

# Firstplan



## **ROCHFORD ALLOCATIONS**

**HEARING MATTER 2:  
GREAT WAKERING  
3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013  
STATEMENT  
BY  
STOLKIN & CLEMENTS (SOUTHEND)  
LLP**

## **POLICY NEL3**

**STOLKIN AND CLEMENTS  
(SOUTHEND) LLP [9891]  
REPRESENTED BY FIRSTPLAN  
[8501]**

**REPRESENTATION 28826**

# **STATEMENT**

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## **APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX 1:</b>	<b>SITE LOCATION PLAN</b>
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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Firstplan has been instructed by Stolkin & Clements (Southend) LLP (S&C) to provide a statement in relation to Issue 2 (Great Wakering) for the Rochford Allocations Submissions Document.
- 1.2 Our clients own land known as Tithe Park, which is a site of 35 hectares, and which lies immediately to the north of the existing urban edge of the Borough of Southend-on-Sea, and is bounded to the north by Poynters Lane. The western part of this site is put forward as a superior and alternative option for the employment designation at South of Great Wakering (Policy NEL3). The area to be considered is shown on a site location plan attached as appendix 1.

### APPENDIX 1

- 1.3 The site is available, deliverable, and suitable for development. It is owned solely by our clients and can be brought forward for development at short notice. To our knowledge there are no major obstacles to development of the site, which is currently in agricultural use.
- 1.4 This statement clarifies S&C's position in relation to the proposed employment allocation for Great Wakering, and explains why the draft plan is unsound as it is currently drafted, and the changes S&C propose to make it sound.
- 1.5 Relevant background information is provided in Section 2. Section 3 sets out our clients' response in relation to the issues raised by the Inspector in the Pre-Examination meeting. Section 4 sets out why S&C considers the Plan to be unsound, and Section 5 provides our conclusions.



## SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Parts of the Tithe Park site were identified in the Allocations DPD Discussion and Consultation Document (Regulation 25, February 2010) as options E23 and E24 (2 of 6 options in total) for a new strategically located employment park to the south of Great Waking.
- 2.2 As part of the process S&C submitted representations supporting a designation for the western part of Tithe Park, which is considered to be the most sustainable location for employment land to the south of Great Waking.
- 2.3 The whole of Tithe Park is assessed as site 149 in the 'Detailed Assessment of Potential Employment' sites evidence document. However, it should be clear that S&C are only looking for a designation for part of the site as shown in Appendix 1. This part of the site is completely within Flood Zone 1.



## SECTION 3: HEARING MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO THE ALLOCATIONS DOCUMENT

3.1 We have specifically addressed the issue and questions raised by the inspector below:

a) **Are the allocated housing and employment sites listed below (both brownfield and settlement extensions) justified, deliverable within the plan period and consistent with national policy?**

3.2 The site proposed by the Council as the employment allocation South of Great Wakering (Policy NEL3) cannot in our view be justified, having regard to national policy. It is not the best option when considered against reasonable alternatives such as Tithe Park. Indeed it conflicts with national policy. In particular, the proposed site does not have defensible boundaries in the green belt and therefore its designation would conflict with paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out that when defining green belt boundaries local authorities should use physical features which are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

3.3 The soundness of the proposed site as an allocation is considered further in relation to the questions below:

i) Is the site selected justified when compared to other reasonable alternatives?

3.4 The proposed site for Policy NEL3 is not justified because it is not the best option when compared with reasonable alternatives such as Tithe Park.

3.5 The site proposed by the Council is poorly related to an existing built up area. The site is adjoined by open fields to the north, south and east, and Star Lane to the west. It would be difficult to create defensible green belt boundaries around the site. The lack of defensible green belt boundaries is recognised as an important consideration in the draft plan. While it is proposed that boundaries can be created through landscaping, the site identified cannot be provided with sufficient landscaping to create an adequate buffer and to provide sufficient replacement employment land, because the site is restricted in area to 2.5 hectares.



- 3.6 The Council's proposed site is further south than is the current southern limit of Great Wakering and it is situated approximately half way between the village and the urban area of Southend. If developed, therefore, there will be a strong likelihood of coalescence between the two settlements, particularly given the lack of defensible green belt boundaries, and the proximity of the newest building areas to the north and south. The potential for coalescence will be enhanced should the current planning application for 116 dwellings at Star Lane Brickworks be approved (12/00252/FUL). If this application is refused the proposed site will be isolated, with the potential of the Brickworks site to be developed in the future and consequently potential for future coalescence.
- 3.7 In comparison Tithe Park is well related to an existing built up area and has defensible green belt boundaries to the north, south and west. It is also of an adequate size to allow sufficient landscaping to the east. The boundary changes to the green belt are therefore more in accordance with the NPPF green belt policies than the Council's current proposed site.
- 3.8 In addition, the council's proposed site is close to the Star Lane Pits Local Wildlife Site and the Council propose that development on the site could use the existing vehicular access to this wildlife site. No details of this proposed access are provided, and the location of the existing access is a significant distance away from the proposed site. There is potential that this arrangement will encourage development between the existing access and the allocated site, leading to the coalescence of urban areas. The proximity to the wildlife site may also raise environmental concerns. In contrast, Tithe Park is approximately 450 metres from the Local Wildlife Site, which is significantly further away, and therefore there should be no environmental concerns.
- ii) Is the proposed development deliverable over the plan period having regard, amongst other things, to land ownership issues and infrastructure constraints?
- 3.9 S&C have no comments on this question.
- iii) Are the detailed site boundaries appropriate?
- 3.10 It is not considered that the location of the Council's proposed site is appropriate and it therefore follows that the detailed site boundaries are not considered appropriate.



