



PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared by Sellwood Planning
JULY 2012

CHILMINGTON GREEN CONTACTS/THE TEAM

CONSORTIUM



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CHILMINGTON GREEN

PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared on behalf of

**Hodson Developments Ltd
Malcolm Jarvis Homes Ltd
Pentland Homes Ltd
Ward Homes**

July 2012

Regulated by RICS

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1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on support of the outline planning application for the comprehensive mixed use development of a new community at Chilmington Green, Ashford. The planning application has been prepared on behalf of the four applicants (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicants’),

Hodson Developments Ltd
 Malcolm Jarvis Homes Ltd
 Pentland Homes Ltd and
 Ward Homes (a Trading name of BDW Trading Ltd).

- 1.2 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the application forms, Development Specification, Parameter Plans, Environmental Statement and other supporting material.

- 1.3 Outline planning permission is sought for

“Outline application for a Comprehensive Mixed Use Development comprising:

- up to 5,750 residential units, in a mix of sizes, types and tenures;
- up to 10,000 m² (gross external floorspace) of Class B1 use;
- up to 9,000 m² (gross external floorspace) of Class A1 to A5 uses;
- Education (including a secondary school of up to 8 ha and up to four primary schools of up to 2.1 ha each);
- Community Uses (class D1) up to 5,000 m² (gross external floorspace);
- Leisure Uses (class D2) up to 5,000 m² (gross external floorspace);
- Provision of local recycling facilities;
- Provision of areas of formal and informal open space;

- **Installation of appropriate utilities infrastructure as required to serve the development, including flood attenuation works, SUDS, water supply and wastewater infrastructure, gas supply, electricity supply (including substations), telecommunications infrastructure and renewable energy infrastructure;**
 - **Transport infrastructure, including provision of three accesses on to the A28, an access on to Coulter Road / Cuckoo Lane, other connections on to the local road network, a Park and Ride with a maximum of 600 parking spaces and a network of internal roads, footpaths and cycle routes;**
 - **New planting and landscaping, both within the Proposed Development and on its boundaries, and ecological enhancement works; and**
 - **Associated groundworks**
- **where appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for future approval and where access is reserved for future approval with the exception of the three accesses on to the A28 and the access on to Coulter Road / Cuckoo Lane”.**

1.4 The only matters which are not reserved for future approval are the three accesses on to the A28 and the access on to Coulter Road / Cuckoo Lane. As a consequence, five detailed plans of these four accesses form part of the submission. The seven Parameter Plans also define a series of Master Plan components (such as development footprint, the distribution of land uses, density, building heights, access and open space) to which any subsequent reserved matters applications must comply in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order (2010) and Circular 01/06.

1.5 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to set out the case for the Chilmington Green proposal. It therefore

- describes the context for the development of the site
- describes the proposal

- explains the planning policy context for the assessment of the application
- evaluates the proposed development in terms of
 - o the principle of development
 - o scheme assessment
 - o infrastructure and other development requirements
 - o future management
- explains how the proposal will be implemented, including phasing, the infrastructure contributions associated with the S106 agreement and the associated community benefits.

1.6 The documents which form the planning application are

- the planning application form
- land ownership and agricultural holdings certificates
- the seven Parameter Plans
- the five Access Plans
- the Development Specification.

1.7 The planning application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents and studies. The Environmental Statement (ES) is required by law to accompany the application in order to assess its likely significant environmental effects. The Development Specification and Parameter Plans form the basis of the EIA. However, the ES does not form part of the application but is submitted in support of it.

1.8 The supporting documentation comprises

- (a) the Planning Statement
- (b) Design and Access Statement
- (c) the Environmental Statement (and Non Technical Summary)
- (d) the Transportation Assessment and Travel Plan
- (e) the Retail Assessment

- (f) the Employment and Economic Benefits Report
- (g) the Flood Risk Assessment
- (h) the Sustainability Statement
- (i) the Utilities Appraisal Summary
- (j) the Statement of Community Involvement.

- 1.9 Whilst not forming part of the application for which approval is sought, these supporting documents are submitted with the aim of assisting the Local Planning Authority, other bodies and local people in both understanding and evaluating the proposals. If appropriate, parts of these documents can be linked via planning condition to the permission.
- 1.10 The Parameter Plan approach provides a robust planning framework compliant with current planning and environmental legislation for the application and the basis of the assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development to be reported in the Environmental Statement.
- 1.11 Such an approach whilst providing sufficient certainty at the outline application stage, will also allow for some flexibility (through limits of deviation) for the future reserved matters, the detailed design and development which will be controlled through the planning conditions expected to be imposed on the Outline Planning Permission requiring the details of the scale and layout of the development to be fully in accordance with the approved Parameter Plans. Such conditions are also expected to secure and deliver any proposed mitigation arising from the EIA process.

