use in practice, I would request that any planning permission makes provision for securing the community use of the indoor and outdoor sports facilities provided on the school site. A formal community use agreement would be the appropriate mechanism for securing community use. Without a formal community use agreement being secured there would be no certainty that the facilities would be accessible to the community in practice after they have been built. Model condition 16 from our model planning conditions schedule <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-model-planning-conditions-december-2012.pdf> should be used as a basis for securing this through planning permissions. Further advice on this matter, including model community use agreements, can be provided upon request.

Any planning permission should also make provision for full details of the design and layout of the school sports facilities to be submitted as part of reserved matters.

Playing Pitches

The illustrative masterplan identifies a multi sports playing field 'green' specifically including a cricket square and outfield. The area identified is specified to be of 1.2ha total area in the planning statement. The Design and Access Statement identifies that the sports green as being capable of accommodating one full sized cricket pitch, 3 adult football pitches or 12 five a side football pitches. The Design and Access Statement also states that its contextual analysis identified a lack of sports pitches and landscapes for older children. Although it appears not to be referred to in the application documentation, this conclusion is consistent with the Council's evidence base provided by its Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 <https://www.thanet.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Playing-Pitch-Strategy.pdf> which identifies that across the district there is an existing deficit of youth 11v11 and 9v9 football pitches that is predicted to increase substantially over the period of the PPS to 2031.

I have consulted the sport governing bodies for their initial comments on the proposed playing pitch area.

The ECB has commented; *The ECB is supportive of the proposed include of a new cricket site within this development. The new fine turf square and outfield will need to be developed in accordance with ECB TS4 guidance. It is unclear whether a pavilion has been included within the illustrative masterplan and it is crucial that this is incorporated into the designs in accordance with ECB TS5 pavilion guidance. The ECB also advises that a non-turf pitch and nets are included within the site plans and meet ECB's TS6 guidance for non-turf facilities. Potential users of a new cricket site in Birchington include Westgate-on-Sea Cricket Club which is based locally to the development. There are other growing clubs in Thanet that are likely to require new cricket sites for their use in the next few years that could also utilise a new site in the area.*

Sport England would further comment in regard to cricket that in order to avoid the risk of ball strike from cricket use of the playing field, that any residential development including private garden space should be set back by at least 80m from the edge of the cricket square.

The Football Foundation on behalf of the FA has commented; *[It is] very difficult to provide detailed comments on these, but there appears to be some football pitches marked out too. There are large youth clubs as well as a strong vets and adult male leagues in Thanet, so there would be need for pitches. However, we would like to see how they've concluded the need for the pitches they've marked out.*

The RFU has commented;

It is unclear as to the exact provision of sports facility proposed and so it is difficult to comment on the need of any solution included within the development. The RFU would, however, have the following comments and questions;

There is one formal 'sports green' identified for sporting provision. It is currently identified as a multipurpose space within the Design and Access statement with the option to provide;

- *Full-size cricket pitch*
- *3 x adult football*
- *12 x 5 a-side pitches*
-

- *Can clarification be sought as to the nature of any ancillary facilities that will support the operation of the 'sports green'?*
- *On the basis of the provision outlined within the Design and Access statement and the assumption that there is no current provision for rugby union in the development, the RFU would seek to support the increase in capacity of provision in the nearest rugby club in Thanet DC; Thanet Wanderers RFC.*
- *Thanet Wanderers RFC is identified in the local Playing Pitch Strategy as in need of increasing capacity on their pitches by;*
- *Improved drainage project and maintenance*
- *Additional compliant floodlighting*

The club is also identified as requiring improvements to the clubhouse within the PPS.

The RFU would be happy to support additional dialogue in progressing the above solutions.

Given the above, Sport England is generally supportive of on-site outdoor pitch provision however, more detail is required as to how the mix of uses and scale of pitch facilities has been arrived at and how the evidence base provided by the Council's PPS has been taken into account. In that regard, Sport England is concerned that there isn't unviable over provision of facilities provided on site that might subsequently fall into disuse. Furthermore, a pitch facility here as identified by the NGBs will demand ancillary facilities in the form of a sports pavilion and car parking in order to be usable and viable. Further clarification should be sought on these matters and consideration should be given to whether a combination of on site provision and a financial contribution towards the improvement of existing off site facilities would be a more appropriate way of meeting the needs of the future population and ensuring viability.

