

Tabled Update for Item 2.1 – 22/503654/EIOUT – Land west of Bobbing

Corrections to officer report

Para. 1.5: delete reference to Stockbury Post Office.

Para. 8.5.18 amended as follows:

Highways modelling has been undertaken based upon methodologies agreed with KCC Highways and National Highways. The KCC modelling treats the proposed development as an addition to the draft Local Plan site allocations rather than as a substitution of them. The National Highways modelling was in line with DfT Circular 01/2022 and was based upon a Reference Case which included all completed, planned (in the 2017 Local Plan) with planning permission and other committed development (as at 2022) plus the completed Bobbing development.

Highways Plans

Highways Plans listed in Background Papers and Information (commencing with No. 10353) on Pages 1 and 2 are amended and should read as follows:

10353_400 Rev. P7 Site Access from Sheppey Way 1
10353_500 Rev. P6 Site Access from Sheppey Way 2
10353_700 Rev. P12 Site Access Locations
10353_1003 Rev. P8 Site Access Roundabout
10353_1004 Rev. P8 Site Access Roundabout HGV Swept Path
10353_2000 Rev. P3 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 1
10353_2001 Rev. P3 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 2
10353_2002 Rev. P2 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 3
10353_2003 Rev. P2 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 4
10353_2004 Rev. P5 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 5
10353_2005 Rev. P2 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 6
10353_2006 Rev. P2 Pedestrian and Cycle Route Improvements 7
10353_SK09 Rev. P4 Proposed Raised Table for Bobbing Village
10353_SK10 Rev. P3 Proposed Parking Court

Condition 5

Amended to refer to:

D3366-FAB-00-XX-MR-L-004 Rev. 07 (Version received 25.02.26) – Movement Parameter Plan

Condition 6

The final line of the table under recommended Condition 6 (Development Limits) should be amended to read 'Sports and Community Facilities – Use Class **E(d) and F2(c)**' to account for the proposed indoor sports facilities.

FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Since the finalisation of the committee report further representations have been received. Where officer responses have not been provided it is considered that the points raised have been addressed in the report. The further representations are detailed as follows:

Bobbing Parish Council

2 further letters of objection have been received from Bobbing Parish Council. The letters reiterate previous comments summarised within the committee report, and make the following additional comments:

- Fundamental departure from the Development Plan including Local Plan Policy ST3 (The Swale Settlement Strategy); Introduction of a new settlement contrary to the plan led approach; Substantial and irreversible harm to the countryside, landscape character and established settlement pattern of this part of Swale.
- Proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policies ST1, ST3, ST5, CP8, DM6, DM8, DM24, DM25, DM28, DM29, DM31 and DM32.
- Conflict with the NPPF, particularly in relation to sustainable transport, protection of the natural environment and heritage assets.
- Site is designated as an Important Local Countryside Gap (ILCG) and proposal would result in permanent loss of the ILCG contrary to Policy DM25 giving rise to harm which should be afforded very substantial weight in the planning balance.
Officer note: a small part of the site lies within an ILCG where no development is proposed therefore the proposal accords with Policy DM25 – see section 8.10 of the officer report.
- Site forms part of an important agricultural landscape which is part of the historic rural setting of St Bartholomew's Church and Bobbing which would be eroded by the proposals. Historic England advise that the setting of St Bartholomew's Church would be harmed. The NPPF requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets and their setting. Harm to their setting requires clear and convincing justification which has not been provided.
- Harm to setting of Parsonage Farmhouse, Bobbing Court, Sole Place and Church Farm Cottages.
- Officer report confirms that the proposal would introduce large-scale urban development into open countryside, fundamentally altering the rural character of the area, with increased lighting, noise and urban activity and loss of rural tranquility. Residual impacts would remain even after the mitigation planting has matured.
- Development would result in loss of approx. 136.7ha of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land resulting in permanent and irreversible harm. NPPF states that where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, areas of poorer quality should be preferred to those of a higher quality. Application does not demonstrate that alternative land has been assessed. Officer report confirms that

proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policy DM31 as the tests under this policy have not been satisfied.