The north, south and east boundaries are not defensible and therefore conflict with green belt policies contained within the NPPF.

- iv) Is the detail about the form, scale, access and quantum of development appropriate having regard to policies in the Core Strategy?

- 3.11 Core Strategy Policy ED4 sets out that the Council will allocate land for a new strategically located employment park which is capable of accommodating businesses displaced from Star Lane Industrial Estate.
- 3.12 The Council is now putting forward only 2.5 hectares of replacement employment land on the basis that the site is not situated in a strategic location in terms of accessibility. This would seem to conflict with the scale of development envisaged in the Core Strategy.
- 3.13 S&C recognise that the Council should not be seeking to have an overprovision of employment floorspace given the green belt designation in the vicinity. They consider that a more flexible approach should be taken. The allocation of the western side of Tithe Park would allow for a suitable size of employment floorspace to be provided together with a landscaping buffer to provide a defensible green belt boundary and mitigate against any visual impact.

- vi) If any of the specific sites/locations are found to be unsound, then what are the alternative options?

- 3.14 An alternative option for the new employment land south of Great Wakering is land on the western side of Tithe Park, as shown on the site location plan attached at appendix 1. This site should be considered to be a better alternative as it has defensible green belt boundaries to the north, south and west and is large enough to provide a sufficient landscaping. It can therefore have a lesser impact on the green belt than the current proposed option. Further justification is provided in response to the detailed in Great Wakering Question iii below.





## Great Waking

- i) Is it realistic to anticipate that existing industrial uses would re-locate to the new employment site?

3.15 The relocation of the existing businesses will depend on market forces. However, the western part of the Tithe Park site could accommodate a range of units which should encourage existing industrial uses to relocate from their current locations.

- iii) If Site NEL3 is found unsound, would the land on the western side of Tithe Park included in Options E23 and E24 (Representation 28826) be sound?

3.16 The western part of the Tithe Park site should be considered sound as it is the best site when considered against reasonable alternatives, it is available, deliverable and developable and is consistent with national planning policy and the Core Strategy.

3.17 An allocation at Tithe Park will meet the requirements of the Core Strategy Policy ED4 whilst giving rise to an appropriate development having regard to the functions of the green belt.

3.18 The site is available, deliverable, and suitable for development. It is owned solely by our clients and can be brought forward for development at short notice. To our knowledge there are no major obstacles to development of the site, which is currently in an agricultural use, but, in the past has been the subject of brickearth extraction, which has reduced its agricultural quality.

3.19 By virtue of its location, the development of the western side of Tithe Park for employment purposes will have a lesser impact on the landscape and openness of the green belt than would be the case with the other options around Great Waking because Tithe Park adjoins Southend to the south and west, and Poynters Lane to the north. The western part of the site will ensure that a significant degree of separation is retained between Great Waking and Shoebury and a comprehensive landscaping scheme would be provided as part of any proposals. This is achievable as the site is of a sufficient size to accommodate a sufficient landscaping buffer, whilst meeting the employment floorspace requirements.



- 3.20 Local shops and services are within easy distance of Tithe Park and can provide services for prospective employees. These include the amenities at Great Waking (Co-op supermarket, pubs, restaurants etc.) and the shopping and associated facilities at the Asda superstore, Southend.
- 3.21 Residents of Great Waking will be easily able to access the site as it is located within a c.800 metre walk (10 minutes). However, the site will also be more accessible to those commuting from outside Great Waking by public transport because Shoeburyness Railway Station is closer to Tithe Park than Great Waking, and there are convenient bus stops situated on Poynters Lane.
- 3.22 The western part of the site is not within a flood risk zone.
- 3.23 Overall, the allocation of the western part of the Tithe Park should be considered sound as it will have a lesser impact on the green belt and is immediately deliverable.



## SECTION 4: SOUNDNESS OF CORE STRATEGY

4.1 For a DPD to be sound, it should be justified, effective, and consistent with national policy.

4.2 As currently drafted, Policy NEL3 is neither justified nor consistent with national policy.

### **(i) Justified**

4.3 The proposed site is not the most appropriate strategy when considered against the alternative of the western side of Tithe Park.

