

Land at Brooklands Farm, Whitstable

Regulation 18 (Part B) Consultation –
Representations

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Appendix 1: Brooklands Farm Concept Strategy

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Hallam Land Management (“HLM”) is promoting the Land at Brooklands Farm (“the Site”) (SLAA ref: SLAA104) which is allocated for a residential-led mixed use development at Policy W4 of the draft Local Plan. The Site was included as a draft allocation (Policy W5) in the previous Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045, which was consulted upon in 2022/23.
- 1.2 Some changes have been made to the Plan following the election of a new Council in May 2023 and formation of a new Cabinet, with a new focus on a transport strategy that is bus led and to encourage the use of public transport or active travel. Regardless of these changes, Land at Brooklands Farm remains a key strategic allocation and HLM supports the aim and focus on shifting the modal share towards sustainable travel throughout the District.
- 1.3 HLM support the Council’s development vision and delivery approach of delivering homes in line with the identified local need using the Government’s standard method, as well as transport infrastructure and economic growth.
- 1.4 HLM fully supports the Plan’s vision in focusing growth within south Whitstable and in particular the draft allocation of Brooklands Farm for a comprehensive mixed-use development (Policy W4). We agree that the Site can form a logical urban extension to the existing settlement and can make a significant contribution to meeting local housing and infrastructure needs.
- 1.5 These representations set out the ways in which Policy W4 can help to fulfil the Council’s Strategic Objectives through protecting existing assets and housing and infrastructure delivery; thus, securing significant benefits for existing and future residents of Whitstable and Canterbury City Council through the delivery of a highly sustainable development.
- 1.6 HLM do have a number of comments on the specific wording of Policy W4 and matters related to the allocation, including the quantum of development for particular proposed uses, as well as on and off-site infrastructure delivery and design / layout. This, and discussion on some of the matters raised by representors within the previous consultation will be covered in these representations.
- 1.7 HLM will continue to work with the Council and stakeholders to deliver a sustainable and well considered development.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The representations have been prepared by Nexus Planning (ID: WR213), on behalf of Hallam Land Management (“HLM”), in response to the consultation on the Canterbury City Council Draft District Local Plan 2040.
- 2.2 HLM is promoting the Land at Brooklands Farm (“the Site”) (SLAA ref: SLAA104), which measures 79.13ha and is located to the south of Whitstable and to the south-west of Chestfield and comprises draft Policy W4 in the consultation Plan (previously Policy W5 in the 2022/23 Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045 consultation Plan). The proposals at the Site will deliver a highly sustainable development on the edge of one of the most sustainable settlements in the District.
- 2.3 HLM continue to undertake more detailed survey and masterplanning work, in order to support the development of the draft allocation.
- 2.4 Whilst not a policy itself, the emerging Plan identifies land to the south of Whitstable as a Strategic Development Area (SDA), focusing on new sustainable communities, key infrastructure and environmental improvements. Together with Policies W4-W6, the SDA is required to deliver 33ha of publicly accessible open space (including allotments and play facilities); 4ha of publicly accessible sports facilities; approximately 1,870 new homes (30% affordable homes and 10% older persons housing); minimum of 4,000sqm of business floorspace; a new local centre; a six form (FE) secondary school; a two FE primary school; a SEND school; new connectivity; new road junctions to the A299 and highways improvements; park and bus facilities; and enhancement to biodiversity and habitat.
- 2.5 Draft Policy W4 allocates the Site, which is being promoted by HLM, for a comprehensive mixed use development, to include:
 - a. Approximately 1400 new dwellings, including affordable, older persons, accessible and self-build housing;
 - b. A community hub to include a local centre, business space and mobility hub;
 - c. New two FE primary school;
 - d. SEND school;
 - e. Local shopping and community uses; and
 - f. On-site open space.
- 2.6 As can be seen from above, Land at Brooklands Farm provides a substantial proportion of the social and transport infrastructure, and the economic uses to support growth and therefore forms a key part of the South Whitstable SDA, integral to future growth at Whitstable and neighbouring coastal towns.
- 2.7 HLM supports the Plan’s Draft allocation of the SDA, as outlined within Policy W4; as well as the development spatial strategy in so far as identifying Whitstable as the secondary focus for development in the District (SS3(3)) after Canterbury City itself, having regard to the important role the coastal settlements play in the District.
- 2.8 The Site was previously included as a draft allocation (Policy W5) in the Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045, which was consulted upon in 2022/23. Some changes have been made to the Plan following the election of a new

Council in May 2023 and formation of a new Cabinet. As a whole, we note the key differences between the two draft Plans are as follows (as taken from the Consultation and Engagement Topic Paper 2024):

- a. the plan period has reduced from 2045 to 2040/41;
- b. reduction in the number of new homes by 4,149 (from 13,495 to 9,346 over the plan period);
- c. removal of the Cooting Farm proposed allocation;
- d. allocation of land north of the University of Kent (Policy C12) for approximately 2,000 dwellings, and associated infrastructure;
- e. removal of strategic sites to the east of Canterbury;
- f. removal of the Eastern Movement Corridor; and
- g. removal of the Canterbury Circulation Plan.

2.9 Despite these changes, land at Brooklands Farm has been retained as a draft allocation in the current consultation Plan (Policy W4) with some changes to the policy wording and requirements. Therefore, and despite the reduced growth planned within the emerging Local Plan, it is evident that the Council consider the Site to be a key and integral part of the emerging spatial strategy for growth in the District. This is a position that HLM fully support.

Approach to the Representations

2.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”) states, at paragraph 35, the tests of soundness that Local Plan and Spatial Development Strategies are examined against, as follows, with the Consultation Plan being considered in the light of these tests:

- a. Positively prepared: providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b. Justified: an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c. Effective: deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d. Consistent with national policy: enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.”

2.11 These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph, or supporting evidence document being addressed. They are structured as follows:

- a. Sections 3 addresses the Council’s spatial strategy, including housing needs and strategic objectives;
- b. Section 4 addresses Policy W3 and Whitstable as a focus for growth;

- c. Sections 5 addresses Policy W4 the Land at Brooklands Farm allocation and Section 6 considers the Sustainability Appraisal;
 - d. Sections 7 and 8 consider other relevant policies in the Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
 - e. Section 9 addresses responses received in the previous consultation.
- 2.12 This submission concludes at Section 10 that HLM supports the allocation of Policy W4 in the draft Local Plan and would welcome further discussions with the Council to discuss the final details of the allocation prior to the publication of the Regulation 19 pre-submission Plan.
- 2.13 HLM’s representations are supported by a Concept Strategy document (Appendix 1), which has been prepared by Define (Masterplanner) and provides greater detail on some of the key technical work being undertaken (highways and sustainable movement; drainage; and landscape) and the emerging strategies, ideas, benefits and improvements that a new neighbourhood at Brooklands Farm could bring to the local area.

3. Spatial Strategy

Housing Needs

- 3.1 As set out in the Development Topic Paper (2024), the Council identify a local housing need (“LHN”) of 1,149 dwellings per year for Canterbury over the 2020-2040 plan period (reduced from 1,252 from the previous Regulation 18 draft Local Plan (2022)). This is an uncapped figure based upon the Government’s Standard Method, which seeks minimum housing figures, and we are therefore satisfied this is correct at this present point in time. The reduction is primarily as a result of the most recent data on the local affordability ratio for Canterbury, which has reduced from 12.86 in 2021 to 10.46 in the 2023 results, which has lowered the affordability adjustment, albeit this figure does, in relative terms, remain high.
- 3.2 The LHN will however need to be kept under review as the emerging local plan progresses to ensure it is based upon the latest available data. The Planning Practice Guidance then notes that the standard method figure can be relied upon for a period of 2 years from the time that a plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in public (ID: 2a-008-20190220). We support the Council’s housing delivery approach, alongside the economic growth and additional investment in local transport infrastructure, which aligns with national policy and guidance.
- 3.3 The Council have a record of failing the Housing Delivery Test with recent scores of 72% in 2023 (as set out in Table 8.5 of the Development Topic Paper (February 2024) although not formally published), 75% in 2022, 65% in 2021, and 87% in 2020 and 2019, demonstrating not enough new homes are being delivered in the District, namely due to the absence of an up to date local plan. This is a similar position for several other Kent councils. In order for plans to be positively prepared, and therefore ‘sound’, the Framework requires unmet need from neighbouring areas to be accommodated where practical and consistent with achieving sustainable development (para 35a). The Council’s Duty to Cooperate Compliance Statement 2024, as was the case in the same titled 2022 Statement, indicates that each authority is working towards their own Strategic Housing Market Assessment, their own individual housing targets and to provide in full within their own administrative area. Such matters will need to be kept under review.