- Site contains ecological features including hedgerows, watercourses and wildlife corridors. Application submission indicates that land surrounding the site was not surveyed therefore the wider ecological context of the site has not been adequately assessed. Development will result in fragmentation of habitats, increased human disturbance and pressure on surrounding ecological habitats. Ecological harm could occur within Rook Wood as a result recreational pressure and urban encroachment. NPPF para. 180 requires development to minimise impacts on biodiversity and safeguard ecological networks.
- Development would be highly reliant on private car use, contrary to local and national policy. Earlier proposals referenced a new railway station which would have significantly improved sustainable transport accessibility. Proposal fails to address NPPF requirement to promote sustainable transport choices.
- Significant additional traffic on A249 corridor which will impact Sheppey, Milton Regis, Kemsley and Iwade.
- Increased traffic risks undermining regeneration funding allocated to Sheppey by reducing accessibility and discouraging visitors.
- Delays in delivery of necessary supporting infrastructure on other sites including in Kemsley and Borden demonstrate risk of similar delays in this case.
- Application does not set out how brickearth would be extracted or safeguarded and mineral resources could be permanently lost contrary to Local Plan Policy DM7.
- Cumulative impact of proposed development with other recent development in western Sittingbourne on local infrastructure and services.
- No provision for secondary education capacity.
- Shortfall in swimming pool capacity contribution.
- Whilst financial contributions will be secured to address infrastructure capacity there is no assurance that the infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner to meet the needs of the development.
- Application does not demonstrate how wastewater capacity would be addressed.
- Approval would set a precedent for speculative development in the borough's countryside and erode confidence in the plan led system.
- Environmental impacts of proposal are not outweighed by demonstrable public benefits and application should be refused.
- If planning permission is granted then Section 106 agreement should secure mains sewerage connections for properties on Sheppey Way and resurfacing of Bobbing Village Hall car park. *Officer note: the requested obligations for mains sewage connections are not being sought as it is not considered that they would not meet the tests at paragraph 122 of the CIL Regulations (2010).*
- Significant harm arising from the proposal is such that the application should be refused.

Eastchurch Parish Council

An objection has been received from Eastchurch Parish Council which is summarised as follows:

- Directly and material impact on Eastchurch as Sheppey's connectivity is heavily constrained with the A249, A2, Sheppey Way and associated routes experiencing frequent and severe congestion. The Kingsferry Bridge and A249 are critical pinch points with very limited resilience in the event of incidents.
- Proposed development of up to 2,500 dwellings will generate substantial additional traffic. The application suggests that the impact is not "severe" but this does not reflect Sheppey resident's experiences of regular delays, unreliable journey times, and restricted access on and off the Island.
- Cumulative impact of development with other developments across the wider area, including in Kemsley, Grovehurst and Iwade which are contributing to worsening congestion and delays, particularly along the A249 corridor, resulting in unsustainable pressure on the network which is at already at a critical level.
- Planning Committee report acknowledges concerns regarding increased traffic, queueing, rat-running through rural lanes, and safety issues at already stressed junctions. Limited access routes to Sheppey accentuate these impacts affecting access to healthcare, education, employment, and emergency services making any further deterioration unacceptable.
- Insufficient certainty that proposed mitigation / infrastructure improvements will be delivered in advance of need, will adequately address cumulative impacts, or will protect the resilience routes serving Sheppey.

Bobbing Village Hall

An objection has been received from the Bobbing Village Hall Management Committee which is summarised as follows:

- Additional population would place considerable pressure on the village hall and its existing facilities.
- If development is approved Section 106 obligations should be secured to deliver necessary improvements to the village hall including kitchen upgrades, additional storage space, extension and improvement of car park, connection to main sewage system and electrical upgrade (estimated cost £182,722-£236,000 plus VAT). Improvements would ensure that the village hall can continue to serve as a hub for existing and future residents and without this mitigation the development is unacceptable.

The applicant has indicated a willingness to make a contribution towards improvements to Bobbing Village Hall. This could be secured through a planning obligation.

