

2.0 Planning Context

Overview

The proposals will importantly enable the long established Hastings United Football Club to secure its long term future by generating a capital receipt to be used in providing a modern 'fit for purpose' stadium at Tilekiln Playing Fields. This is shown in more detail on the presentation slides for the new Stadium / Sports Complex project. This will also unlock additional community benefits through the provision of a range of additional facilities, such as 3G pitches, which can be used more intensively in all-weather and without the same level of 'wear and tear' as traditional grass pitches.

The proposed residential use of the Pilot Field site is consistent with the established surroundings and it is proposed to accommodate the residential properties sensitively, and working around the established landscape features wherever possible, which will maintain appropriate separation. The removal of the large south stand will also help to improve established building relationships with the properties to the south of the site.

Following this online consultation, it is proposed to submit an outline planning application which will seek to secure permission in principle for up to 89 residential homes. The final housing mix will be determined at a later stage however it is envisaged that the majority of homes will be dwellinghouses, with some apartments. This will ensure the provision of a balanced mix of housing and in turn providing sustainable, mixed communities as encouraged by national planning policy.

Planning benefits

As well as being a crucial part of the linked proposals at Tilekiln, the proposals will provide much needed housing, including affordable housing in accordance with local policies.

The proposals will also secure employment during construction and spending in the local economy during and after construction. There will be other economic benefits such as generating local taxation revenue.

A range of technical, professional reports will be prepared in order to address all relevant planning matters and to demonstrate a sensitive approach. These are currently in preparation.

National Policy

The proposals will support the Government's drive to boost national housing delivery to 300,000 units per annum. This is one of the key priorities of the Government, in order to assist in addressing the historical housing shortage, and has recently been highlighted by the publication of the White Paper, 'Planning for the Future' which aims to streamline the planning system, particularly in established settlements.

The current National Planning Policy Document is the NPPF, revised February 2019. Amongst other things, it stressed the importance of making the best use of brownfield sites in settlements, noting that substantial weight should be afforded to this.

Para. 38 states that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way, working with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. In this case, there are significant benefits to the community arising from the reinvestment into new sporting facilities as well as in terms of housing provision and to the economy. A sensitive approach is being taken to design and respecting the established treed boundaries of the site. Accordingly, the proposals are consistent with national planning objectives and policies.

Local Policies

The site falls within the St. Helen's Focus Area of the Hastings Development Management Plan 2015 (DMP). The majority of housing in this area is 20th Century post-war, which is typical of the surroundings to the Pilot Field site, and it is noted that there is an eclectic range of architectural styles in the area. There are some 11,000 residents and the focus area is the second least deprived in the Borough. A third of residents are above retirement age.

Para. 6.127 sets out the future vision for the area, with most new development expected to be focused on Elphinstone Road and The Ridge. New development is expected to be in keeping with the suburban character but to be of a higher density than the existing typically low density housing. Affordable housing is also to be encouraged as there is little of it currently within the area.

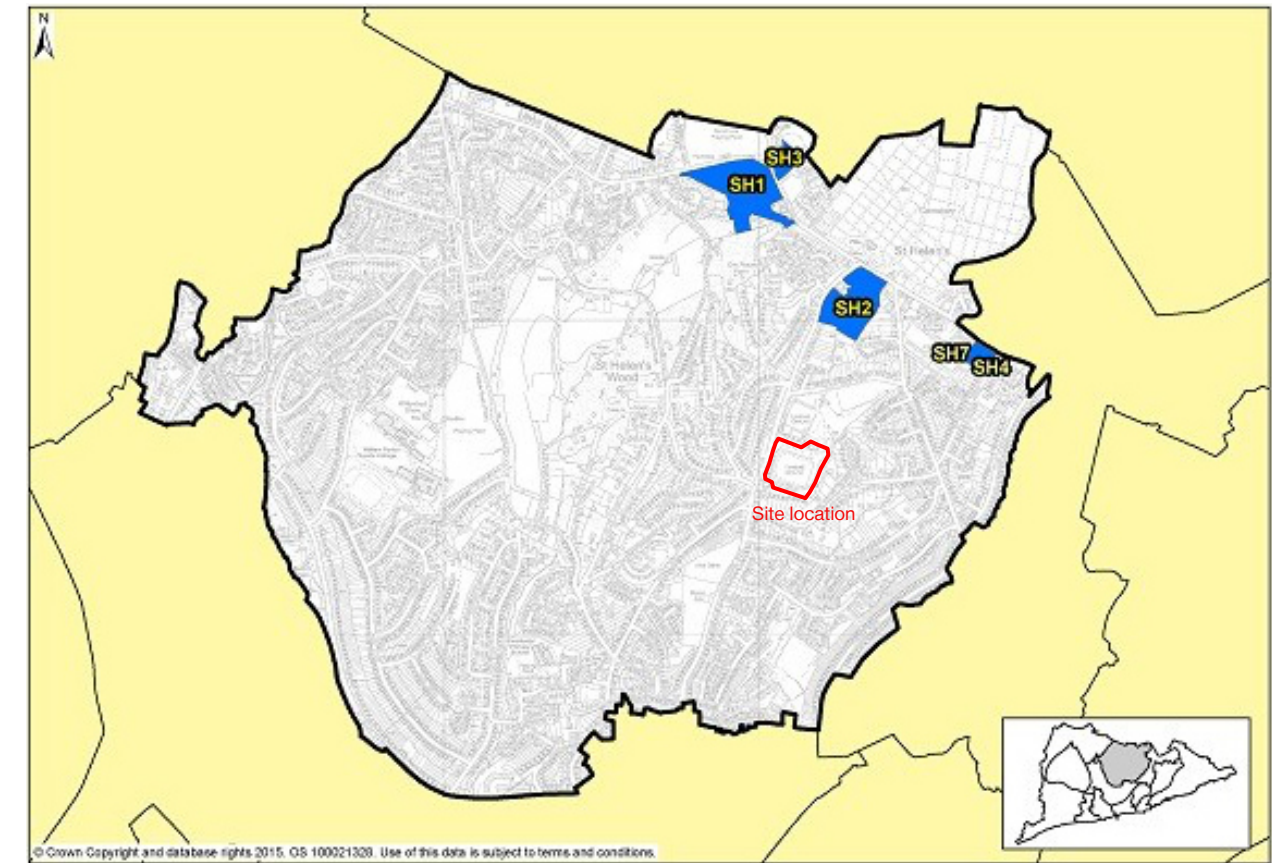
There are various general design policies within the DMP including a requirement for lifts within flatted schemes above 2-storeys in height. On the indicative scheme, one of the apartment buildings, on the social club part of the site, is shown to be above 2-storeys and therefore requiring a lift.