### **(ii) Consistent with National Policy**

4.4 The proposed site is not consistent with National Policy in terms of green belt objectives.

### **(iii) Proposed Changes to make the Plan Sound**

4.5 Allocate the western side of Tithe Park as the new employment land to the south of Great Waking.



## SECTION 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 We conclude that:

*What part of the Plan is unsound?*

5.2 Policy NEL3

*Which soundness test(s) does it fail?*

5.3 It is not justified or consistent with National Policy.

*Why does it fail?*

5.4 The proposed site is not the best option when considered against reasonable alternatives.

*How can the Plan be made sound?*

5.5 Allocate the western side of Tithe Park as the new employment land to the south of Great Waking

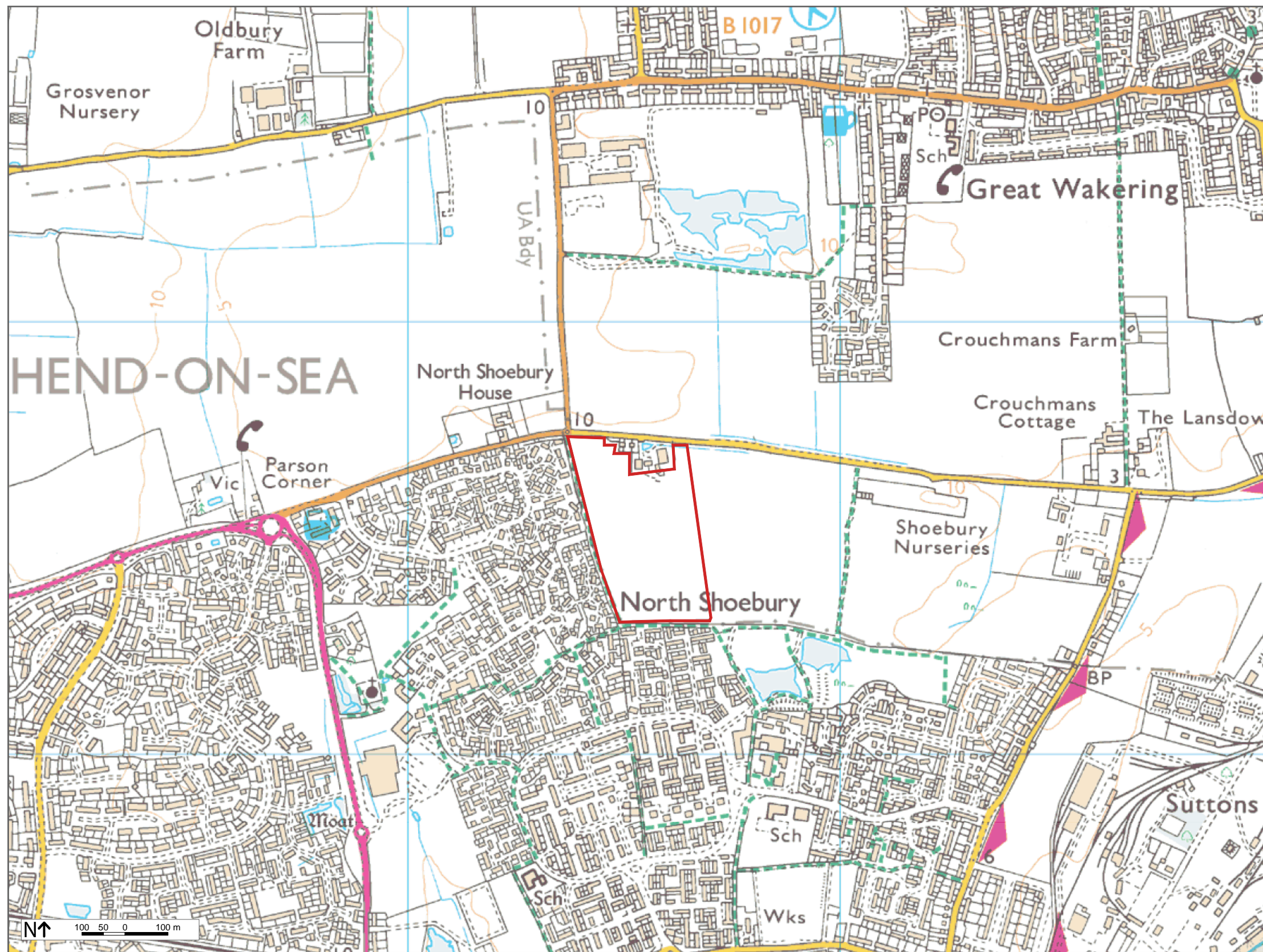
*What is the precise change/wording that is being sought.*

5.6 Allocation of the western side of Tithe Park as shown on the plan in Appendix 1.



## **APPENDIX 1**





Tithe Barn Farm  
Rochford

Firstplan  
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**FIND**  
PROFESSIONAL MAPPING INTELLIGENCE

Scale 1:10,000  
Date 25/01/13

 **Ordnance Survey**