Councillor Mike Baldock

An objection has been received from Councillor Mike Baldock which is summarised as follows:

- Officer report is unsound and requires rewriting and re-evaluation in order that members can make a sound judgement.
- Error at paragraph 1.5 with reference to Stockbury Post Office which does not lie within the site. This error casts suggests a lack of understanding of the application and the area and casts huge doubt over the integrity of the whole report. *Officer note: the error is acknowledged and is corrected above.*
- Para. 8.1.6 states that there are some significant issues with the baseline ecological data, with some necessary surveys not having been carried out, incorrect survey areas used and out of date information provided. Subsequent 'clarifications and responses' are not adequate to meet the Council's legal duty to ensure it meets its duties under the biodiversity requirements. *Officer note: the KCC Ecologist has provided a response to the case officer advising that she has reviewed the applicant's response to the ES Review and this does not alter or change her formal response to the application which advised that the proposals are acceptable in relation to protected and notable species subject to a condition a suitable scheme of mitigation.*

Neighbour comments

50 additional objections have been received from local residents which address issues previously summarised within the committee report and include additional comments which are summarised as follows:

- Major applications should be voted on by residents in affected areas. *Officer note: The Council's Planning Committee is the relevant decision making body in this case.*
- Swale Planning Officers should live in the area. *Officer note: The home address of planning officers is not a material planning consideration.*
- Development has one access from Bobbing roundabout which will result in severe impacts on the A2 and A249. *Officer note: the development would have 3 vehicular accesses.*
- Increased pressure on inadequate car parking in Sittingbourne town centre.
- Local residents have endured years of roadworks, including for Grovehurst Roundabout; Further disruptive roadworks are planned.
- Existing traffic problems from Bobbing Primary School drop-off/pick up.
- Inadequate investment in cycle infrastructure and public transport; Residents of development will not walk, cycle or travel by bus to Sittingbourne town centre; Lack of safe walking route from Bobbing to Sittingbourne Buses will be unreliable due to congestion.

- Lack of clarity regarding secondary school education provision to meet the requirements of the development; children currently have to travel significant distances to secondary schools; lack of teachers for proposed primary school.
- Unclear where financial contributions from other developments for healthcare and education infrastructure are being spent. *Officer note: requests for financial contributions for infrastructure are accompanied with a justification identifying where the monies will be spent.*
- Loss of habitats used by badgers, lizards, great crested newts, skylarks winter migrating birds (including red wings, field fare and lapwings), owls, harrier, hawks, sparrow hawks kites, song birds, bats, rabbits, stoats, butterflies, mice, glow worms and stag beetles.
- Recreational impacts on wildlife habitats and ancient woodland.
- Cumulative impact of developments in the borough (including potential Highsted Park development) on ecology, transport, public services and the natural environment should be considered. *Officer note: Applications are assessed based upon their individual planning merits but cumulative impacts are assessed within the ES.*
- Increased pressure on inadequate surface water drainage infrastructure.
- Increased pressure on inadequate sewage infrastructure will result in increased pollution, environmental harm to local watercourses and potential public health impacts; No assurance that adequate sewage infrastructure will be delivered. *Officer note: The relevant statutory consultees have raised no objections to the application.*
- Internet services are poor and will become worse; Increased pressure on unreliable electricity infrastructure *Officer note: Internet service quality is a matter for internet service providers; UK Power Networks raised no objections to the proposal.*
- Housing being delivered in the area does not respond to local housing need.
- Harm to settings of listed buildings including St Bartholomew's Church; St Bartholomew's Church is Grade I listed and not Grade II listed *Officer note: the report confirms it is Grade I listed; No mention of Upper Toes, Nether Toes, White House and Pheasants Farm in heritage officers comments Officer note: the Heritage Advisor accepted the scope of the Heritage Assessment.*
- Light pollution will affect wildlife and residents of neighbouring villages. *Densities of development on the peripheries of the site will be lower. Details of lighting would be secured by condition at reserved matters stage therefore the impacts of lighting can be controlled. In view of separation distances to the nearest properties it is not anticipated that light pollution will result in any undue harm to the living conditions of existing occupants.*
- Scheme will be altered in the future to deliver more houses at the expense of green space. *Officer note: The recommended conditions are intended to safeguard against this scenario.*
- There are brownfield sites in the borough which should be developed. *The Council's evidence base (including the HELAA) does not indicate that a 5 Year*

Housing Land Supply would be achieved through brownfield sites. The application should be assessed on its merits.

- Loss of Grade 1 agricultural land is contrary to NPPF requirement to seek to use areas of poorer quality land.
- Proposal is speculative and sites for housing should be allocated through the Local Plan process. Precedent for further unplanned development.
- No justification for new homes given numbers of unoccupied homes. *Officer note: The Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply position indicates a need for new homes.*
- Lack of new restaurants and parks in response to population growth in the borough. *Officer note: the proposed development includes parks and open space and a unit up to 500m² which can be used as a restaurant.*
- Detrimental impact on quality of life and wellbeing from urbanisation of the countryside.

12 representations in support of the proposal, in particular the proposed sports facilities, have been received from members of the public which are summarised as follows:

- Significant opportunity to address local need and several longstanding challenges facing grassroots football and community sport in the Sittingbourne area - many teams rely on grass pitches that are frequently unplayable during the winter months due to waterlogging leading to repeated cancellations of matches and training sessions, disrupting leagues, limiting player development, and reducing overall participation.
- High-quality, full-size artificial pitches would provide a reliable, all-weather facility that can be used consistently throughout the year.
- Subdivision of the pitches for different age groups would allow multiple teams to train and play at the same time, significantly increasing capacity for local clubs.
- Wider community benefits from greater participation in physical activity, particularly among young people, helping to support both physical and mental wellbeing.
- Opportunities for clubs to grow sustainably, attract new players, and retain existing members who might otherwise disengage due to poor facilities.
- Accessible location would ensure that the facility is inclusive and widely used by the local community.
- Willingness of the developer to work with local clubs to determine how the site is operated presents an opportunity to create a facility that meets the needs of its users and results in a long-term, sustainable home for grassroots football in the area.
- Overall scheme can act as a catalyst for support wider infrastructure investment and support improvements to transport, accessibility and local services including through financial contributions.

- Scheme can help manage growth in a coordinated way in a sustainable location and reduce risk of piecemeal development with associated impacts such as increased traffic on rural lanes.
- Area will benefit from new infrastructure such as the sports hub, primary school and business floorspace.

Minerals

A further response has been received from the KCC Minerals and Waste Planning Officer following publication of the committee report which notes the assessment minerals safeguarding within the report and raises no objections on mineral safeguarding grounds.

Letter from Lawyers acting on behalf of Quinn Estates (Highsted Park appellant)

A letter dated 23 March 2026 has been received from Town Legal LLP representing Quinn Estates Ltd. It asserts that there are significant flaws associated with certain elements of the application (and their treatment in the committee report) which would make it unsafe for members to reach a resolution to grant planning permission. Concerns are raised that that the approval of the Bobbing Scheme, without a robust technical analysis of impacts and cumulative assessments, particularly in light of the resolution to approve Duchy of Cornwall scheme, may result in housing growth without sufficient infrastructure to mitigate the growth.

The issues are considered below.

Transport/Highways

Town Legal's letter is accompanied by a Technical Note prepared by Charles and Associates (C&A) highways consultants which concludes that the Transport Assessment Update (TAU) which accompanied the planning application is fundamentally flawed and therefore no reasonable conclusions can be drawn from it. The inaccuracies in the TAU result in errors in not only the Transport Chapter of the Environmental Statement but also the chapters on Air Quality and Noise (addressed below) which are based upon the transport modelling. The committee cannot therefore rely on the conclusions of these documents for sound decision making.

It should be noted that, following submission of the TAU, extensive further engagement took place between KCC Highways, National Highways and the applicant's transport consultants where revised highways modelling was agreed and subsequently undertaken. This engagement was summarised in Technical Records submitted by the applicant in November and December 2025.

The KCC Highways Officer has confirmed that the matters raised by C&A have all been addressed as set out in the December 2025 Technical Record. On this basis, KCC maintains its position that the development's transport impacts can be acceptably mitigated, and that the modelling evidence used to reach this conclusion is robust.

National Highways have confirmed that they are satisfied with the updated transport modelling and concluded that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability, and/or operation efficiency of the Strategic Road Network in the vicinity of the site (A249 and M2) subject to the imposition of conditions, including mitigation at the A249 Bobbing Junction.

Consultation with Natural England

Town Legal's letter notes that the Council does not appear to have consulted Natural England (NE) in relation to the intention to adopt the Applicant's Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (sHRA). NE were consulted on the Council's Appropriate Assessment Statement which indicated the Council's intention to adopt the sHRA on 29 July 2026, and responded on 13 August 2026, making no comments and referring to NE's standing advice.