Policy SS3 - Development Strategy for the District

- 3.4 Paragraph 35a) of the Framework requires plans to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs, as a minimum and the PPG identifies that it might be appropriate to plan for a higher housing need figure and that the Government supports ambitious authorities who want to plan for growth (ID: 2a-010-20201216).
- 3.5 The Development strategy sets an average of 1,149 new dwellings per year, as confirmed within the Council’s Development Topic Paper (2024). This approach redistributes any undersupply in the early years to over the entire plan period. However, this approach only meets the LHN and does not exceed it, as was the case within the previously consulted upon Plan. In this case, we fully implore the Council to consider reviewing a strategy that materially exceeds the standard method minimum in order to support economic growth and extra investment in local infrastructure, such as transport.
- 3.6 The consultation Plan sets out the LHN, however, as with the previous Regulation 18 consultation draft Plan, does not set out a housing target over the Plan period, which is required for transparency, certainty on supply/trajectory and planning supporting infrastructure. Whilst the Development Topic Paper (February 2024) states there is a total need of 24,129 dwellings across 2020-2041, we suggest the Plan makes reference the total housing requirement as a minimum, as required within paragraphs 35a and 61 of the Framework.

- 3.7 We support the development strategy in strategic terms in so far the Whitstable area is being a focus for new development. The Council recognise the importance of promoting and progressing its coastal towns.
- 3.8 This is evidenced through the Canterbury Economic Development and Tourism Study, (October 2020) (EDTS), which outlines that Whitstable has significant potential to unlock and stimulate culture-led economic growth and strengthen existing economic ties with other parts of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor. In view of this, it is clear that growth is required and justified at Whitstable in order to take advantage of the District’s economic potential over the plan period.
- 3.9 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IoMD) (2019) also confirm there are pockets of deprivation within Whitstable and other coastal and rural areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. In view of this, growth to support regeneration should continue to be a focus at Whitstable. The overall measurement of deprivation and the nine sub-domains of deprivation shows a worsening trend from the 2015 Indices, particularly against the ‘Crime Domain’ and the ‘Barriers to Housing and Services’ Domain. The spatial strategy can help to prevent the settlements continued decline against the IoMD domain indicators.
- 3.10 Analysis of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates between 2011 and 2019 indicate that Whitstable’s population growth has been meaningfully lower than the District’s other sub-areas – a level less than half of the other sub-areas over the same time period. A key reason why Whitstable’s population growth has been lower than the District more generally, is likely to be associated to the low level of planned growth at the settlement within previous Local Plans.
- 3.11 In 2019, 65% of the District’s population was aged 16 to 64 (working age), however, only 57% of Whitstable’s population was aged 16-64. Between 2011 to 2019, the District’s working age population has remained broadly constant (65% of the total population), whereas the proportion of working age population at Whitstable has declined from 59% in 2011 to 57% in 2019. Conversely, it noted that the proportion of Whitstable’s population aged 65+ has started to steadily increase over the same period (24% in 2011 to 28% in 2019). At the District level the proportion of population aged 65+ has increased from 19% in 2011 to 21% in 2019. The demographic structure of Whitstable is therefore becoming increasingly older.
- 3.12 In view of this, additional growth will need to be focused at Whitstable over the Local Plan period to maintain the settlement’s status within the hierarchy and to prevent negative socio-demographic issues including an aging population structure and declining working age / family households. Without additional housing growth at Whitstable over the plan period the demographic trends observed over much of the past decade are expected to continue. This has the potential to result in the settlement having a gradual spiral of socioeconomic decline over the Plan period. Additional growth at Whitstable will also provide both direct and indirect localised job creation, GVA and consumer spending during both the construction and operation phases.
- 3.13 Additionally, the allocation requires 10% of the total number of dwellings to be older persons accommodation, which could include bungalows or purpose-built accommodation. Given the ageing population in the area, specialist elderly persons accommodation will allow existing residents to move out of their over-sized homes and into new smaller and suitable accommodation, thus allowing for the recycling on family housing for those most in need of it. Older residents will also be able to stay locally and in close proximity to their existing networks. This shows that the development can cater for the needs of the wider population.
- 3.14 Given the above, it is demonstrable that in order to achieve a balanced approach to growth that secures a range of economic, social and environmental benefits across the District, significant additional allocations will need to be made at Whitstable as part of the Plan.

- 3.15 This position is supported through the paragraphs 5.3.4 and 6.1.7 of the Sustainability Appraisal Report, which sets out the spatial strategy has a secondary focus within the Whitstable Urban Areas, and this preferred option would have significant positive effects on housing, and employment and economic effects, including enhancing the viability and vitality of existing businesses.
- 3.16 The Sustainability Appraisal recognises that the supply of brownfield land in the District is limited. Therefore, such growth at Whitstable, which is driven by the delivery on new infrastructure and employment land, will need to include urban extensions on greenfield sites that have the capacity to accommodate meaningful growth, green infrastructure and importantly a range of services and facilities on site. Such sites would also provide greater opportunities to accommodate the specific housing needs of Whitstable, which the Council’s Housing Need Assessment (“HNA”) advises is for 3-bedroom homes (paragraph E.16), noting that brownfield sites are likely to be more suitable for higher density development and therefore smaller 1- and 2-bedroom units.
- 3.17 In this context, the land promoted by HLM at Brooklands Farm, Whitstable represents a wholly logical urban extension to the settlement that could accommodate approximately 1,400 dwellings, including a significant proportion of 3-bedroom family homes, substantial green infrastructure, inclusive of a primary school and local centres that include community facilities, and employment uses.
- 3.18 Overall, delivering appropriate levels of growth at the coastal settlements would:
- a. Maintain and strengthen the District’s longstanding settlement hierarchy, through growth that is focused on the three key settlements of Canterbury City, Whitstable and Herne Bay.
 - b. Support and unlock the District’s economic growth potential, particularly culture-led and University based potential at Canterbury City and Whitstable.
 - c. Deliver Herne Bay regeneration priorities and address pockets of regeneration through the District.
 - d. Help to deliver local transport infrastructure, including an upgrade to the A28 road, a Park and Ride at Whitstable and other public transport and active travel measures through a mixture of CIL and other developer contributions.
 - e. Deliver improved biodiversity and open space and new and improved community infrastructure throughout the District.
- 3.19 As such, the growth in Whitstable and the development strategy for the District is strongly supported.

Policy SS4 – Movement and Transportation Strategy for the District

- 3.20 Part (1) and (2) of the Policy seek to deliver sustainable transport infrastructure to shift to low-carbon and active travel journeys, including use of new bus-led transport services. Part (3) requires improvements to connectivity and public realm at the coastal towns, including provision of a park and bus facility, and new A299 access at Whitstable. This requirement for new strategic infrastructure is supported by HLM in principle, which will encourage modal shift, alleviate existing journey reliability issues and helps to unlock growth and development in the area, without putting undue pressure on the existing local highway networks.
- 3.21 Linked to this however, Policy W4 requires the delivery of highways and transport improvements, such as the completion of the Crab & Winkle Way. Further discussion on this can be found elsewhere within these representations, but we would welcome further engagement with the Council to understand what they envisage

for these schemes, along with the benefits and costings in each case, and the extent to which any impacts from the development at Brooklands Farm relates to them.

Policy SS5 – Infrastructure Strategy for the District

- 3.22 We strongly support the need to deliver appropriate infrastructure alongside development. Historically, there has been underinvestment in local infrastructure in Whitstable.
- 3.23 We support the Council’s position insofar that Whitstable has excellent connectivity and links, such as via rail and the A299, which Policy W4 has the potential opportunity to further enhance.
- 3.24 It is evident that strategic sites, such as Brooklands Farm (Policy W4) provide the best opportunities to facilitate infrastructure via CIL, delivering a strategic objective of the Plan. Brooklands Farm can deliver major improvements to the area, with the opportunity to include a 2FE primary and SEND school, new local centres and employment uses, public open space, improved sports facilities, drainage measures, allotments, and the potential opportunity for the east-bound highways slips to the A299 Thanet Way.

Strategic Objectives

- 3.25 The Plan sets out the District’s strategic objectives. As a draft allocation, Policy W4 clearly helps to fulfil these objectives, however for the avoidance of doubt this is outlined below:

Create a thriving economy with a wide range of jobs to support increased prosperity for all throughout the district.

- a. The Site allocation (Policy W4) will provide on-site commercial / employment space, with opportunity for a variety of jobs, as well as a significant and long-term investment into the construction process supporting a substantial number of jobs.
- b. It will of course also provide a substantial number and range of housing types to ensure skilled people have high quality homes to live in.

Support the growth and development of our universities as a centre of innovation and learning excellence, which stimulates business start-ups and generates skilled jobs.

- a. The Site will include on-site 2FE primary and SEND school provision and contributions towards secondary school improvements, ensuring children receive a high quality education and are best placed to succeed should they decide to pursue courses at universities in the District.

Capitalise on our rich and distinctive heritage and culture, enhancing character, sense of place and quality of life, supporting sustainable tourism and the local economy for our residents, visitors and businesses.

- a. Development will be attractive and desirable, through the design code and consultation processes, ensuring development meets the needs of the community. The Site does not include any designated heritage assets and will be sensitively designed in regard to the impacts upon the setting of heritage assets off-site.
- b. The emerging concepts for the Site feature substantial areas of green infrastructure and landscaping, and the strategy is underpinned by enhancing the existing green corridor that runs through the centre of the Site. Large areas of public open space and landscaping can be used for recreation, play, community growing, provide active travel routes, and protects habitats and enhances biodiversity, therefore creating an attractive and healthy place to live.

Create accessible vibrant town centres, improving safety and access for all, and high quality open spaces, enabling residents, visitors and businesses to shop, stay and enjoy their leisure time.

- a. The development proposals will provide public realm and local shopping facilities, as well as significant open space for recreation and leisure. The occupants of Policy W4 will generate significant additional spend in the local area, supporting the vitality of Whitstable town centre.
- b. The Site will deliver significant areas of public open space and community areas, which can be used for recreation and leisure.

Reduce the causes of climate change and adapt to ensure that all district developments enable the carbon emissions reduction and increased resilience as quickly as possible.

- a. The Site will be designed, subject to urban design constraints, from the outset with masterplanning that maximises solar gain, ensuring designs to take advantage of natural daylight and careful consideration of building orientation, fenestration and alignment. Mixed-uses and green infrastructure provision through landscaping to provide active and passive heating and cooling effects, which will also create pleasant relaxation and community spaces.
- b. The Site will have a fabric-first approach to ensure construction of housing has substantial insulation, minimising air permeability and thermal bridging, and optimising the U-Values of the external fabric to enable a reduction in energy loss and minimise heating requirements. Coupled with modern technology for heating, such as Air Source Heat Pumps, this will ensure all buildings comply with Building Regulations and Future Homes Standards at the time, which at present stipulate a 75% reduction in carbon emissions than baseline. Decarbonisation of the National Grid is planned by Government, which will create further emissions reductions. Carbon sequestering strategies can also potentially be implemented across the Site to contribute to offsetting any remaining carbon emissions, which will also enhance Biodiversity Net Gain.
- c. To encourage the uptake of Electric Vehicles, all homes will have fast-smart Electric Vehicle Charging Points to comply with Building Regulations.
- d. Construction and operational waste will be managed, and the proportion sent to landfill minimised through efficient design, waste segregation, reuse, and recycling – secured through a Waste Management Plan. Sustainably sourced and managed materials will be used where possible and appropriate.
- e. The quality of groundwater and / or water courses will be protected from contaminated run-off.
- f. The Travel Plan will aim to embed sustainable travel practices into the heart of the new community and to promote and encourage travel by sustainable means of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport, for all journey purposes. A modal shift will promote a sustainable move from travel by private car to other modes and encourage a sustainable lifestyle.
- g. Measures will be introduced to restrict water consumption to comply with Building Regulations. This can be achieved using water efficient fittings, such as delayed inlet valves and flow restrictors, and water efficient appliances, such as low flush WC's. In addition, rainwater butts fitted to appropriate roof gutter downpipes will be installed at all properties to allow for watering of garden plants without a hosepipe. To prevent easy hosepipe use, an external tap will not be fitted.
- h. The site wide strategy for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will reduce the volume and rate of surface water run-off from the Site. The drainage strategy will employ the most appropriate storage methods, such as ponds, to attenuate flow, remove pollutants, and ensure that runoff to existing watercourses is restricted

according to the existing hydrology of the Site. All SuDS elements will be sized to accommodate increased flows from potential future climate change. SuDS features will be designed to accommodate for multifunctional spaces, which, where appropriate, will allow for POS and Biodiversity Net Gain.

- i. To assist with minimising journeys, high speed broadband will be provided to each dwelling. This will enable residents to access online shopping/delivery services and allow them to work from home.

Protect and enhance our rich environment and valued landscapes, creating a network of spaces, protecting and enhancing green gaps between settlements, supporting nature’s recovery and biodiversity and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

- a. Green Infrastructure will be provided to enhance and maintain the natural environment, whilst contributing towards Biodiversity Net Gain.
- b. The Site is not located within a designated Green Gap.
- c. Open space will be provided on-site, promoting healthy environments for play and exercise.

Create a transport network with a focus on district-wide public transport and low-carbon travel to improve air quality and people’s health while ensuring excellent access to city and town centres on foot, cycle and by public transport.

- a. The development of the Site will be highly sustainable through close proximity to a variety of existing services, and the inclusion of new on-site facilities, including opportunities to extend / divert the existing bus routes in the area or provide a new service. Pedestrian and cycle routes can be enhanced, if demonstrated to be necessary, and suitable connections will be delivered through the Site, thus enhancing sustainable transport measures.

Take advantage of and improve our links to and from London and the Continent, while creating a transport network which enables most residents, particularly those in the urban areas, to access their day to day needs locally through healthy, environmentally friendly journeys.

- a. The development of the Site will be highly sustainable through close proximity to a variety of existing services, and the inclusion of new on-site facilities. Pedestrian and cycle routes can be enhanced, where evidence shows it is necessary, and suitable connections will be delivered through the Site, thus enhancing sustainable transport measures.
- b. As discussed in more detail below (as in at paragraph 5.32-5.36) the scheme benefits from multiple access points and there is exiting highway capacity headroom in the network to facilitate delivery of the Site, which can be further enhanced through localised junctions improvements. The provision of the new east bound slip roads to the A299 to the southern end of the Site, would have a significant strategic benefit enhancing movement, trip distribution and reducing the pressure on several junctions for the wider Whitstable urban area, but it should be noted the Site is not predicated on the east bound slips coming forward.

Positively exploit the delivery of infrastructure needed to support growth to maximise the benefits for existing residents and businesses while ensuring critical infrastructure is delivered at the right time to support development.

- a. Development will contribute towards the delivery of both on-site and off-site infrastructure via planning obligations. New schools (2FE Primary and SEND), open space and recreational facilities, shops and road infrastructure (East bound A299 slips) can be delivered through the development, where evidenced by the Council.

Provide affordable high-quality housing for people at every stage in their lives, as part of mixed, sustainable communities.

- a. The allocation of the Site through Policy W4 has the capacity to deliver approximately 1,400 dwellings, with a mixed range of dwelling types, sizes and tenure, as required within the Policy.
- b. Affordable housing and older persons accommodation will be provided at a policy complaint level.
- c. The Site is located on the edge of a highly sustainable settlement and, subject to evidence showing it is required, can deliver a range of on-site services and facilities, ensuring the creation of a new sustainable community.

Ensure housing is of high-quality design, is low carbon and energy and water efficient as part of healthy communities with easy access to community facilities and open space.

- a. The allocation of the Site through Policy W4 can deliver high-quality, low carbon, and energy and water efficient housing in line with the relevant policies, providing the evidence is demonstrated for its requirement. Community facilities and public open space is also a significant benefit of the housing allocation noting almost half of the Site area will be given over to green infrastructure.

Support the sustainable growth of our rural communities through the provision of affordable housing, community facilities and public transport infrastructure while taking advantage of opportunities to protect and grow the rural economy.

- a. The development would provide a full affordable housing provision in accordance with the policy.
- b. By locating large scale strategic growth at the key towns and cities, this ensures that proportionate growth can be located at lower tier rural settlements.

4. Whitstable

Policy W3 – Whitstable Urban Area

- 4.1 Policy W3 sets out the overarching Policy position for the Whitstable urban area. HLM support the general need to make effective use of brownfield land in sustainable locations.
- 4.2 Part 9 of the Policy stipulates – sports and leisure facilities, including those provided alongside education provision, will be protected and enhanced. New sports facilities at the Brooklands Farm strategic site will be co-located, where appropriate, to create an accessible sports hub which will be sustainably designed to combat climate change and provide social benefits.
- 4.3 HLM accept this in principle, however, as raised in the previous representations, consider that there would be logic in locating the sports facility within a reasonable proximity that would complement the existing Chestfield Cricket Club sports facility to the north-eastern part of the Site, which is an existing and well-ran Club and is well supported by the local community. Centrally and collectively locating the new sports facilities in the scheme with links to the existing facilities would improve the sports facilities in this location, catering for and being in an accessible location for existing residents and offers the most holistic approach to sports provision.

5. Land at Brooklands Farm

Policy W4 - Land at Brooklands Farm

- 5.1 Brooklands Farm is located on the edge of Whitstable, one of the most sustainable settlements in the District. The allocation of the Site can provide significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the area, including a spectrum of housing to create a balanced and sustainable community; infrastructure delivery including new schools, employment land, community facilities, transport connections / improvements and highways slips; new public open space; and green and blue infrastructure.
- 5.2 HLM fully support the strategy in that the south of Whitstable can support the strategic growth to meet the identified needs.
- 5.3 As set out above, the Council recognise the importance of promoting and progressing its coastal towns, and the EDTS identifies the significant potential Whitstable has to unlock and stimulate economic growth. Development and housing allocation can therefore make significant steps towards facilitating economic growth.
- 5.4 Furthermore, Whitstable's growth has been meaningfully reduced in recent times, compared to Canterbury and Herne Bay. This is due to the low levels of planned growth in the settlement within previous Local Plans. As a result, the demographic structure of Whitstable is becoming increasing older and socio-demographic issues increase. Therefore, the draft Local Plan has an opportunity to rebalance this trend and to maintain the settlement's status as an urban area within the hierarchy.
- 5.5 Given the above, it is demonstrable that in order to achieve a balanced approach to growth that secures a range of economic, social and environmental benefits across the District, significant additional allocations will need to be made at Whitstable as part of any Plan.
- 5.6 Furthermore, urban extensions on greenfield sites are required at Whitstable that have the capacity to accommodate meaningful growth, green infrastructure and importantly a range of services and facilities on site. These sites would also provide greater opportunities to accommodate the specific housing needs of Whitstable, noting that brownfield sites are likely to be more suitable for higher density development and therefore smaller 1 and 2 bedroom units.
- 5.7 Taking this into account, the land being promoted by HLM at Brooklands Farm, Whitstable represents a wholly logical urban extension to the settlement that could accommodate approximately 1,400 dwellings, including a significant proportion of 3 bedroom family homes, substantial green infrastructure, a 2FE primary school, SEND and local centres that include community facilities.
- 5.8 We therefore wholly support Policy W4 in general through the allocation for a comprehensive mixed use development, but make the following key observations, which we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with officers in due course prior to the publication of the pre-submission version of the Local Plan.
- 5.9 Policy W4 includes a concept / work in progress masterplan, with indicative locations for open space, access, cycle and pedestrian connections, green corridors, community hub and development parcels. HLM do not have any in-principle issues with the concept plan at this stage, but it is important to note that a masterplan is being prepared by Define having regard to the Site constraints and opportunities, and as such, the concept masterplan contained in the emerging Local Plan will need to be kept under review and potentially refined as the strategy evolves. HLM welcome the opportunity to discuss the content of the masterplan with the Council in due course.

- 5.10 The Council’s Housing Trajectory, as set out in the Development Topic Paper (2024) indicates the anticipated first year of completions for the development would be in 2029/30, with delivery phased over an 11-year period (Table G.1: Strategic and Housing Allocations). HLM agree with the Council’s anticipated trajectory, but HLM is preparing a planning application to be submitted alongside the Regulation 19 consultation (expected January 2025) in order to support the Plan through Examination and demonstrate the developability of Brooklands Farm. As such, the anticipated trajectory could in fact be earlier.
- 5.11 For context, HLM is preparing a planning application to be submitted alongside the Regulation 19 consultation (expected January 2025) in order to support the Plan through Examination and demonstrate the developability of Brooklands Farm. As such, the following trajectory is assumed to align with the anticipated first year of completions:
- a. Submission of Outline planning application - Late 2024;
 - b. Determination of Outline planning application – Early 2026 on adoption of the Local Plan;
 - c. Submission of the first Reserved Matters Application and discharge of pre-commencement conditions – Mid-late 2026;
 - d. Preliminary works on Site – Early-Mid 2027;
 - e. First housing completions –2028.

1. Development Mix

1(b) – Non-residential development

- 5.12 Parts 1(b)(i) and (iv) of Policy W4 set out the requirements for the community uses / local centre facilities across the Site, with a community hub on the western part of the Site as a focal area for the community, to contain – a local centre comprising commercial (understood to be for smaller operators that you would typically find on a high-street, such as a hairdressers, vets, café, etc.), shopping and community uses, business space and mobility hub; and the eastern side to provide local shopping and community uses to meet local needs.
- 5.13 HLM fully supports the requirement to provide community facilities and local centres to ensure a sustainable development with high quality facilities in close proximity to their homes and in order to establish placemaking and a strong sense of place for the future residents. However, these must be located appropriately to maximise their associated benefits, avoid competition and ensure functionality and vitality for its lifetime.
- 5.14 The policy is considered to be overly prescriptive regarding the location and type of development within the hubs and the quantum in each. At the current time the masterplan provided within the policy is indicative, whereas the policy is rather rigid. HLM consider the policy should be amended to allow flexibility and choice subject to the ongoing masterplanning and Design Review Panel process. The policy places the majority of commercial, which at 880sqm would be a small parade of units, and retail use (the proposed 350sqm is equivalent to a Sainsburys Local) on the western side, however we are conscious this location would be in close proximity to the existing facilities (Tesco supermarket and petrol station, garden centre and employment uses) on the western side of South Street and those accessed off Millstrood Road. Future residents living at the west of Brooklands Farm are likely to use the existing and established retail and commercial facilities in the area, especially around Tesco, rather than the new facilities in a western hub, due to the scale and options available. Even if they did use any new facilities provided in

the western hub, clear competition for patronage would arise. This could unnecessarily create challenges around the viability and vitality of the existing and proposed facilities.

- 5.15 Alternatively, it would be beneficial from a community and placemaking perspective to locate the majority of the commercial units and local convenience store on the eastern side. Such a location on the eastern side would be logical given that it can also be used by existing residents of Chestfield, given the lack of retail and commercial units at Chestfield Road. It would also help to reduce the number of trips made by residents at Chestfield to use Tesco to meet their basic day to day shopping needs. However, commercial units and a local convenience store located in an eastern hub would still be fully accessible to residents on the western side of Brooklands Farm, including those who can tie in trips to these whilst walking or cycling to the school drop off and pick up.
- 5.16 Part 1 (b)(ii) of the Policy W4, requires the provision of an on-site two form entry (FE) primary school, which would be 3ha in size. Conversely, Policy C7 (Land to the North of Hollow Lane) and Policy C12 (Land north of the University of Kent) each require the delivery of a new two FE primary school to be 2.05ha in size. We understand from discussions with Officers that the size requirement in Policy W4 is incorrect and will be corrected to 2.05ha, which we support.

1(c) – Open Space

- 5.17 Part 1 (c) of the Policy requires the delivery of open space, and the outdoor sports provision should include a new cricket pitch and facilities for Chestfield Cricket Club. HLM has been in discussions with the Cricket Club and there is no requirement from the Cricket Club, nor within the Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report (2020) or Sport England’s representations for a cricket ground. HLM would be pleased to work with the Council to deliver alternative outdoor sports facilities in accordance with the identified needs and upgraded facilities at the Chestfield Cricket Club. Accordingly, the policy wording should be amended to reflect this.

2. Design and Layout

2(c) – Focused location of development

- 5.18 The Policy stipulates that the development to the south of South Street should be focused to the north and wrap-around areas of higher topography.
- 5.19 The evolving concept follows the basis of the Policy requirements, generally, however we feel it is premature for the Council to conclude that development should ‘wrap-around’ the areas of higher topography until such time that detailed landscape and visual analysis has been undertaken (at the application stage). As such, HLM consider the Policy would benefit from flexibility to state “...development should be focused to the north and **generally** around areas of higher topography”.

2(d) - Mixed use community hubs including a “Changing Places” facility

- 5.20 Policy W4 Part 2(d) requires new mixed use community hubs that are easily accessible and to form focal points of the development in a high street or village / town square setting to include flexible outdoor space for community events. HLM is satisfied with this design requirement. However, the Policy also requires a “Changing Places” facility and accessible kitchen to be provided as part of the community facilities. HLM support the sentiment, however, consider the wording to be too prescriptive for a local plan and that any facilities available within the community uses should be informed by consultation with the local community as part of the engagement and design process. As such, HLM suggest reference to the Changing Places facility and accessible kitchen should be removed.

3. Landscape and Green Infrastructure

3(b) – Provide 20% biodiversity net gain

- 5.21 Policy W4, alongside Policy SS1 (Environmental strategy for the district) (5) requires development across the District to incorporate measures to deliver a minimum 20% biodiversity net gain, which shall be in line with Policy DS21 (Supporting biodiversity recovery).
- 5.22 HLM understand that this is a political aspiration of the Authority, and we support the principle and sentiment of Policy W4, SS1 and DS21 seeking to improve biodiversity improvements in developments and creating sustainable and more efficient places is acknowledged. However, this far exceeds the 10% requirement of the Environment Act 2021, and as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the requirement of the Policy is not considered to be justified. This requirement became mandatory for all major planning applications from 12th February 2024 and for small sites from 2nd April 2024.
- 5.23 Paragraph 006 of the Planning Practice Guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain (ID: 74-006-20240214) provides recent guidance and states that “*Plan-makers should not seek a higher percentage than the statutory objective of 10% biodiversity net gain, either on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development unless justified. To justify such policies they will need to be evidenced including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development*”. In proposing the 10% requirement the Government considered evidence and discounted proposing, amongst other things, a 20% net gain requirement and in view of this, compelling local evidence must therefore be presented to justify a 20% net gain.
- 5.24 It is therefore clear from the Government’s position that plans should not increase the requirement and only in certain circumstances will this be possible, which shows that a high level of evidence is necessary to justify the policy.
- 5.25 The Natural Environment and Open Space Topic Paper (2024) appraises the draft Local Plan’s aim at supporting biodiversity recovery and explains how the 20% net gain requirement will be implemented. At paragraph 9.14 of the Topic Paper, the Council highlight that its key strategies and visions demonstrate how valuable the natural environment is on nature recovery and also to health and wellbeing, and in view of public petition for the Council to declare a biodiversity emergency, and so, the Council believe the target of 20% is required and deliverable.
- 5.26 The Topic Paper considers the overage of net gain against the mandatory requirements in the context of land extent and investment, however, there is a lack of compelling evidence demonstrating the local need for a higher percentage other than it being a key vision of the Council.
- 5.27 The Council’s Viability Study considers the 20% biodiversity net gain requirement as relatively modest compared to the delivering 10% only. However, this is not site specific and therefore makes a number of general assumptions. Whilst many sites will be able to deliver 20% where the level of biodiversity is low at the baseline, others will require the developers to either purchase off-site credits or reduce the development area (and its capacity) where the baseline is high, which inevitably impacts viability.
- 5.28 The Study also cannot account for changing costs for off-site credits. In many cases this ranges from £30-£50,000 per unit and may increase if capacity is not available locally.
- 5.29 As such, further clarity and justification is required through the submission Plan and the Council will need to demonstrate the delivery of a 20% net gain would be viable. If the Council cannot provide local evidence, then the Council should revert back to the 10% as required by the Environment Act 2021.

- 5.30 If the Policy is found to be sound and the 20% Net Gain requirement is maintained, then the Policy should be reworded to state that the statutory 10% is fixed, but the additional 10% can be reduced where the viability and capacity of development is impacted.

3(c) – Golden Plover

- 5.31 Policy W4 requires the green and blue infrastructure strategy to assess the site’s potential to be functionally linked land for golden plover, in line with Policy DS17, which includes provisions to determine whether there is the potential for a site to be functionally linked land with an SPA, SAC and/or RAMSAR and assess the potential value of the site.
- 5.32 This is borne from the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA), which supports the draft Local Plan, which indicated the Site had the potential of being functionally linked land for golden plover.
- 5.33 Functionally linked land describes areas outside of a designated site which are considered to be important for qualifying species/habitats for which SPA, SAC or RAMSAR sites have been designated. These habitats are frequently used by SPA species and support the functionality and integrity of the designated sites for these features.
- 5.34 Land at Brooklands Farm is located approximately 2km from Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay Ramsar site, SPA and SSSI. Its SPA designation is a result of the habitats supporting a nationally important wintering population of golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) alongside a nationally important breeding population of little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) and an internationally important population of overwintering turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*).
- 5.35 To assess the importance of the Site for the local bird population, FPCR Environment and Design Consultants has undertaken two years of breeding bird and wintering bird surveys across the Site between 2021 and 2023. The breeding bird surveys followed best practice guidance at the time of survey, comprising monthly visits from April to June 2022 and again in 2023. The breeding bird surveys were supplemented by Nightingale surveys, two in May 2022 and monthly from April to June 2023. During the surveys, an assemblage of birds typical of the habitats present was recorded; restricted mainly to arable and pasture and no nightingale were recorded.
- 5.36 This survey work has already enabled an assessment of the Site’s potential to provide functionally linked habitat for golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*). The wintering bird surveys comprised a combination of vantage point surveys and transects, with two visits every month between November 2021 and March 2022, and again between November 2022 and March 2023. During the wintering bird surveys, the only sighting of golden plover was on 22nd January 2022, where 42 birds were recorded flying over the site, but did not land. No other SPA qualifying species were recorded during the surveys. Small numbers of curlew (*Numenius Arquata*) and snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), two non-SPA-qualifying species were recorded sporadically using the Site. Due to the close proximity of the Site to the SPA, if the habitats on Site were functionally linked, a regular use by wading bird species and in higher numbers would be expected. No other wading birds were recorded during the surveys.
- 5.37 Therefore, the Site is not considered to support the functionality of the nearby Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA and is therefore not considered to be functionally linked land for golden plover, curlew or snipe.
- 5.38 It is therefore demonstrated that requirements to assess the Site’s potential for golden plover has been undertaken and the policy wording is now superfluous. It is recommended that the Part 3(c) is omitted accordingly, but HLM can provide further clarity as requested by the Council.

3(i) – Incorporation of the existing structure of the landscape into the masterplan – including hedgerows

- 5.39 The Policy requires existing hedgerows to be incorporated into the masterplan proposals to enhance the historic field pattern and strengthen habitat connectivity, and to use the native hedgerow planting for boundary treatment to soften impact of development.
- 5.40 The early scheme strategies indicate that there would be limited loss of hedgerow in places to allow for the construction of, for example, vehicular access into the Site. HLM therefore, consider the wording is too prescriptive. The Framework allows for compensation and a net gain in hedgerow units will be required in all respects. As such, HLM request that flexibility is incorporated into the Policy to include “where possible”.

3(m) – Conserve or enhance the PRoW network

- 5.41 The Policy requires the existing PRoW network across the Site to be conserved or enhanced to ensure key views are protected. It is inevitable and unavoidable that through the development of the Site, there will be changes to views across the Site, as a result of the built development proposed. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to be completed as part of the planning application process to identify the key views and the extent to which they will be impacted and mitigated through the design.
- 5.42 HLM consider the Policy would benefit from amendment to ensure the design of the development is not fettered, but will endeavour to provide a sensitive response to the key views within the PRoW network or to mitigate the visual and landscape impacts.

4. Access and Transportation

4a(i) Walking and cycling upgrades to CW21 and CW38; 4a(iii) Walking and cycling connections to Site 12 in Policy CF1; and 4a(v) Walking and cycling connections to Herne Bay via A2990 Thanet Way and downgrading Molehill Road to a green lane

- 5.43 Parts 4a(i), 4a(iii) and 4a(v) all require upgrades to walking and cycle connections to the CW21 and CW38, Site 12 in Policy CF1 and to Herne Bay respectively. These policy requirements are very broad in description at this stage, without detailed justification. HLM would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to scope out the nature of any upgrades and what is appropriate having regard to relevant tests. Given the likely on-going nature of such discussions, the policy could refer to upgrades as detailed in a separate documents, such as the Council’s IDP.

4(a)(ii) New and improved cycle connection to Whitstable via the Crab & Winkle Way

- 5.44 HLM fully support the requirements to deliver appropriate enhancements to cycle and pedestrian improvement networks noting the potential associated benefits for existing and future residents. HLM will be delivering improvements to the Crab & Winkle Way and other walking and cycling routes in Whitstable, and have identified potential works at the following:
- a. Millstrood / South Street – dropped kerb and tactile paving
 - b. Junction at Millstrood / Bellevue – removal of guard rails and dropped kerb
 - c. Virginia Road / South Street - dropped kerb
 - d. Ham Shades Lane – dropped kerb and tactile paving
 - e. Church Street – dropped kerb and tactile paving

- f. Clover Rise / Grasmere Road – dropped kerb
- g. Richmond Road – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- h. Ridgeway PRow – CIL funded upgrade
- i. 143 Chestfield Road – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- j. Radfall Recreational Ground – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- k. Chestfield / Molehill – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- l. Chestfield Barn – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- m. 66 Chestfield Road – dropped kerb and tactile paving
- n. Chestfield & Swalecliffe Station – new station cycle parking bays

5.45 However, HLM do not consider it is necessary to provide improvements in locations further away from the Site, where there is no robust justification. Specifically in reference to the pedestrian and cycle bridge from Old Bridge Road to Teynham Road and then off road to the harbour. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan indicates an estimated cost of £3.5m (Council’s estimate) to complete the Crab and Winkle Way.

5.46 Brookbanks, on behalf of HLM, has reviewed the requirements for the Bridge (Appendix 2) and do not consider it to provide any material benefits, as there are alternative railway crossing points in close proximity that provide a similar travel time (approximate 1-minute longer) to the harbour to that which would be provided through the erection of the Bridge.

5.47 Furthermore, any residents from the development making cycling and walking trips along the Crab & Winkle Way will have reached destinations (such as Tesco, the secondary schools, rail stations, places of work) prior to reaching and needing to travel over the railway line, with few users needing to make trips to the town centre or to the harbour for their every day to day needs. As such, any travels beyond the railway line would likely be for leisure and infrequent, which is not considered to be proportionate to justify a new bridge or new off-road cycle routes.

5.48 As such, HLM do not consider the new pedestrian and cycle bridge is required to make the development of Brooklands Farm acceptable.

5.49 HLM would welcome discussions with the Council regarding the deliverability of the proposed bridge, or alternative sustainable infrastructure, to which the proposed development could contribute towards.

5. Phasing and delivery

5a – New access from the A299

5.50 HLM support the principle of delivering new access from the A299.

5.51 However, the Council’s estimates show that the cost of the slip roads would be in the region of £20 million, a significant contribution for any scheme.

5.52 HLM understand that the slip roads are expected to be funded through proportionate contributions made from other developments in the local area, including Policy W5 (Land south of Thanet Way – see Part 4(e)). However, the planning application for Policy W5 (Land South of Old Thanet Way (ref. CA/23/00379)) has a resolution to grant permission and there is no reference within the Committee Report that a contribution would be made.

5.53 As such, it does not appear that other developments providing these contributions and HLM is concerned that the funding will rest solely in their hands. HLM would welcome the opportunity to discuss the Council's approach to any wider funding streams.

5(b) - The local centre to be delivered prior to occupation of 25% of the total dwellings. The eastern local centre shall be provided prior to the occupation of 80% of the total dwellings.

5.54 Notwithstanding the comments earlier regarding the requirements of the western and eastern community / local centre facilities, the allocation concept masterplan envisages two community hubs that are likely to be delivered in two separate phases. The Policy has been worded to require the western local centre to be delivered first. However, HLM would request flexibility in the wording, as it is too early to determine which side should be delivered first although initial thoughts are that for placemaking purposes it would be preferable to deliver development on the eastern side of the parcel as an extension to Chestfield firstly and then move to the western side thereafter. In this scenario, this would mean the eastern local centre would be delivered first.

5.55 Noting the above, the policy wording should simply refer to the 'first' hub or similar.

5(d) – The primary school site and the SEND school site must be transferred prior to the occupation of 100 dwellings

5.56 HLM is satisfied with the principle of transferring the land for the primary school and SEND school at 'nil consideration' and fulfilling KCC's General Transfer Terms. However, HLM's previous representations, we identified there is capacity in the existing primary schools in the area and this is supported by the recent planning application at Land South of Old Thanet Way (ref. CA/23/00379), with the KCC Development Contributions consultation response confirming there is currently sufficient capacity in the Primary School Planning Group to accommodate the development.

5.57 As such, providing the schools at an early stage is not considered to be necessary at this stage but plainly this is not something that remains static. HLM therefore consider it would be beneficial to include flexibility, with a tailpiece stating the land should be transferred prior to the occupation of 100 dwellings or "...other alternative trigger agreed with the Local Planning Authority" to ensure an appropriate trigger can be agreed at the application stage.

6. Sustainability Appraisal

- 6.1 Appendix C of the Development Topic Paper (2024) – Summary of SLAA and SA Outcomes sets out the same scoring against the Sustainability Appraisal (“SA”) Outcomes from the 2022 version.
- 6.2 Appendix G of the SA (Appraisal of Site Allocations and Alternatives) at Appendix A provides summaries to the consultation responses, including a response from the Council in response to HLM’s revised scoring, as set out below:
- 6.3 Having regard to Table 2.3 (Call for Sites appraisal matrix) of the Sustainability Appraisal of Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2022), HLM make the following observations:

SAO 3: Biodiversity

- 6.4 The Site contains Ancient Woodland (an internationally / designated site) and Convict’s Wood a Local Wildlife Site and Priority Habitat Inventory Site, parts of the southern section of the Site is within 400m of the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI, and there is also likely to be some protected species on the Site, although further surveys are required. Noting that the methodology does not account for mitigation or policy requirements, and it is purely based on proximity to designated areas, then it is factual therefore that the Site scores a significant negative in this regard. For the overall objective score, if any score a significant negative effect, it scores significant negative effect overall. HLM therefore accept the SA scoring on this basis.
- 6.5 However, emerging Policies do require mitigation and an offset from the Ancient Woodland and priority habitats, as well as protection and enhancements for habitats, species and biodiversity, whilst the Plan also seeks a biodiversity net gain of 20%.
- 6.6 HLM is preparing a masterplan and landscape strategy that aims to achieve a significant net gain of biodiversity on Site, above the statutory requirement of 10%, enhanced tree coverage and appropriate buffers to the Ancient Woodland, whilst a full range of ecological surveys have been / are being undertaken.
- 6.7 As such, the development is unlikely to result in significant negative effects as a whole.

SAO 4: Geology

- 6.8 Part of the Site is within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and in accordance with the methodology, therefore, would result in significant negative effects.
- 6.9 The recognised minerals on Site are solely along and beneath the Swalecliffe Brook, Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site, which makes it unviable to obtain. Therefore, in practice, the effect is likely to be limited.

SAO 5: Landscape

- 6.10 The Council’s Appendix G Site Assessment document sets out that *“Comments noted. Due to the size of the site, character of the area and existing views, development would have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding open countryside”*. The assessment does not compare to other sites and does not consider mitigation measures. The SA of the SLAA does not mark based on how the site compares to other sites. It is a factual assessment of the Site without considering other sites or mitigation measures.
- 6.11 As set out in our previous representations, the Local Landscape Designations Review and Recommendations (2021) confirms the Site is within the Coastal Hinterland (C2: Chestfield Farmland Landscape Character Area) and Blean

Woods Area of High Landscape Value. The Report recommends the boundary to be redrawn southwards along the New Thanet Way (A299), noting that the area (i.e. the Site) to the north of the New Thanet Way is *“of value as the rural setting to Whitstable, but is open arable farmland and does not have the same qualities as setting to the Blean Woods”*. As such, the Site would no longer be part of the designation.

- 6.12 HLM consider that whilst there would be some change, the impact on the landscape is not considered to be significant beyond the unavoidable loss of greenfield land, noting it will no longer be a locally designated landscape and that parts of the District are covered by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and therefore has a low environmental value.
- 6.13 HLM can confirm that a full landscape visual impact assessment will be produced and submitted with a future planning application, which will feed into the evolving scheme to ensure landscape led approach to ensure an integrated and attractive environment is delivered.
- 6.14 As such HLM consider the landscape effects should be revised to minor negative effect.

SAO 6: Water

- 6.15 The SLAA does not take account of mitigation such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), and the methodology states that a significant negative effect will be scored if the Site is within 10m of a waterbody. The Site contains a water course running through the centre of the Site and therefore would be a significant negative effect for the purposes of the SA. This scoring is accepted, as no mitigation is considered.
- 6.16 However, the development would be required to be offset from the waterbody, which is only located in a limited part of the Site, and SuDS features (including new attenuation basins) provided and therefore is unlikely to result in significant negative effects and could in fact protect and enhance ground and surface water quality and promoting the sustainable and efficient use of water resources.

SAO 7: Flood Zone

- 6.17 It is agreed that the Site does contain some small areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the Swalecliffe Brook. Therefore, based on the methodology it is accepted that the Site scores significant negative effect.
- 6.18 The area at risk of flooding is limited and the development can easily be located outside of this to ensure residents are safe from the flood risk areas and in respect of good design. These areas can be retained as public open space and mitigation and SuDS will also be delivered to make improvements both on and off-site.
- 6.19 HLM, is undertaking work to assess the drainage strategy and foul water strategy, alongside Southern Water, for the Site and potential drainage improvements that could benefit the wider Whitstable area. As set out in the Concept Strategy (Appendix 1) and the Flooding and Drainage Technical Note (Appendix 3), HLM consider there are a number of potential on site improvements that would benefit the drainage network, including:
- a. Flood storage – surface water can be controlled and managed through SuDS, including attenuation basins and burns within public open space, slowing the flow of rainwater into the Swalecliffe Brook;
 - b. On-plot source control through harvesting – initiatives such as water butts installed on every property, and rain gardens, permeable paving and tree planting will be included where appropriate, which will help to capture and store rainwater at source;

- c. Control – if it is considered to be appropriate, telemetry infrastructure can be implemented in the pumping stations to store and hold back foul water, which is generated from the Brooklands Farm development, during storm events until after the storm has passed and capacity becomes available in the network and the Waste Water Treatment Works.

