

Policy DS13 – Sustainable Design

1. These representations have been prepared by Nexus Planning (ID: WR213), on behalf of Hallam Land Management (“HLM”), who 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 Canterbury District Local Plan (2042/43)(March 2026) (Regulation 19). 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. The Site was included as a draft allocation (Policy W4) in the previous draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2040, which was consulted upon in 2024, as well as the Canterbury District Local Plan Focused Consultation, which took place in September – October 2025.
3. An outline planning application of the Site was submitted for the Site and validated on 2 May 2025 (ref. CA/25/00779) aligning with Policy W4. The application is currently under consideration with responses from technical consultees and third parties being considered at the time of writing. The application demonstrates that the strategic site is deliverable and viable, and that the allocation is sound.
4. The description of development is as follows and the proposed development aligns with the emerging draft allocation policy:

“Outline application with all matters reserved apart from principal access from South Street and Chestfield Road for a mixed use development of up to 1350 dwellings, including older persons housing (Classes C2 and C3); a mixed use Local Centre comprising of retail, commercial, office, health, community uses and a mobility hub (Use Classes E and F); a primary school and a SEND school, business/employment space (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g)); open space and associated works including landscaping, drainage infrastructure, engineering operations, open space, roads, pedestrian and cycle routes; and new A299 east off / east on slip roads to the south of Chestfield.”
5. Draft Policy W4 continues to allocate 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.
6. The Site 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 Strategic Development Area (“SDA”), integral to future growth at Whitstable and neighbouring coastal towns.
7. HLM supports the Plan’s continued draft allocation of the SDA, as outlined within Policy W4; as well as the development spatial strategy (Policy SS3) 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.
8. HLM continues to support the draft allocation (Policy W4) and it is evident that the Council consider the Site to be a key and integral part of the emerging spatial, development (Policy SS3), economic (Policy SS4), movement and transportation (Policy SS5) and infrastructure (Policy SS6) strategies for growth in the District.

Approach to the Representations

9. The Framework states, at paragraph 36, 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."
10. These representations respond to key parts of the Consultation, highlighting the specific policy, paragraph, or supporting evidence document being addressed. HLM has also submitted standalone representations on Policies SS2, W4, DS15 and DS25.

Design Code and Masterplan

11. Policy SS2(8) requires new communities of more than 100 homes to require a masterplan, prepared in collaboration with the community and be subject to a design review during the design process; and new communities of more than 300 homes, or multi-phased residential developments will also be required to produce a design code, which will be secured through condition and developed through effective community engagement and need to reflect community aspirations for development in the local area.
12. This is also reflected in Policy DS13(2) regarding sustainable design.
13. Paragraphs 131, 134 and 137 of the Framework state:

131 - "The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

134 - Design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents. Landowners and developers may contribute to these exercises, but may also choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop. Whoever prepares them, all guides and codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.

137 - Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should, where applicable, provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy, and should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot."

14. HLM acknowledge the sentiment behind the requirement of the Policies to prepare a design code and masterplan to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach to development, however the Policy, in requiring the Design Code to 'reflect' community aspirations for development in the area we are concerned that the policy does not include the inbuilt flexibility you would typically expect for the views of the community to be taken into account and adopted where appropriate, but equally discounted where there is sound planning reasons to do so.
15. Additionally, given the scale of development and anticipated phasing, it is expected to be constructed over many years, and national policy, design requirements, and housing standards are likely to change. Therefore, a site-wide strategy on day one may not be suitable for development coming forward at the latter end of the site build-out (potentially 10 years later).
16. The outline planning application for Land at Brooklands Farm was subject to community engagement with local residents (2-day public consultation on the 12/13 September 2024) and several Parish Council meetings, to which the Site has now been identified within the Emerging Chestfield Neighbourhood Plan as per Policy W4 of the Draft Canterbury Local Plan. Furthermore, a Design Review Panel was completed on 22 August 2024 with third party independent experts who reviewed and endorse the approach being taken. Further public consultation will undertaken by the housebuilders prior to the submission of reserved matters application.
17. HLM submitted a comprehensive Design and Access Statement with the application, which includes built form character areas; open space character areas; and phasing; and has been informed by the public consultation and Design Review Panel undertaken ahead of the submission of the application.
18. The work carried out so far by HLM would accord with draft Policies SS2(8) and DS13, however, as a 'design code' strategy, HLM has agreed to prepare a Design Principles and Placemaking Document which will set out overarching and key aspects of design for the Site, which will be submitted and agreed with the LPA. Following this, it is to be agreed that Design Codes will be dealt with on a phase by phase / parcel by parcel basis, which will be in accordance with the Design Principles and Placemaking Document, reflecting relevant character area and in accordance with draft Policies SS2(8) and DS13. This approach has been agreed with the Development Management Case Officer.

Proposed Changes

19. **Modification:** Criteria 2 of Policy DS13 should be amended, as follows to introduce flexibility:

DS13 (2). A design code, **or similar document**, will be required for proposals for more than 300 dwellings, or multi-phased residential proposals. They should be developed through effective community engagement and **have regard to** community aspirations for development in the area and any existing relevant design codes and/or guides including those for nearby sites. Design Codes, **or similar**, will be subject to design review and their implementation will be secured through planning condition.