2.0 The Application Site

- 2.1 The application site occupies an area of 415.29 hectares to the south west of Ashford. The site is bounded by the urban edge of Ashford to the north (Singleton and Stanhope), the A28 to the west, Long Length to the east and farmland to the south. The village of Shadoxhurst is located approximately 900 metres south of the application boundary.
- 2.2 Within the overall application site there are some parcels of land which are excluded from the proposed development. These areas are controlled by third parties and are mostly occupied as private houses with gardens. The planning application makes no proposals regarding the future of these land parcels.
- 2.3 The land which forms the planning application site is predominantly agricultural land plus a limited number of buildings which are controlled by the applicants. The site is crossed by a number of public highways, public rights of way (including the Greensand Way) and utility services (including overhead and underground power lines). The watershed between the catchments of the River Stour and the River Beult runs through the site. The topography of the site consists of sloping land falling from the Singleton / Stanhope ridge to the north, flattening into more level land in the central and southern portions of the site. There is a mosaic of fields largely bounded by hedgerows and interspersed with copses and small woodlands.
- 2.4 The site contains no Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments. There are several listed buildings within the parcels excluded from the application site. The site contains five areas of woodland which are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory and a number of hedgerows which are deemed to be of historic importance under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

3.0 **Consultation**

- 3.1 The planning application proposal consists of the Development Specification, seven Parameter Plans and five Access Plans which, together, support the indicative Master Plan set out in the Design and Access Statement. The Master Plan is the product of several years research and consultation with a wide range of people and organisations. The Statement of Community Involvement explains in detail the consultation process that has been undertaken. However, in summary, it has comprised

Table of Consultation Events

	DATE	EVENT
1.	September 2008	AAP Stakeholder Workshop 1
2.	February 2009	AAP Stakeholder Workshop 2
3.	July 2010	AAP Stakeholder Workshop 3
4.	September 2010	Design Champion Workshop
5.	September 2010	Young People's Workshop
6.	September 2010	Community Planning Weekend and AAP Options Exhibition
7.	October 2010	Report Back Presentation and Exhibition
8.	October 2010	Presentation to Landowners and Developers Group (Ashford's Future)
9.	November 2010	Presentation to ABC Councillors
10.	February 2011	Presentation to ABC Councillors
11.	March 2011	Presentation to ABC Councillors
12.	April 2011	Kent 20/20 Exhibition
13.	July 2011	Newsletter and launch of website
14.	September 2011	Pre-Application Exhibition
15.	October 2011	Presentation to ABC Councillors
16.	November 2011	AAP Stakeholder Workshop 3
17.	December 2011	South East Regional Design Review

- 3.2 It is proposed that the consultation process will continue following the submission of the planning application. Following the grant of outline planning permission, further consultation will occur when the phase master plans and individual reserved matters are submitted.
- 3.3 A dialogue has taken place in respect of the evolving scheme over a period of several years with a range of stakeholders. In addition to discussions with Ashford Borough Council, the scheme has been formulated in close liaison with such bodies as Natural England, the Environment Agency, Kent County Council (as highway and education authority), Southern Water and the Kent Wildlife Trust. Regular liaison meetings have also taken place with the Chilmington Green Community Group which is made up of local Parish and District Members and local people.

4.0 **Policy Context**

- 4.1 This chapter assesses the planning policy context for the proposed development.
- 4.2 Whilst not a policy, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the legislative principles governing the consideration of planning applications.

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise ”.

- 4.3 The Courts are the arbiters of what constitutes a material consideration. However, they must be genuine planning considerations which means they must be related to the development and the use of land. They must also fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned. The Courts have held that the Governments’ statements of planning policy are material considerations which must be taken into account, where relevant, in decisions on planning applications.
- 4.4 Emerging policies, in the form of draft policy statements and guidance, can be regarded as material considerations, depending on the context. Their existence may indicate that a relevant policy is under review; and the circumstances which have led to that review may need to be taken into account.
- 4.5 It is for this reason that this Planning Policy chapter considers both current and emerging policy.
- 4.6 Planning policy guidance applicable to the Chilmington Green development is currently provided at three levels. There are national guidance (the National Planning Policy Framework), regional guidance (the South East Plan) and local guidance (the

Ashford Core Strategy and SPDs). In addition, the Chilmington Green AAP pre submission document was placed on consultation in April 2012. All levels of guidance have been reflected in the formulation of the Chilmington Green proposal and, where appropriate, are referred to in this Planning Statement. Since the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was only published on the 27th March 2012, the scheme was informed by the guidance in the, now abolished, PPGs and PPSs. However, the next subsection analyses the NPPF and shows the high degree of compliance between the Chilmington Green proposals and the guidance in the NPPF.

- 4.7 At the time of submitting this application, the South East Plan remains part of the statutory development plan. However the Government is proposing to revoke this plan under the provisions of the Localism Act. Whilst part of this Planning Statement analyses the policies of the South East Plan, it is likely that it will have been revoked by the time the application is determined.
- 4.8 In these circumstances, the application would only be assessed against the NPPF and local policies.

National Guidance

- 4.9 **National Planning Policy Framework** : The NPPF confirms (para. 6) that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This is expressed in terms of having three dimensions, the economic, the social and the environmental. All planning applications need to be assessed against each dimension to ensure that they will deliver sustainable development.
- 4.10 Paragraph 12 confirms the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision taking and how proposals in accord with an up to date Local Plan should be approved unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is one of those material considerations. This is carried forward into paragraph 14 which sets out the '**presumption in favour of sustainable development**', where

applications which accord with the development plan should be ‘**approved without delay**’.

4.11 Having set the overarching approach of the NPPF, paragraph 17 specifies twelve core land use planning principles which should underpin both plan making and decision taking. These are

- be genuinely plan led
- be creative in finding ways to enhance and improve places
- to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development and meet objectively identified development needs
- to always seek to secure a high quality of design and amenity
- to take account of the different roles and characters of different areas, promoting vitality of urban areas, protecting Green Belts, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting rural communities
- to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate
- to contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations should prefer land of a lesser environmental value
- to encourage the use of previously developed land
- to promote mixed use developments
- to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance

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- to actively manage patterns of growth to focus significant development in locations which are, or can be made, sustainable
 - to support strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing and deliver sufficient facilities and services to meet local needs
- 4.12 Having set out the overall approach and the core land use principles, paragraphs 18 to 149 of the NPPF provide more detailed guidance on the thirteen topic areas relating to the delivery of sustainable development. Paragraphs 18 to 149 provide more detailed guidance on the thirteen topic areas arising from the core principles which will assist in delivering sustainable development. Each of these topics are considered below in the context of the Chilmington Green planning application.
- 4.13 **‘Building a Strong and Competitive Economy’** : The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support economic development (para. 19). As part of this, LPAs should plan proactively to meet the needs of business in the 21st century.
- 4.14 Whilst the Ashford Core Strategy sees Chilmington Green as primarily a residentially led mixed use urban extension, it is expected to provide around 1,000 jobs servicing the new community. The Employment and Economic Benefits report demonstrates how the proposals will provide a flexible portfolio of employment, ‘A’ class, community and leisure land which will generate in excess of 1,000 jobs.
- 4.15 As a consequence, the planning application complies with the first sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.16 **Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres** : This principle seeks to recognise that town centres are the heart of their communities and requires that a sequential test is applied to planning applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan.

- 4.17 The Ashford Core Strategy seeks to promote the viability and vitality of Ashford Town Centre, but it also recognises that the urban extensions at Chilmington Green and Cheesemans Green will need to include new district centres to provide for the day to day needs of residents and workers. Since a new retail centre at Chilmington Green is recognised in the 2008 Core Strategy, there is no need to undertake a sequential test in the Retail Assessment.
- 4.18 However, it is recognised that the retail facilities at Chilmington Green should not undermine the role of Ashford Town Centre. As a consequence, it is of a size that focusses on local needs. It is for this reason that GL Hearn was instructed to prepare a Retail Assessment. This confirms that the level of retail floorspace proposed will meet local needs without threatening Ashford Town Centre.
- 4.19 As a consequence, the application complies with the second sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.20 **Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy** : This topic area is not relevant to the Chilmington Green planning application.
- 4.21 **Promoting Sustainable Transport** : The NPPF notes (para. 29) that transport has an important role in facilitating sustainable development and states that support will be given to patterns of development which promote sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.22 The Ashford Core Strategy identified Chilmington Green as a suitable site for a sustainable urban extension, linked to the provision of high quality, bus based public transport and a network of cycle and pedestrian routes. The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan accompanying the planning application set out the detail of how these sustainable transport objectives will be achieved in practice. An important element in this is the provision of a wide mix of on site services and facilities such as schools, shops, leisure and employment which allow many trips to be retained within Chilmington Green.

- 4.23 As a consequence, the application complies with the fourth sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.24 **Supporting High Quality Communication Infrastructure** : The NPPF notes (para. 42) that advanced, high quality communication infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and particularly highlights the potential of high speed broadband networks. In the course of preparing the Employment and Economic Benefits report, local Agents identified slow broadband speeds are a problem in Ashford. The Chilmington Green developers have responded to this by entering into an agreement with Openreach to provide the site with high speed broadband; not otherwise available in the Ashford area. This should make Chilmington Green an especially attractive location for businesses that are heavy broadband users.
- 4.25 As a consequence, the application complies with the fifth core land use principle in the NPPF.
- 4.26 **‘Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes’** : The primary housing objective is the need “**to boost significantly**” the supply of housing and paragraph 52 notes that this can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns. The Ashford Core Strategy undertook an assessment of the best approach to meeting its housing needs and concluded that a significant proportion of its future housing supply would be focussed at the urban extensions of Chilmington Green and Cheesemans Green. The planning application is, therefore, consistent with the Core Strategy.
- 4.27 The NPPF (para. 50) also expects new housing developments to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes with a mix of housing types and tenures. The Design and Access Statement explains how the Chilmington Green development will provide both a range of choice and high quality housing.

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- 4.28 As a consequence, the application complies with the sixth sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.29 **‘Requiring Good Design’** : The NPPF sees good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, it is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Paragraph 62 urges LPAs to put in place design review arrangements and generally refer major projects for review. The Chilmington Green proposals were assessed by South East Regional Design Review Panel in December 2011. The comments of the Panel were generally very positive and have helped influence the final form of the application.
- 4.30 As a consequence, the application complies with the seventh sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.31 **‘Promoting Healthy Communities’** : Paragraph 69 of the NPPF expects the planning system to play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. It is suggested that this can best be achieved through creating mixed use communities with safe and accessible environments as well as clear, legible pedestrian routes and high quality public spaces.
- 4.32 The Chilmington Green development will be a new mixed use community containing a range of open spaces, community facilities, shops and jobs. Paragraph 72 notes the importance of ensuring that sufficient school places are available. The Chilmington Green proposals achieve this through the provision of a new Secondary School and four Primary Schools. All of these facilities will be delivered through the S106 agreement.
- 4.33 As a consequence, the application complies with the eighth sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.

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- 4.34 **‘Protecting Green Belt land’** : The application site is not Green Belt land and no land around Ashford is Green Belt. As a consequence, this sustainable development topic area does not apply to the Chilmington Green proposals.
- 4.35 **‘Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change ‘** : Paragraph 93 advises that planning has a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, minimising climate change, providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy. Chilmington Green reflects the advice in paragraph 96 by using landform, layout, orientation, massing and landform to minimise energy consumption. It also complies with the low energy / renewable energy policies in the Core Strategy and emerging SPD.
- 4.36 With regard to flood risk, the proposals have been extensively discussed with the Environment Agency and the form of the development has been carefully designed to direct development away from areas of highest risk of flooding. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which provides detailed information on the proposals and how SUDS measures will be adopted to ensure that flood risk is not increased off site.
- 4.37 As a consequence, the application complies with the tenth sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.38 **‘Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment’** : Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 111 encourages the reuse of previously developed land. In the case of Ashford, the Core Strategy establishes that there is insufficient previously developed land to meet the required housing provision. As a consequence of this, the greenfield urban extension at Chilmington Green was selected.
- 4.39 Paragraph 118 provides advice for the determination of planning applications. The Chilmington Green development has been derived using an extensive evidence base

of surveys which has allowed the nature conservation interest of the site to be established. Where impacts are expected to occur, they are proposed to be mitigated by a range of measures which have been agreed in principle with Natural England.

- 4.40 Paragraphs 120 to 125 deal with pollution, land instability, air quality, noise and light pollution. All of these issues have been taken into account in the preparation of the Chilmington Green master plan and are addressed in the Environmental Statement.
- 4.41 As a consequence, the application complies with the eleventh sustainable development topic area in of the NPPF.
- 4.42 **‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’** : Paragraph 128 requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposed development. The Applicants have prepared a Heritage Assessment and have also done some archaeological evaluation. This has enabled the extent of the heritage assets to be identified. This has allowed the master plan to be designed to minimise the impact on these assets. Where impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed.
- 4.43 As a consequence, the application complies with the twelfth sustainable development topic area in the NPPF.
- 4.44 **Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals** : The Chilmington Green proposals do not relate to mineral bearing land, so this sustainable development topic area is not applicable to the development.
- 4.45 The conclusion to be drawn from this brief evaluation of the National Planning Policy Framework is that the Chilmington Green planning application proposals comply with all of the thirteen sustainable development topic areas which underlie the core land use principles in the guidance.

Regional Guidance

4.46 **South East Plan** : The Regional Policy applicable to Chilmington Green is contained in the South East Plan (SEP) which was published in May 2009. The SEP is based on the following six spatial planning principles

- “1. A co-ordinated approach to managing change within the region’s key settlements and their hinterlands. This will be achieved through the co-ordination of policy in nine identified sub-regions (Policy SP1).**
- 2. Focusing new development on the South East’s network of regional hubs, according to their role and function, whilst promoting their accessibility and inter-linkages between them. This will include new development in five strategic development areas (Policy SP2). (A further two SDAs where specific development opportunities exist not linked to hubs will also be pursued).**
- 3. Pursuing a continued strategy of urban focus and urban renaissance, by encouraging accessible mixed use development of the region’s network of town centres and by seeking a high quality built environment in all areas (Policy SP3).**
- 4. Spreading opportunities more evenly around the region through co-ordination of regeneration and social inclusion activity in the region’s lagging areas (Policy SP4).**
- 5. Respecting and maintaining the general pattern of the South East’s settlements and undeveloped areas, through the protection of the region’s identified Green Belts (Policy SP5).**
- 6. Supporting the vitality and character of the region’s rural areas, whilst protecting the valuable natural and historic assets of the region (policies set out in box at the end of this chapter).”.**

4.47 Ashford is located in the ‘East Kent and Ashford’ sub region (Policy SP1) and is identified as a ‘Regional Hub’ (SP2) where regional housing and economic activities

will be focussed. This policy emphasis is reflected in Policy SP3 which seeks to achieve both an urban focus and urban renaissance in the region and SP4 which identifies East Kent and Ashford as an area with extensive regeneration needs.

4.48 Policy EKA2 ‘Spatial Framework for Ashford Growth Area’ sets out how new development in Ashford will be achieved through a combination of urban intensification and new sustainable urban extensions. Particular sustainability aspects include

- more efficient use of resources
- water related demand management
- strategic planning of surface water drainage
- the timely provision of infrastructure
- a step change in sustainable design
- strategic planning of sewerage and waste water infrastructure.

4.49 Policy EKA3 ‘Amount and Distribution of Housing’ confirms that the Ashford part of the sub region will deliver 22,400 new homes between 2006 and 2026 (1120 pa) The indicative affordable housing target is 30%.

4.50 The development of Chilmington Green is entirely consistent with the RSS since it is a sustainable urban extension to the primary growth focus of Ashford and will make a major contribution to achieving housing and job growth in the town.

Local Guidance

4.51 **Core Strategy** : The statutory local policy document of relevance to Chilmington Green is the Ashford Core Strategy. This was adopted in July 2008 and relates to the period 2006 – 2021 with further guidance on the growth of the town and the urban extensions to 2031.

4.52 Policy CS1 sets out the guiding principles which flow from the Council's desire for sustainable development and high quality design. There are thirteen planning objectives.

- A. Development that respects the environmental limits that protect the high quality built and natural environment of the Borough, minimises flood risk, provides for adequate water supply, and protects water and air quality standards;
- B. The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and built heritage of the Borough;
- C. Protection for the countryside, landscape and villages from adverse impacts of growth and the promotion of strong rural communities;
- D. New places – buildings and the spaces around them – that are of high quality design, contain a mixture of uses and adaptable building types, respect the site context and create a positive and distinctive character and a strong sense of place and security;
- E. New buildings and places designed to meet challenging sustainable design and construction standards that work towards achieving zero carbon developments, including minimising the use of resources and waste, and to enhance biodiversity;
- F. The best use of previously developed land and buildings to help regenerate urban areas and the carefully phased release of green field land to make best use of a finite resource;
- G. The timely provision of community services and other local and strategic infrastructure to provide for the needs arising from development;
- H. A general balance between a growing population and the creation of jobs locally and, on large sites, a mix of residential, employment, community and other local services that together help create a well served community, capable of providing locally for many of its needs;
- I. A wider choice of easy to use forms of sustainable transport to serve developments that generate significant demand for movement;

- J. Provision of a commercial environment that is conducive to encouraging new and existing businesses;
- K. The creation of an integrated and connected network of green spaces to provide a framework for growth – helping serve the recreational needs of the community, enhancing biodiversity and providing green routes for pedestrians and cyclists;
- L. Healthy sustainable communities that put human health and well being at their heart – fostering access to amenities, healthier forms of transport, and mixed and cohesive communities designed for social interaction;
- M. Developments that are designed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

4.53 Policy CS2 provides the Borough wide strategy. The main elements of relevance to Chilmington Green are

- land for 16,770 new homes and around 16,700 new jobs will be identified in the Ashford Growth Area
- large scale growth will be located in the Ashford Growth Area and will include two major new peripheral urban extensions
- key infrastructure will need to be brought forward at the same time as the new development they serve
- the need for a broad balance between housing and job growth.

4.54 Policy CS5 ‘Ashford Urban Extensions’ provides the detailed rationale and content of the urban extensions at Chilmington Green and Cheesemans Green. The elements which apply to Chilmington Green are

- no less than 3,350 dwellings and 600 jobs by 2021 with the potential for over 7,000 dwellings and about 1,000 jobs in total
- the urban extensions should be planned and implemented in a comprehensive way that is linked to infrastructure delivery. Area Action Plans will guide the detailed planning of these areas

- the core aims are to
 - create flexibly designed, mixed use places of real character
 - to incorporate high quality and innovative building design, public spaces and landscape to create strong character areas
 - to be well related to the surrounding rural landscape
 - to be developed at a rate which is supported by the delivery of infrastructure.

- 4.55 Policy CS9 ‘Design Quality’ lists nine criteria that all development proposals must comply with to achieve a high quality design. Policy CS10 ‘Sustainable Design and Construction’ expects all major developments to incorporate sustainable design features to reduce the consumption of natural resources and help deliver the aim of zero carbon growth in Ashford.
- 4.56 Policy CS12 ‘Biodiversity and Geological Conservation’ seeks to avoid harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, and to maintain and, where practicable, enhance and expand biodiversity.
- 4.57 Policy CS13 ‘Affordable Housing’ sets a target of not less than 30% affordable housing, of which 60% shall be social rented and 40% other forms of affordable provision. CS13 ‘Range of Dwelling Types and Sizes’ aims to maintain and extend the range of dwellings to increase housing choice.
- 4.58 Policy CS15 ‘Transport’ has the objective of promoting public transport and other non car based modes of travel. In particular, this would be achieved by the early introduction of a bus based rapid transport system. The Council will also seek the early implementation of necessary highway works which would remove serious impediments to growth.
- 4.59 Policy CS16 ‘retail’ seeks to maintain the existing retail hierarchy but recognises that new retail of an appropriate scale will be provided to meet the local needs of each of the two urban extensions.

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- 4.60 Policy CS18 ‘Meeting the Community’s Needs’ states that the social and physical infrastructure needs generated by new development should be provided in accordance with standards set out in other DPDs and SPDs. Policy CS18A ‘Strategic Recreational Open Spaces’ has the objective of protecting and enhancing Victoria Park and to establish new strategic recreational open spaces, including Discovery Park. The size and boundaries of these areas of strategic open space will be established in other DPDs.
- 4.61 The Chilmington Green development has been developed with close regard to the statutory planning context set by the Core Strategy. The precise evolution of the master plan is described in the Design and Access Statement. The only area where the application proposals do not precisely accord with the Core Strategy is that 5,750 dwellings are proposed rather than the ‘potential for over 7,000’ expressed in Policy CS5. This lower figure results from the application of more recent open space, dwelling size and car parking standards adopted by ABC which would make it difficult for the site to accommodate 7,000 dwellings. The result of applying these factors is a high quality and distinctive development of 5,750 new homes.
- 4.62 **Chilmington Green and Discovery Park Area Action Plan** : In accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy, ABC commenced the preparation of this AAP in 2007. This will provide detailed policy guidance on the form and content of the Chilmington Green development. The pre submission version of the AAP was placed on public consultation in April 2012. The AAP relies on the same evidence base as this planning application and the principles of the master plan are common to both the AAP and planning application.
- 4.63 The AAP contains 22 policies and the high degree of compliance of the planning application to each of the emerging AAP policies is set out below.
- 4.64 Policy CG1 “Chilmington Green Development Principles” : This policy contains seven guiding principles which set the tone for the whole development. Each of these

principles has also led the design of the master plan and hence the application meets all of these principles.

- 4.65 Policy CG2 ‘Strategic Development Requirements’ : This policy sets out the basic development parameters of 5750 new homes, at least 1,000 jobs, focussed around a District Centre and two Local Centres. The policy also defines the built footprint. The planning application fulfils all of these requirements.

- 4.66 Policy CG3 ‘The District Centre and High Street Character Areas’ : This policy provides the broad design parameters and some key floorspace guidance for the District Centre and requires the application to be accompanied by a retail assessment. The Design and Access Statement provides extensive information on the way in which the design and layout aspiration for the District Centre will be met and the GL Hearn Retail Assessment confirms that the level of ‘A’ class floorspace is of an appropriate scale.

- 4.67 Policy CG4 ‘The Local Centres’ : This policy explains that two Local Centres will be provided in phases 3 and 4. These will meet the day to day needs of the local communities. The Parameter Plans, the Design and Access Statement and the phasing plans demonstrate how the objectives of this policy will be realised.

- 4.68 Policy CG5 ‘Chilmington Green Hamlet Character Area’ : This policy provides guidance on the form of development around the sensitive environment of Chilmington Green Hamlet. The Design and Access Statement provides information on how the Character Area will meet these policy requirements.

- 4.69 Policy CG6 ‘Southern Fringe Character Area’ : This policy provides guidance on the form of development on the southern fringe area necessary to achieve an informal, low density transition to the open countryside. The Design and Access Statement shows how this form of development will be delivered in practice.

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- 4.70 Policy CG7 ‘Discovery Park Edge Character Area’ : This policy provides guidance on how the development will achieve an attractive and seamless transition between the development edge and Discovery Park. The Design and Access Statement demonstrates how this objective can be achieved in practice.
- 4.71 Policy CG8 ‘Meeting the Recreational Needs of Chilmington Green’ : This policy requires open space to be provided in accordance with the Green Space and Water Environment SPD on a phased basis. The Open Space Parameter Plan (OPA06) shows the proposed distribution of open space to achieve the SPD requirements. Phasing is dealt with in the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.72 Policy CG9 ‘Discovery Park’ : This policy provides for the creation of a new strategic park to the east of Chilmington Green called Discovery Park. Within the park there will be a cluster of sports pitches and an indoor sports hall. The Land Use Parameter Plan (OPA02) and the Open Space Provision Parameter Plan (OPA06) show how Discovery Park forms an integral part of the master plan for Chilmington Green.
- 4.73 Policy CG10 ‘Developing a Community at Chilmington Green’ : This policy supports a community led management arrangements to help support a strong new community at Chilmington Green. The Councils’ preferred solution of a Community Development Trust is also supported by the Applicants who are currently preparing a business case to put to the Council.
- 4.74 CG11 ‘Highways and Access’ : Policy CG11 sets out the principal highway arrangements plus a requirement to assist in the funding of wider on and off site highway improvements as well as the provision of a high quality bus service. The Parameter Plans show how the site will be accessed in accordance with this policy and the Development Specification confirms that the Applicants accept the principle of off-site and on-site highway contributions and a commitment to the provision of a bus service.

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- 4.75 CG12 ‘Public Transport’ : This policy sets out the requirement that public transport services at Chilmington Green will be designed to achieve at least a 20% public transport modal share. The Transport Assessment submitted with the application shows how this will be achieved.
- 4.76 Policy CG13 ‘Cycling and Walking’ : Policy CG14 states that the development will provide a network of pedestrian, cycle and equine routes. The Access and Strategic Routes Parameter Plan (OPA05) shows how this will be achieved.
- 4.77 Policy CG14 ‘Park and Ride’ : This policy requires that land to the west of the A28 is identified for a Park and Ride facility. The Land Use Parameter Plan (OPA02) provides for a Park and Ride site to the west of the A28.
- 4.78 Policy CG15 ‘Education Provision at Chilmington Green’ : This policy requires the on site provision of one Secondary School and four Primary School. The Land Use Parameter Plan (OPA02) shows the locations of each of these schools.
- 4.79 Policy CG16 ‘Indoor Sports and Community Leisure Provision at Chilmington Green’ : This policy sets out the requirements for each of these topics in terms of an indoor sports hall in Discovery Park, leisure buildings in the District Centre and the two Local Centres plus a cricket pavilion at the Hamlet. The Development Specification confirms that these buildings will be provided and will form part of the S106 package.
- 4.80 Policy CG17 ‘Social and Community Facilities at Chilmington Green ‘ : This policy seeks a focussed provision of community facilities in the District Centre with a lesser level of provision at the Local Centres. Appropriate buildings will be provided, although their precise sizes will be determined through the S106 agreement.
- 4.81 Policy CG18 ‘Provision of Affordable Housing at Chilmington Green’ : The policy sets out a target of 30% affordable housing although the actual percentage on each

phase will be subject to a viability analysis. This broad approach is accepted by the Applicants.

- 4.82 Policy CG19 ‘Sustainable Design and Construction’ : Policy CG19 is designed to ensure that the development is zero carbon in accordance with Policy CS10 and the emerging Sustainable Design and Construction SPD. The Sustainability Statement sets out how this will be achieved in practice.

- 4.83 Policy CG20 ‘Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage’ : This policy seeks to ensure that development should avoid land in the 1 in 100 year floodplain and provide a network of SUDS. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment details the Applicants proposals.

- 4.84 Policy CG21 ‘Ecology’ : This policy requires development at Chilmington Green to avoid the loss of locally important ecological networks and semi natural habitats. The Environmental Statement and Ecological Mitigation Strategy show how this is to be achieved.

- 4.85 Policy CG22 ‘Phasing, Delivery and Implementation’ : This policy seeks the implementation of Chilmington Green in four broad phases in association with the necessary supporting infrastructure. The Design and Access Statement sets out how this will be achieved.

- 4.86 This brief analysis of the Policies in the emerging AAP shows how the planning application closely confirms to the provisions of the AAP.

- 4.87 The conclusion to be drawn from this section of the Planning Statement is that the planning application proposals for Chilmington Green will deliver a well considered and sustainable urban extension to Ashford which accords with both current and emerging planning policies at national, regional and local levels.

5.0 **Planning Policy Evaluation**

- 5.1 **The Principle of the Development** : The principle of an urban extension at Chilmington Green is accepted in Policy CS5 of the statutory Ashford Core Strategy (2008). This proposes a mixed use community of up to 7,000 dwellings with a wide range of supporting community, retail and employment uses.
- 5.2 Policy CS5 states that Chilmington Green should accommodate 3,350 homes and 600 jobs by 2021 with the potential for over 7,000 dwellings and 1,000 jobs in total. The evidence base underpinning both the planning application and the AAP has demonstrated that it would not be possible to accommodate around 7,000 new homes at Chilmington Green whilst also achieving the Core Strategy and AAP objectives of creating a place of real character, well related to the surrounding rural landscape and incorporating high quality and innovative design of buildings and public spaces. This is largely due to the adoption by ABC of new car parking and dwelling size standards and emerging open space standards which increase the amount of the site taken up by open space and car parking. In combination, these changes since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 result in lower densities. This was also reflected in the 2010 amendments to PPS3 which removed the minimum density criterion of 30 dwellings to the hectare.
- 5.3 A second factor which has led to a reduction in the size of the Chilmington Green development is the detailed assessment of the site undertaken as part of the master planning and EIA process. This has included assessments of a wide range of issues including landscape and visual impact, nature conservation, archaeology and sustainable urban drainage capacity. As a consequence of these studies, both the AAP and the planning application are proposing a development of 5,750 homes.
- 5.4 Policy CS5 also anticipates the creation of 1,000 jobs at Chilmington Green. The Employment and Economic Benefits Report prepared by Sellwood Planning and supported by the Nathaniel Lichfield Report “Chilmington Green, Economic Benefits

Report” show how more than 1,000 jobs will be created at Chilmington Green. As a consequence, the development will exceed the jobs target in Policy CS5 on the basis of a reduced number of dwellings.

- 5.5 With regard to the timing of the development, Policy CS5 refers to the completion of 3,350 dwellings and 600 jobs by 2021. The housing objective will not be achieved due to the site starting later than anticipated because of delays in the completion of the AAP and the wider recession. However, once house completions commence in 2013 / 14, they are expected to achieve annual rates similar to that assumed in the Core Strategy (250 - 300 pa). As a consequence, around 2,000 dwellings are likely to be completed by 2021. With regard to jobs, the location of the District Centre, community hub and Primary School in the first phase and the Secondary School early in the second phase, mean that job growth will be approaching, or have achieved, the desired 600 jobs in 2021.
- 5.6 **Scheme Assessment** : The master plan has been informed by both the evidence base and public consultation. The Design and Access Statement and the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment explain how the master plan has evolved. In the case of some elements, such as the locations of the District Centre and Secondary School, this has included the creation of a range of sub options which have been tested in order to derive a preferred option. The master plan has also benefitted from assessment against the policies of the emerging AAP.
- 5.7 Although the form of the master plan has been influenced by the evidence base, the submitted master plan has also been assessed by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, the Transport Assessment (TA) and the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). These documents have assessed the base line position at Chilmington Green and then considered the impacts of the development both without mitigation and with the proposed mitigation measures. It is the conclusion of the Environmental Statement (ES), the TA and the FRA that, with the introduction of suitable mitigation measures, the full proposals for development at Chilmington Green can be accommodated without unacceptable levels of impact.

5.8 **Infrastructure Requirements** : Policy CS5(d) of the Core Strategy expects the Chilmington Green development to be developed at a rate which is supported by the delivery of infrastructure. This has also been a guiding principle in the preparation of the Chilmington Green planning application.

5.9 It is accepted that a new urban extension, such as Chilmington Green, will require the creation of a new network of social and physical infrastructure both on site and off site. The on site infrastructure will include

- a District Centre containing a range of shops, community facilities and employment
- two local centres containing more modest levels of retail and community facilities, each local centre will be associated with a nearby primary school
- a Secondary School on an eight hectare site
- four Primary Schools
- a community hub containing a community hall, community meeting rooms, sports and health / social facilities
- an indoor sports hall in Discovery Park
- a range of open spaces from local areas of childrens play to the strategic Discovery Park and allotments
- new areas of habitat and habitat enhancement
- a new high quality bus service both within the site and onward to the town centre
- a new sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS)
- a new foul drainage system
- a new utilities infrastructure
- a network of new and enhanced vehicular routes, cycleways and footpaths
- new landscaping both within and on the edge of the site.

5.10 It is recognised that the full Chilmington Green development will have some impacts which will be wider than the site itself; particularly in terms of transportation. In

order to minimise the number of external car trips, the Chilmington Green development provides

- a wide mix of on site uses, thus allowing many trips to be internalised
- a good network of footpaths and cycleways both within the site and via connections to Ashford as a whole. By giving residents a real opportunity to use non car modes, some trips will be diverted to cycling and walking
- a high quality bus service operating from the earliest stages of the development. This will link the site to both Ashford Town Centre and the International railway station.

5.11 However, it has been recognised in both the Ashford Core Strategy and the Local Transport Plan that whilst this combination of measures will reduce vehicle trips, there will still be an impact on traffic flows in Ashford over the next 20 years as a result of the adopted growth strategy. In order to mitigate these impacts, ABC and KCC have agreed a package of strategic highway improvements to support the strategic growth proposed at Ashford including those to the Drivers Roundabout, Victoria Way and the phased upgrade of the A28. These projects are all KCC schemes which will be promoted by KCC which, if necessary, will use CPO powers. The Chilmington Green development will make its due contribution to these strategic improvement works via the S106 agreement.