Sport England also notes that the Sports Green is not specifically identified in the land use parameter plan or listed in the legend under the range of included facilities in the green infrastructure or, as a facility to be secured under the draft Heads of Terms for the s.106. We would seek reassurance that the on-site facilities to be provided and any financial contribution towards off site improvements identified, are fully specified and secured within the s.106 legal agreement.

Sport England recommends that a ground conditions assessment is undertaken by a sports turf specialist/agronomist who can recommend a scheme for preparing the playing fields to the required specification. The recommended scheme should then be implemented. Detailed guidance on the issues that require consideration is set out in Sport England's guidance 'Natural Turf for Sport' <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/outdoor-surfaces> and with ECB TS4 guidance http://pulse-static-files.s3.amazonaws.com/ecb/document/2016/08/29/54dc77cb-0cb0-46ad-a4fe-372259bec20d/ECB_guidelines_for_construction_and_maintenance_of_pitches_and_outfields.pdf.

CONCLUSION ON COMMUNITY SPORTS PROVISION

As no clear proposals have been made at this stage for meeting the development's indoor sports facility needs and further information is required regarding outdoor playing pitch provision, an OBJECTION is made to the planning application in its current form. However, Sport England would be willing to withdraw this objection if it is confirmed that appropriate provision in the form of on site facilities, financial contributions towards off- site improvements or a combination of the two, secured through a section 106 agreement will be made.

Active Design

Sport England welcomes the applicant's use of 'Building for a Healthy Life', the Kent Design Guide and the design guidance for street typologies in developing the illustrative masterplan for the proposed development. In working up the details of the development for Reserved matters, Sport England would also commend its Active Design guidance prepared in conjunction with Public Health England. 'Active Design' (October 2015) is a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active, more often in the interests of health and wellbeing. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring new developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design. Sport England would commend the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments. The document can be downloaded via the following link:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

All other Consultees

TDC Strategic Housing Manager

(Interim Comment)

Within Thanet District Council's Local Plan (adopted July 2020), SP23 requires residential schemes of 10 or more units to provide 30% of the dwellings as affordable housing, including extra care facilities falling under the Use Class C3. To be policy compliant, a contribution of 30% affordable housing (AH) across the 1600 units (whole site) is required.

The 30% AH shall be split 25% First Homes (FH), 70% Affordable Rent (AR) and 5% Shared Ownership (SO) which equates to 480 no. AH units - split 120 no. FH, 336 no. AR, and 24no. SO; however, the exact tenure split can be confirmed during the course of the application process.

Within the submitted Development Specification Document Version II: June 2023 created by Pfarmigan Land on behalf of Places for People, it states the following on pages 4-5:

Upon review of the submitted Development Specification Document Version II: June 2023, it states that the affordable housing mix is not for determination within this application. Although it is worth noting that the provisional AH mix proposed, aligns with Strategic Housing target mix as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), updated 2021, which states the following:

If the affordable housing mix, as specified above, is adhered to, and is realised equally across the staggered development phases, then this is supported by TDC's Strategic Housing department. It will be advantageous, as the proposal progresses, to provide details of the exact tenure split, mix, property types and location of the AH units across this site. Local Plan Policy QD05 - Accessible and Adaptable Accommodation shall be provided as follows:

It will be advantageous as the proposal progresses to provide further information evidencing compliance with the above technical standards.

(Initial Comment)

Within Thanet District Council's Local Plan (adopted July 2020), SP23 requires residential schemes of 10 or more units to provide 30% of the dwellings as affordable housing, including extra care facilities falling under the Use Class C3. To be policy compliant, a contribution of 30% affordable housing (AH) across the 1650 units (whole site) is required.

The 30% AH shall be split 70% Affordable Rent (AR) and 30% Shared Ownership (SO) which equates to 495no. AH units - split 346no. AR and 149no. SO. However, the exact tenure split can be confirmed during the course of the application process.

Upon review of the submitted Planning Statement (November 2020) - p26, the indicative dwelling type and mix of private and affordable housing is reflective of TDC's SHMA findings and in alignment with SP22 of the Local Plan. However, the final mix shall be confirmed during the reserved matters stage.

The above is deemed acceptable on the provision that the stipulated affordable housing mix is realised equally across the staggered development phases. Using current data from Thanet District Council's Housing Register, the number of households on the Housing Register by bedroom need in the immediate postcode areas; CT7 (Birchington) CT8 (Westgate), is as follows:

The above should be read in conjunction with the SHMA findings, which accurately reflect the current and future affordable housing needs across the district as a whole. In line with Local Plan Policy QD05 - accessibility provision, accommodation shall be provided as follows: