Planning Statement

Land between Star Lane and Alexandra Road, south of High Street, Great Wakering

Residential development of up to 180 dwellings with all matters reserved except access

Taylor Wimpey East
London and Swan Hill Homes Ltd

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Executive Summary

The proposals involve the development of 8.83ha of arable agricultural land to the south of Great Wakering. The proposed development will amount to up to 180 residential units, of which 63 units will be made available for affordable housing.

The application site is the subject of a formal allocation for housing within the Council’s adopted Allocations Plan 2014. It is therefore identified as a housing site required to meet the Council’s market and affordable housing needs. The Council’s Core Strategy did not anticipate this particular site coming forward until post 2021, unless housing expected to be delivered on other sites between 2012 and 2015 were delayed. Delivery on those sites has been delayed, most notably the West Rochford allocation at Hall Road, where 450 residential units that were expected to be constructed before 2015, these properties have not materialised. The Council has accepted that the site can therefore come forward earlier than anticipated, in order to address the shortfall in delivery and to assist the Council in maintaining its 5-year housing land supply.

The proposals are submitted in outline with all matters except access to be reserved. Access to the site will be from Star Lane via the emerging development on the former Star Lane Brickworks. The site has few constraints that might hinder its development. One area of particular sensitivity is the Star Lane Pits Local Wildlife Site, which lies along the site’s southern boundary. This wildlife area is not within the development site, however it is within the joint applicant’s ownership and as a result, it will be retained and enhanced through these proposals. Extensive surveys have been undertaken to assess the impact of the development on the wildlife site. The applicant’s ecologists are of the view that the Local Wildlife site will not be significantly affected by development and that some enhancement secured via the proposals can be achieved.

In addition to policy compliant levels of affordable housing, the proposals will make financial contributions towards Education, Health, Youth and other community facilities. The proposals include an illustrative layout of 180 units, which has been shaped by pre-application consultation with Officers, the highway authority, Parish Council and most importantly, the public. The original scheme tabled for consultation included 201 residential units and this has since been reduced to 180, in response to feedback from all sources.

In addition to the ecology assessments, comprehensive studies have been undertaken to assess the proposals impact on the highway network, flooding, surface water, health, air quality, archaeology, landscape, energy use and noise impacts. These studies are included with the application proposals and they reveal that no significant impacts will result from the development that would prevent its implementation.

Overall, the proposals have been found to be entirely policy compliant and will deliver high quality new homes in a sustainable location, whilst making a significant contribution to meeting Rochford’s housing needs.
Introduction

1.0 This statement has been prepared by Pomery Planning Consultants on behalf of our joint clients, Taylor Wimpey East London and Swan Hills Homes Ltd (the joint applicants). The statement has been prepared to describe and explain the proposals for residential development of up to 180 dwellings on land between Star Lane and Alexandra Road and to the south of the High Street in Great Wakering.

1.1 The application site is allocated for housing within the adopted Rochford Site Allocations Plan (2014) and it is identified as one of three housing allocations within Great Wakering. The application site is identified within the Allocations Plan as Site SER 9b. To the south and west of the site is another housing allocation, which has been referenced in the Plan as Site BFR 1. Site BFR 1 combines Star Lane Industrial Estate and the former Star Lane Brickworks. The brickworks section of the allocation was the subject of a reserved matters approval granted on the 26th June 2015, for the development of 116 residential units. The development of the brickworks site is currently under construction by Taylor Wimpey East London, once complete, the former brickworks development will provide the sole vehicular access/egress to the application site.

1.2 Taylor Wimpey East London hope to complete the brickworks development (Phase 1) towards then end of 2017 and would, if permissions are granted, roll on to the application site (Phase 2) to commence development in early 2018. An approval for this outline application will then be followed with reserved matters submissions during the course of 2017, in order to meet this programme.

1.3 The purpose of this statement is to set out the policy background to the proposals, to describe the site and its surroundings, to describe the development proposed, to identify any development constraints and to explore the planning policy framework and all material planning considerations.

1.4 The planning application is supported by a number of technical and environmental studies, along with an "Illustrative Layout", which provides an illustration of a possible scheme of development for the site.
The supporting technical and environmental submissions are as follows:

Design and Access Statement  |  CMYK Planning and Design
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment  |  CGMS
Flood Risk Assessment  |  Stomor LTD
Sustainable Drainage Strategy  |  Stomor LTD
Transport Assessment  |  Stomor LTD
Foul Drainage Strategy  |  Stomor LTD
Ecology Reports  |  Middlemarch Environmental
Landscape Strategy  |  ACD Environmental
Energy Statement  |  Environmental Economics
Housing Land Review  |  Barton Wilmore
Arboricultural Assessment  |  ACD Environmental
Noise Assessment  |  Cass Allen
Health Impact Assessment  |  Strutt and Parker

**The Application Site**

2.0 The application site is irregular in shape and extends to some 8.83 hectares in area. The land is presently in arable agricultural use and is situated on the western edge of the settlement of Great Wigging, directly south of the High Street. To the west, the site is bounded by Star Lane Industrial Estate, beyond which is Star Lane. To the south west is the former Star Lane Brickworks, which is now a housing development, presently under construction by Taylor Wimpey East London.