6.20 As such, the effect is unlikely to be significant.

SAO9: Heritage

6.21 In regard to heritage, to score significant negative effects, the methodology at Table 2.3 of the Sustainability Appraisal of Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2022) states development would – have an adverse effect on a World Heritage Site and its buffer zone; and / or a nationally designated heritage asset or their setting; and / or significant adverse effect on a non-designated heritage asset.

6.22 The methodology does not provide for cases where development has a less than adverse effect on nationally designated heritage assets or their settings.

6.23 There are no heritage assets on the Site. There are adjacent historic assets, and a suitable design response will be required. Brooklands Cottage and Farm (Grade II) to the south of the Site, has limited visual connection due to screening afforded by existing agricultural buildings in the immediate vicinity. In respect of Rayham Farm and Barn (Grade II), to the north, there are limited views to and from the Site due to existing tall, hedged boundaries. As per the draft Policy W4 (2)(f), the Masterplan recommends a landscape buffer and keeping views open and set back from boundaries to avoid conflict with these heritage assets. The Chestfield Conservation Area lies to the east of the Site, but has limited intervisibility with the Site and there would be no material impacts on archaeology or heritage assets. As such, this clearly would not result in significant negative effects.

6.24 The Council indicate that the assessment does not take into account of the layout, design or any mitigation, and given there are several listed buildings and Conservation Areas in close proximity the development ‘could’ have adverse impacts on the assets and / or their setting.

6.25 As there is no alternative threshold for heritage asset, the assessment criteria is overzealous in this context, but HLM accept the scoring on the basis of the methodology. HLM however consider that the initial concept masterplanning demonstrates any issues regarding impacts on heritage assets can be addressed through offsets, as shown in the Concept Strategy Masterplan found within Appendix 1.

SAO 13: Transport

6.26 The evidence base for the draft Local Plan confirms that the allocation of Brooklands Farm and other strategic sites in Whitstable can deliver opportunities for strategic level benefits, such as, new and improved connectivity with the A299, a new Park and Bus service for Whitstable, and enhancements and extension to the Crab and Winkle Way walking / cycling route. This position and attribution of significance is supported, and further consideration is given to these off-site highways, cycle and pedestrian elsewhere in these representations.

6.27 The SA scores mixed impacts on transport – with significant positive effects on access to public transport and significant negative effects on the highway network.

6.28 The Council’s commentary in Appendix G sets out that due to the large-scale development, there is ‘potential’ for new residents to be car dependent, so there will be significant negative effects on the highway network and

therefore the scoring remains appropriate. The Council do recognise the delivery of the A299 east bound slips and their wider benefits when selecting the Site as a draft allocation.

- 6.29 HLM has prepared a public transport strategy, which focuses on the close proximity to the existing rail services at Whitstable and Chestfield stations, the proximity to existing bus stops, and existing walking and cycling network to these and other facilities and services. The pedestrian and cycle connections will be enhanced through use of dropped kerbs, tactile paving, road crossing improvements, extensions to the cycle routes and new cycle parking facilities at Chestfield Station, which will encourage residents to use alternative and low-carbon modes of travel. Further, HLM is also considering opportunities to re-route and divert the existing bus service (Route 5) or providing a new hopper bus service into and through the Site to connect the proposed mobility hub, new local facilities and onto Whitstable, Canterbury and the wider area.
- 6.30 There will be additional movements on the network, however, significant positive junction improvements will be made and the development has good access to sustainable alternatives, which alleviates the highways capacity at other junctions within the Whitstable area and improves journey reliability.
- 6.31 The scale of harm is considered to be adverse rather than significant adverse, and therefore the score for highway network improves to minor negative effect, therefore increasing the overall score to minor positive effect.

SAO14: Sustainable communities

- 6.32 Mixed impacts are found for sustainable communities, with significant positive effects on provision / loss of facilities, minor positive effects on access to GP / open space and access to education, and minor negative effects on neighbouring uses (A299).
- 6.33 The Council's Appendix G 'Site Assessment' response sets out the assessment reflects pre-mitigation scoring, so policy requirements in relation to school delivery on the Site is not taken into account, and the inclusion of Primary and SEND schools, despite helping to meet the District's needs, were not taken into consideration within the SA of the SLAA.
- 6.34 The minor positive effects score reflects the access to existing education facilities. The mixed score has been given in the SA of the SLAA (2022) due to the potential conflict with neighbouring uses, in this case the A299. The Council consider mitigation is required to some extent and no mitigation is taken into consideration in the methodology. The A299 abuts the southern part of the Site and it is acknowledged there could be effects, such as noise, that requires mitigation. Noise monitoring is currently underway and a mitigation strategy will be developed. At present this is assumed to comprise a mixture of an offset buffer to the highway, planting and, if required, physical measures such as gentle bunding or acoustic fencing. Overall, noise levels will achieve relevant British Standards.
- 6.35 The Council state that even if access to education was changed to significant positive, it would not change the negative effects in another sub-category, and whilst it is not an uncommon relationship between development and a road, on the basis that there is a neighbouring use in close proximity to the Site, the Site must score minor negative effects, in line with the methodology set out in Table 2.3 of the SA of SLAA (2022).

Summary

- 6.36 In light of this revised scoring for landscape and transport, HLM request the Council review these matters and align the scoring with HLM's assessment. In this scenario the Site would score better, reinforcing its appropriateness as an allocation in the draft Local Plan.

6.37 HLM acknowledge that mitigation cannot be considered through the scoring, however, as demonstrated above, with mitigation, the impacts of each SA objective will be significantly reduced.

7. Other Relevant Policy

DS21 – Supporting Biodiversity Recovery

- 7.1 HLM support the sentiment regarding Policy DS21, which requires development of over 300 dwellings to provide a minimum tree coverage of 20%. However, the policy wording is currently unclear and lacks supporting evidence. We note the Canterbury Tree and Woodland Strategy Consultation document lacks a definitive stance on this requirement, moreover the viability appraisal does not show evidence to show this is feasible. One essential area missing clarity is how the tree coverage is calculated, such as whether existing trees can be included and at what point the tree canopy is measured.
- 7.2 HLM is proposing to accommodate the 20% canopy cover requirement within the Brooklands Farm masterplan but welcome discussions with the Council on exactly how the tree coverage is calculated.

8. Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 8.1 The Draft IDP (February 2024) sets out the following specifically in respect of the Brooklands Farm development, as being development that can support or is dependent on the delivery:
- a. new eastbound only on/off slip at A299 Thanet Way (CCC estimated cost - £20m);
 - b. realignment of South Street;
 - c. opportunity for a new bus route and mobility hub;
 - d. extension of the Crab & Winkle Way walking and cycling route to Whitstable Harbour (CCC estimated cost - £3.5m);
 - e. new shelters and seating (CCC estimated cost - £70k), and improved fencing and anti-trespass measures (CCC estimated cost - £20k) at Chestfield and Swalecliffe Station;
 - f. provision of a new 2FE primary school (CCC estimated cost - £10.62m);
 - g. provision of a new SEND school (CCC estimated cost - £5.858m); and
 - h. provision of open space, with new cricket pitch and facilities for Chestfield Cricket Club.
- 8.2 The proposed development at Brooklands Farm provides the opportunity to deliver significant infrastructure, which is a key objective of the Council's strategy, which will mitigate the impacts arising from residents at the new development. However, some of the infrastructure is strategic in nature, especially the eastbound only on/off slip at A299 and SEND school, which is meeting a wider existing or projected sub-regional need. Whilst HLM can provide land towards these, as well as contributions these will need to be cognisant of the impacts arising from the proposed development in order to be justified in planning.
- 8.3 The estimated costs for the infrastructure works identified above are noted, however, HLM are carrying out a detailed review of the costs through the design process.
- 8.4 Elsewhere in these representations, HLM make specific points regarding the specific requirements for the new cricket pitch and the bridge over the railway line to extend the Crab & Winkle Way and route to the harbour. HLM welcome further opportunities to discuss the items listed above and within the IDP with the Council, such as the evidence base and how the Council anticipate the associated infrastructure to be designed, financed and delivered; the developments the impacts are arising from that need to be mitigated; and how these other developments in Whitstable will contribute to the financing of the infrastructure, as this is not apparent from Table 9.4 of the IDP.

9. Responses to matters raised in the previous consultation

- 9.1 The Consultation and Engagement Topic Paper (February 2024) sets out how the draft Local Plan has responded to the representations raised in earlier consultations, through for example, the strengthening of climate change policies. The Paper confirms that many comments regarding the Whitstable strategic policy relate to the need to retain green gaps and avoid urban sprawl, the need to improve community infrastructure (such as health care) and transport impacts, with walking and cycling improvements being imperative.
- 9.2 As confirmed in the Topic Paper, Brooklands Farm will deliver a significant amount of infrastructure for the local area, including green open space, cycle and footway enhancements, new schools, and flexible community hubs that can be used for health care facilities.
- 9.3 Appendix 3.2.3 Chapter 3: Whitstable of the Consultation and Engagement Topic Paper (February 2024) sets out the list of representations raised by representors to Policy W5 (now Policy W4). In this section of the representations we respond directly to these points, to address any concerns raised by local residents, interest groups or organisations.