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)

Town Legal's letter refers to the committee report which notes that NE has worked with SBC (and the other neighbouring Councils) to prepare the SAMMS and that NE are satisfied that a SAMMS contribution is satisfactory to mitigate impacts from recreational disturbance to the SPAs and Ramsar sites. Town Legal express surprise and suggest that on similar schemes (including the northern Highsted scheme the subject of application ref. 21/503906/EIOUT) NE have required a 'SAMMS+' approach requiring additional financial contributions to fund additional warden patrols. Town Legal suggest that the committee report is inaccurate in indicating that NE are satisfied with the mitigation measures secured owing to a failure to consider the need for a SAMMS+ approach.

The committee report states that the mitigation measures to ensure additional impacts from recreational disturbance to the SPAs and Ramsar sites are ecologically sound. The application includes large areas of open space including a country park which will provide recreational opportunities for residents of the proposed development, as well as off-site ecological mitigation whilst the applicant has agreed SAMMS contributions.

Environmental Statement (ES)

Town Legal note that the Air Quality chapter of the ES does not include an Emissions Mitigation Statement (including damage cost calculations) as required by the SBC Air Quality Planning Technical Guidance.

The Emissions Mitigation Statement is a local requirement, and its absence does not make the ES deficient. The purpose of an ES to report the likely significant effects of a proposed development and the Air Quality chapter states that the impact of the proposed development is negligible and not significant. The ES identifies that no mitigation in respect vehicle emissions is required in any event, and this remains unchanged with the updated modelling (detailed below). The application was accompanied by a Damage Cost Calculation.

Town Legal note that, contrary to the requirements of the EIA Regulations, the ES is lacking information on Alternatives on Accidents and Disasters. Furthermore, the cumulative assessment is also predicated on there being sufficient information available in respect of the relevant schemes; the selection of such schemes is unclear.

The EIA regulations state that a 'description of the reasonable alternatives studied by a developer is required'. The applicant has responded that Chapter 2 of the ES states that the applicant has a contractual position on this site and, as the site is free from overriding planning constraints, it is not 'reasonable' for them to have considered alternative sites. In respect of alternatives scales of the development and design, the applicant considers that Chapter 2 of the ES adequately sets out how alternative designs, and design evolutions, have been considered and implemented. This response is accepted by Officers.

In relation to 'Major Accidents and Disasters' the EIA regulations require 'a description of the expected significant adverse effect of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned'. The applicant has responded that the nature of the development and its location indicate that it is not likely to result in accidents or disasters that would result in significant environmental effects or is vulnerable to accidents and disasters from neighbouring land uses. There is a high-pressure gas pipe that runs through the site; however, standard and appropriate development free buffers have been applied in consultation with HSE. It is noted that the proposed development does not fall within the scope of EU legislation 2012/18/EU (control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances) or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom (Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations) as identified in Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations. With the exception of the consideration of the high pressure gas pipeline (which effects from and to have been designed out of the scheme), a formal assessment of major accidents and disasters was scoped out of the ES at the formal EIA Scoping stage. This response is accepted by officers.

Air Quality and Noise

As noted above Town Legal have suggested that the updated highways modelling has implications for the findings of the Air Quality and Noise chapters of the ES. The applicant's consultants have reviewed the Air Quality findings and have concluded that there would be no meaningful impact upon these findings, with the percentages shown within each table remaining unchanged therefore no updating of the tables is required. In relation to noise, the applicant's consultants advise that the minor increase/decrease in road traffic would not have a material impact on the noise generated by the development. The original noise assessment is therefore considered to be robust, and estimated changes in road traffic noise levels are not considered to change the outcomes of the noise and vibration assessment set out in the ES Chapter.

The Council's Public Protection Officer has reviewed the applicant's Air Quality submission and advises that the resulting impacts are still negligible and no concerns are raised in relation to the updated traffic data and the impacts relative to this. At the time of writing advice was awaited from the Public Protection Officer in relation to the noise assessment and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

The applicant has clarified that the information submitted does not constitute new information under the ES but represents points of clarification to the Council.