5.12 **Management** : The provision of a range of new social and physical infrastructure will require the creation of an appropriate structure to ensure long term management and the maintenance of quality. The applicants also accept that a new community is more than the creation of new housing and new facilities. As a consequence, the favoured option of both the developers and ABC is the establishment of a Community Development Trust (CDT). This would be a 'not for profit' organisation whose sole purpose would be to support the new community at Chilmington Green. The management board of the CDT would evolve over the lifetime of the development

from a more developer led structure at the early stages to one controlled by local residents and community organisations on completion.

5.13 Further details on the Community Development Trust will be provided in the S106 agreement and in the emerging CDT Business Plan.

5.14 In addition to complying with current and emerging national, regional and local planning policies, the scheme has been assessed through the Environmental Assessment process. It is the conclusion of the ES that where impacts arise they can be appropriately mitigated. Overall, the balance of advantages arising from the development of Chilmington Green far outweigh the identified residual impacts.

6.0 **Phasing, Developer Contributions and Delivery**

- 6.1 **Phasing** : The phasing strategy is set out in the Design and Access Statement. In accordance with the pre submission draft of the AAP, it is proposed to develop the site in four broad phases. Phase 1 will commence at the western edge of the site where new accesses will be created on to the A28. This first phase will include the District Centre, the first primary school and part of the hamlet. Phases 2 and 3 will progressively move east and south and the final, fourth phase completes the south eastern edge of the development.
- 6.2 Each phase will be associated with the delivery of its own package of social and physical infrastructure which will be secured by a S106 agreement or agreements. Whilst there will be four phases, it is probable that a further phase or phases may start prior to the completion of the first and second phases. The precise pattern of development will reflect updated information on infrastructure delivery and market demand. However, any amendments to the phasing will need to be fully justified and agreed with Ashford Borough Council.
- 6.3 **Developer Contributions** : As explained in Section 5, the applicants recognise that a major planning application such as the new community at Chilmington Green will need to be associated with a package of planning conditions and a S106 planning agreement. This will ensure that the progressive expansion of Chilmington Green is matched by the provision of new infrastructure.
- 6.4 The S106 agreement will relate to the range of on site matters as set out in Section 5 plus a contribution to the wider off site package of strategic transportation improvements being promoted by KCC as part of the Ashford growth strategy. The Heads of Terms of the S106 are currently being discussed with ABC and will be progressed in parallel with consultation on the planning application.

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- 6.5 One important element of the S106 agreement will be the delivery of affordable housing. The Core Strategy aspires to achieve 30% affordable housing, subject to this being viable. The pre submission AAP adopts a similar approach whereby any figure less than 30% needs to be fully justified by a transparent viability assessment and agreed by ABC.
- 6.6 Whilst the impact of the current recession indicates that it is unlikely to be viable to provide 30% affordable housing in the first phase, it is not possible to complete a full viability assessment for phase 1 until such time as the other elements of the S106 are settled. Since this position will not be reached until some time after the application is submitted, it is not possible for this Planning Statement to define a percentage of affordable housing now. It is anticipated that the level of affordable housing in each phase will be agreed prior to the start of that phase in the context of the prevailing economic circumstances of the time.
- 6.7 **Delivery :** At the present time, there are four applicants in respect of the planning application. However, following the grant of planning permission it is likely that additional housebuilders will become involved in the development of the site. This will be necessary to achieve the desired house building rate of 250 to 300 dwellings per year and also to provide market diversity.
- 6.8 If outline planning permission is granted in late 2012 or early 2013, it is likely that infrastructure works would commence in mid 2013 with the first house completions in 2013 / 14. The rate of completions normally builds up rapidly and the optimum completion rate of 250 to 300 dwellings per year is likely to be achieved in 2014 / 15. This broad level of development activity is likely to be maintained up to the completion of the development in the mid 2030's.
- 6.9 The pre submission AAP sets out a sequence of approvals between the grant of planning permission and the submission of reserved matters. This is to ensure that all matters of strategic or phase wide importance are agreed prior to the submission of a reserved matters application in that phase. When a reserved matters application is

submitted, it should then only need to provide a statement of compliance that it accords with all higher level documentation.

7.0 **Conclusions**

- 7.1 The Chilmington Green planning application is the culmination of several years research, evidence gathering, option assessments and public consultation. The proposals take as their starting point the strategic principle of a mixed use urban extension at Chilmington Green as contained in Policy CS5 of the Ashford Core Strategy. This remains the statutory planning document for the area and should be given significant weight in the determination of this planning application.
- 7.2 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008, ABC has progressed the requirement in the Core Strategy for the preparation of an Area Action Plan for Chilmington Green. The AAP has been in preparation since 2007 and during this time it has been possible for the emerging AAP and the planning application to be developed and finalised on a complementary basis. As a consequence, the planning application now accords with the pre submission Chilmington Green AAP in all material respects. It is anticipated that the planning application will not be determined until the Inspectors report on the AAP has been received. This should ensure that the proposals can be shown as being in full compliance with both the Core Strategy and the AAP.
- 7.3 The period between the submission of this application and determination in late 2012 or early 2013 will allow a further period of public consultation to take place. This, in turn, provides the opportunity for amendments to be made to the application if these are felt to be appropriate. This period also gives time for the S106 negotiations to be completed and planning conditions agreed.
- 7.4 As noted previously, the combination of the S106 agreement and the package of planning conditions will give both ABC and local people the confidence that the social and physical infrastructure necessary to support the new community at Chilmington Green will be provided in a timely manner.

7.5 Chilmington Green has taken ten years from inception to the submission of this planning application. We trust that Members of Ashford Borough Council will view this application favourably and the Applicants can continue to work jointly with the Borough Council to make the Chilmington Green concept a reality.