Loss of agricultural land

- 9.4 The representations raise issues regarding the purported loss of best and most versatile land, as parts of the site are currently farmed for cereal crops and is therefore apparently likely to be Grade 3a rather than 3b.
- 9.5 No specific assessment has been undertaken at this stage to determine whether the Site contains best and most versatile land. Irrespective, footnote 62 of the Framework confirms that “the availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in the Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development”.
- 9.6 The Council has identified a clear and significant housing need in the District, with evidence showing that there is insufficient land in built up areas to accommodate the needs. Therefore, it is inevitable that greenfield, including agricultural, land will be required to meet those needs in full. The loss of agricultural land is of course only one consideration when determining whether a site can deliver sustainable development. Having regard to other designations and constraints across the local authority area, the Council has rightly confirmed that Brooklands Farm is one of the most suitable sites for development, a position HLM fully agree with.

The Site is outside of the settlement boundary of Whitstable

- 9.7 The Site is located outside of the settlement boundary for the purposes of the adopted Plan. However, when considering opportunities to accommodate the local area’s housing need, the evidence base overwhelmingly indicates there is insufficient land in the built-up area. The Council has discounted options early in the plan making process that do not involve development on greenfield land, a position we wholly agree with having regard to the significant and adverse social and economic impacts that would arise.

Impacts on Landscape Character

- 9.8 The Council’s evidence base include an assessment of the Landscape Character Areas, a Designation Review and Recommendations as well as Green Gaps and Local Spaces Reviews. The Site does not fall within a designated Green Gap and the findings conclude that the boundary of the C2: Chestfield Farmland Landscape Character Area and Blean Woods Area of High Landscape Value should be redrawn southwards along the New Thanet Way (A299) as “it does not have the same qualities as the setting to the Blean Woods”.

- 9.9 As outlined in earlier representation, HLM support the change to the landscape boundary extent in this location which we consider is wholly justified.
- 9.10 Noting the above, Brooklands Farm would be located in an undesignated landscape of comparatively lower environmental value, in accordance with Chapter 15 of the Framework.
- 9.11 Furthermore, the development would be locally responsive and include significant green infrastructure in order to mitigate the impact on the landscape.

Adverse impact on biodiversity

- 9.12 The Kent Wildlife Trust raise concerns with the threat of increased recreational pressure from the proposed development on the Blean Woodland Complex, a designated Local Wildlife Site and SSSI.
- 9.13 The proposed development provides opportunities for a substantial amount of green infrastructure and landscaping, with amenity and recreational open space delivered on Site to limit visits to the Blean Woodland Complex. The emerging concept strategy within Appendix 1 demonstrates the emerging green infrastructure strategy.
- 9.14 All existing landscape features, such as hedgerows, trees, woodland and watercourses will be retained, protected and enhanced, with new broadleaved woodland, trees, hedgerows, growing spaces, areas of parkland, conservation grassland, swales and wetland habitats introduced. As such, the new public open spaces will deliver a variety of habitat areas that protect existing and enhance site wide habitats, biodiversity and wildlife connectivity.
- 9.15 HLM will therefore ensure protected species and habitats on the Site are enhanced and protected, and a Biodiversity Net Gain will be achieved in line with the relevant policies.

Ancient Woodland

- 9.16 There is a section of the Site running through its centre, which is designated as Ancient Woodland.
- 9.17 The Framework, at paragraph 186(c) indicates that planning permission should be refused where development would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as Ancient Woodland.
- 9.18 The area of Ancient Woodland and would become a green corridor running through the heart of the development. The proposed development would be designed in such a way that sufficient separation buffering, in accordance with guidance, would be retained around the Ancient Woodland to avoid any damage to the trees itself or its roots, whilst enhancements would be made to prevent recreation within it. There would be no further crossings over the Swalecliffe Brook and existing bridges would be used and enhanced where necessary.
- 9.19 As such, any impacts on the Ancient Woodland would be limited.

Drainage and flooding

- 9.20 Local residents have raised concerns with regard to flooding, primarily sewage and foul drainage.
- 9.21 The Site does contain areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, which are limited to parts adjacent to the Swalecliffe Brook. The proposed development would be located entirely Flood Zone 1, with the areas at risk of flooding to be contain green infrastructure. The Site also contains areas at risk of surface water flooding, however, this will be considered

fully through the masterplan, including management and controls at source, including on-plot water butts, and rain gardens, permeable paving and tree planting, where appropriate.

- 9.22 Appendix 1 has been produced by Define (Masterplanner), with input from Brookbanks (who are providing specialist engineering services), setting out amongst other things, the water infrastructure approach.
- 9.23 Brookbanks has held discussions with the LLFA and Southern Water on a drainage strategy for the project.
- 9.24 The report confirms that during heavy rainfall the existing wastewater treatment works becomes overwhelmed with the increase levels of surface water resulting in capacity issues in the network.
- 9.25 It is understood that Southern Water has committed to investing circa. £25 million into upgrading the Swalecliffe Wastewater Treatment Works, to replace the storm overflow pipe and reduce the amount of surface water entering the system.
- 9.26 The proposed development has the opportunity to deliver real improvements to these existing issues, including:
- a. Assisting the operational capacity of the wastewater treatment centre by reducing time to discharge untreated effluent;
 - b. installing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to control and manage attenuation at source;
 - c. Creating attenuation basis and burns on-site to capture more storm / rainwater, slowing the flow to the Swalecliffe Brook;
 - d. Rainwater harvesting to capture and store rainwater on residential properties; and
 - e. Opportunities to hold back foul water during storm events through the use of pumping stations with telemetry, which allows to capacity to be available in the network.
- 9.27 Implementation of these features will be established through the planning application process and as the design of the scheme evolves in discussion with the LLFA and Southern Water.
- 9.28 As such, there is not considered to be a harmful impact in respect of flood risk.

Transport / movement

- 9.29 Transport modelling has been carried out on behalf of HLM and in discussions with KCC Highways to ensure there would be no significant or severe impacts on the local network through the provision of appropriate mitigation, as required.
- 9.30 The proposed development of Brooklands Farm would include the delivery new on/off east bound slips to the Thanet bound carriageway of the A299, which will have positive benefits to the existing road network in the wider Whitstable area, as confirmed within the Council's evidence base. The Brooklands Farm site is unique in its ability to offer this strategic infrastructure improvement.
- 9.31 HLM is supportive of the Council's approach to public transport infrastructure improvements and is committed to facilitating this with delivering diversions / extensions to the existing bus routes, on-site pedestrian and cycle connections, and upgrades to existing off-site routes for a variety of users.

- 9.32 In this regard, the accompanying Concept Strategy (Appendix 1) has been produced by Define, with input from Brookbanks' highways team.
- 9.33 The report shows how well located Brooklands Farm is to a range of everyday local amenities, including schools, medical centres, food stores, and other existing sustainable transport options, such as train and bus services. The report also details the range of potential improvements that can be delivered as part of the proposed development, including connections to active travel modes (such as enhancing walking, cycling and public transport), a mobility hub, as well as making part of South Street local access only.
- 9.34 Given the above, the Brooklands Farm site will take up and create opportunities to maximise the use of sustainable transport modes, in accordance with national policy.

Community infrastructure

- 9.35 The representations raise concerns with the strain on the existing infrastructure and services in Whitstable.
- 9.36 Brooklands Farm, like any site, will need to ensure that it suitably mitigates any potential impacts on existing infrastructure and services. However, due to the strategic scale of the Site, it has the ability to provide an extensive range of services and facilities on-site, in addition to off-site financial contributions.
- 9.37 Noting the above, Policy W4 requires the delivery of an extensive array of infrastructure, much of which is on-site, including:
- a. commercial (minimum 880m²) and local shopping and community uses (minimum 350m²);
 - b. business space (minimum 4,000m²), including flexible working space;
 - c. a mobility hub to serve residents and businesses;
 - d. a 2 Form Entry Primary school, with early years provision; and
 - e. a SEND school.
- 9.38 HLM would like to engage and work with the community, parish council, planning authority and other stakeholders through the masterplanning process in order to develop ideas of what local facilities and amenities could form part of the neighbourhood centres that reflect local views and market demands.

10. Summary

- 10.1 HLM support the allocation of Policy W4 within the draft Local Plan and would welcome further discussions with the Council and the local community to discuss the final details of allocation prior to the submission of the Regulation 19 pre-submission Plan.



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