Policy HC3 refers to loss of community facilities and generally requires it to be shown that the facilities being lost are not viable or are to be replaced within the proposals. In this case, the replacement of the sporting and community facilities is to take place on a different site and a planning application for the provision of those facilities is to be submitted at the same time as the outline planning application is submitted for The Pilot Field.

Policy H1 of the Hastings Planning Strategy 2014 requires development to be carried out at densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are special circumstances. In this case the proposed density is just below this figure, which reflects the extent of trees and ecological areas to be retained and also taking account of the established surroundings which is generally of low to moderate density suburban housing.

Policy H2 requires a mix of housing types and tenures. The indicative information submitted shows a range of all housing types and sizes and furthermore the applicant is committed to meeting the requirement for both market and affordable housing (25% affordable housing required under Policy H3).

Policy CI2 deals with Sports Infrastructure and Facilities and states, in part that:



The St. Helen's Focus Area from the Hastings Development Management Plan

Playing fields and sports pitches will be identified as part of the green infrastructure network (see Policy EN2), and planning permission for the reduction in size or number of playing fields or sports pitches will only be granted where:

1. existing facilities are of a poor and unsustainable quality and surplus to requirements; or
2. the proposal would serve to upgrade the sports facilities, or reinstate them elsewhere on the site; or
3. the proposed development is necessary to meet an important national, regional or local need and alternative provision is made that enhances, or is equivalent to, existing recreational facilities; or
4. in the case of an operating school site, the proposal is for educational purposes that are essential and cannot be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere.

In this case the proposals will enable the delivery of upgraded sport facilities elsewhere within the Borough, and would enable replacement of the existing poor and unsustainable facilities.

Policy CI3 allows for existing children's play facilities to be upgraded, where they exist within 600m of the site. In this case, there are equipped play facilities approximately 400m from the site, in Elphinstone Road.

Policy EN3 refers to Nature Conservation and Biodiversity. The outline proposals indicate that the proposals can be achieved whilst maintaining the local nature areas around the northern and eastern parts of the site, as well as providing a further mitigation and enhancement area along the southern boundary, and retaining the vast majority of established trees. There are opportunities to enhance these areas with measures to

enhance biodiversity which could also include woodland management. These would be secured via planning conditions or, if necessary, a legal agreement.

With regard to Transport, the proposals are in a sustainable location with ready access to local bus routes and to the local highway network. A full Transport Statement will be prepared and submitted as part of the outline planning application.

Overall summary

The proposals are critical to securing a long term, sustainable future for Hastings United Football Club and at the same time providing enhanced, modern sporting and community facilities which can be more widely used by the local population.

The sensitive re-development of this existing brownfield site to provide good quality housing, will be consistent with the established character of the locality. The illustrative proposals show that a sensitive approach is to be taken, working around areas of local visual and biodiversity importance wherever possible and setting new buildings well away from the site boundaries so that any effects on neighbouring residents will be improved. In particular, the proposals will allow the removal of the substantial mass of the main / south stand which is a significant, unrelieved bulk of building very close to the neighbouring properties to the south.

On the basis of the approach taken, and the information that will be set out in a full suite of technical reports with the outline planning application, the proposals align with national and local planning policy objectives.