2.1 Directly south of the application site is Star Lane Pits, which are designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) referenced (site R35). The wildlife site is a collection of former clay pits and a mosaic of scrub, rough grassland and aquatic habitats. The pits or lakes are stocked with fish and are a notable site for fishing syndicates.
2.2 To the west is an area of scrubland, which is not formally part of the wildlife site, but is understood to be of some ecological value. Beyond the scrub are the gardens and properties of Alexandra Road. Directly north of the application site are the gardens to residential properties, which line the south side of the High Street. The aerial photograph below illustrates the site in context.

2.3 The application site is bounded by strong hedgerow planting on almost all of its boundaries. The hedgerows contain a number of trees and in some cases sections of drainage ditch. These features on the edges of the site are to be retained and where possible enhanced. Additional planting to create dense landscape buffers on the site boundaries will form part the development proposals, particularly where the site abuts existing residential property and the industrial estate.
2.4 A public footpath runs east to west towards the south of Star Lane Pits, between Star Lane and Alexandra Road. This footpath (route 284) is not directly affected by the proposals and will be maintained and where necessary improved. New public routes will be created within the development and in carefully chosen locations in and around the wildlife site; any new routes in this area will be chosen sensitively with the benefit of ecological advice.

2.5 There are no statutory Listed Buildings in, or immediately adjacent to the application site. The site is not within a Conversation Area or close to any Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The proposals will therefore have no impact on any heritage assets. The joint applicants have previously submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening request to Rochford District Council. In response, the Council as planning authority has advised that the proposals were not in their view EIA Development. The application site is within Flood Zone One on the Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps, and as such, is at the lowest risk of a flood event.

2.6 Site Access

The application site is presently accessible from the south via Star Lane and to the north, on to the High Street. The development will have a sole vehicular access/egress from Star Lane, through the housing development on the former brickworks (Phase 1). The northern access on to the High Street, will be formalised and only accessible to emergency vehicles. This route will however, have an enhanced pedestrian/cycle access, which will allow residents to access the heart of Great Wakering village.

Planning Background and Pre-Application Engagement

3.0 Rochford District Council adopted its Core Strategy in December 2011. The Core Strategy explains how the Council will deliver its vision for the District in terms making provision for housing, employment, transport, community infrastructure, leisure, tourism, retail and economic development.

3.1 To meet the housing needs of the current and future population of the District, the Core Strategy identifies that some 4,600 new homes will be needed across the District. The Core Strategy also identifies that the District could not
accommodate all of its housing growth from sites within its existing urban settlements and villages or from "brownfield" sites. As such, the Strategy makes appropriate provision for carefully chosen Green Belt releases on the edges of existing settlements. In order to ensure that the growth of the District would be as sustainable as possible, the Council propose Green Belt releases as urban extensions to the main settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon, Hockley/Hawkwell, Hullbridge, West Great Wakering, Canewden and to a less extent, some smaller settlements.

3.2 The Core Strategy sets out a phasing structure for the release of land within two tiers, under policies H1, H2 and H3. Housing land planned for release in Great Wakering has been set out in Policy H3, where some 250 new homes will need to be found in the period post 2021. However, Policy H3 also advises that:

"The Council will monitor the supply and development of housing in the District and may bring forward development in these locations prior to 2021, if required to meet East of England Plan requirements."

3.3 The East of England Plan has since been abolished, however all Councils in England are required by Government to identify and maintain a continuous five-year housing land supply. Rochford will therefore, need to continue to monitor the rate of housing delivery as originally envisaged in the Core Strategy and bring forward sites as and when to meet its needs.

3.4 The Council followed its Core Strategy with the adoption of an Allocations Plan in February 2014. The Allocations Plan, which was the subject of extensive consultation, identified the precise locations for all forms of development required, allocating individual sites to meet the Council’s housing growth requirements set out in the Core Strategy. In the case of the allocations proposed for Great Wakering, three sites were identified, one being a "Brownfield" location, namely Star Lane Brickworks and Star Industrial Estate, referenced BFR1. The other two sites were Green Belt releases, Site SER 9a (Land west of Little Wakering Road) and the application site, SER 9b. All three locations can be seen in the extract maps overleaf taken from the Allocations Plan, along with a proposed new Employment Site in Great Wakering, referenced NEL 2.
3.5  Early Land Release

Whilst it is clear from the policies set out in the adopted Core Strategy and the
Allocations Plan that delivery of housing on the application site SER 9b, would be
held back until post 2021, actual delivery of housing since these plans were
adopted has been slower than expected. Some of the major housing sites
identified for delivery under the first tier of housing in Core Strategy Policy H2
have not been delivered to date. The most notable of which would be the 450
units at West Rochford (Hall Road), which were expected to be delivered by
2015; work on this site is only just beginning.

3.6  It should be remembered that Policy H3 of the Core Strategy advises that the
Council will monitor delivery rates and will bring forward sites if delivery is
behind expectations. The joint applicants have commissioned planning
consultants Barton Willmore to undertake a Housing Land Review of the District
to assess the current rates of delivery. This Housing Review is submitted in
support of this application and it clearly sets out the evidence, which justifies
the early release of the application site. Whilst this planning application is being
made now in outline, there is still some way to go before any houses might start
to appear on the land. It is not expected that development of the site will begin
until at least 2018, with projected construction of circa 50 dwellings per year.
Completion of the development will not be until 2022 at the earliest.

3.7  Pre- Application Engagement

The joint applicants have held a number of meetings with the Council's Senior
Planning Officers to discuss these proposals prior to the submission of the
application. A key issue for discussion was the potential to bring forward the
submission of the application prior to 2021. In a written response to this
particular issue dated 13th November 2015, Officers advised the joint applicants
that:

"The principle of residential development of this site would accord with
site allocation SER 9b of the Site Allocations Document adopted in
December 2014, however this site is safeguarded for development until
2021, unless required in order to maintain a five year supply of
deliverable housing land. Whilst the Council’s most up to date Annual Monitoring Report (AMR 2014) concluded that a five-year supply was demonstrated, the AMR has not yet been updated with data from 2013/2014, nor has more recent data been considered. The Council’s AMR is scheduled to be updated in early 2016. I have discussed the housing supply matter with my Head of Service and can confirm that the general view is that at present, the Council, would not seek to resist an application for development of the SER 9b site pre-2021”.

3.8 At the time of writing this statement June 2016, the expected AMR update had not been published. However, the joint applicant’s Housing Land Review submitted with the application, clearly makes the case that the application site will need to come forward to contribute to the Council’s 5-year housing land supply.

3.9 Further pre-application meetings were held with Officers, where more detailed matters were considered. Initially, the applicants tabled an indicative scheme of 201 residential units. This indicative scheme was also assessed by the Urban Design Team at Essex County Council, following which, further refinements were made, including a reduction in the number of dwellings proposed to 191.

3.10 **Public Engagement**

The joint applicants and their advisers attended a briefing with Great Wakering Parish Council, where an indicative scheme of 191 units was tabled. The briefing provided some useful feedback on the proposals and the joint applicants were able to answer a number of questions from Parish Councillors in relation to the impact of the proposals on the wildlife site, site access arrangements and how and where s106 funds would be spent.

3.11 A formal Public Consultation Event took place on the 25th April 2016, at the Great Wakering Memorial Hall. The event was attended by some 156 people of which 88 provided a feedback. The nature of the feedback and how it has shaped the final proposals is set out in a Statement of Community Involvement Report, which is submitted as part of the application.

3.12 The indicative scheme displayed at the consultation event, continued to illustrate a scheme of 191 residential units. Following this consultation, the
scheme was further reduced in number to 180 units. Overall, the discussions with Councillors, Stakeholders and the public has resulted in a number of amendments to the proposals, perhaps most notable of which is the reduction in the number of dwellings proposed, which has reduced by 21 from 201 to 180.

The Application Proposals

4.0 The planning application is submitted in Outline with all matters reserved accept access. What this means is that the joint applicants are seeking approval in principle to develop the site for up to 180 residential units and for the site access to be granted detailed consent. This will leave the approval of the appearance, final layout, landscaping and scale to be decided at a later date, when further applications (the reserved matters) will need to be submitted and approved by the Council.

4.1 As the scheme is submitted in outline, there are few formal plans. However, the applicants have prepared an illustrative layout and submitted some illustrative sections and typical street scenes. The illustrative layout indicates a form of development of the site, that conforms to urban design principles, highway guidance and illustrates each of the 180 homes, its garden and parking provision. The applicants do not seek formal approval of this layout, it is primarily submitted to illustrate that the site area is capable of accommodating the quantum of housing proposed, in a form that will meet parking, garden size, highway and public open space standards and policy requirements.

4.2 The layout also illustrates a mix of units from 2 bed to 5 bed. Whilst there is no formal requirement for the submission of detail, the applicant’s Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the application provides a wealth of information relating to how the site will connect to the settlement, the size and types of homes proposed, how the scheme has evolved, the possible design of dwellings and some illustrative street scenes. In addition, it suggests a possible mix of units and provides helpful information in relation to surface water drainage.

4.3 Affordable Housing Provision
A scheme of 180 residential units means that these proposals will be qualifying
development for the provision of affordable housing as required by Policy H4 of the Core Strategy. Policy H4 requires 35% of all developments, which exceed 10 units to make provision for affordable homes. In this case, the development will make provision for some 63 affordable homes across the site, which will be secured via a legally binding Planning Obligation (s106 agreement). Policy H4 also requires that the affordable housing units provided will be split between homes for affordable rent (80%) and homes for shared ownership (20%).

4.4 The final mix of units and the type of affordable homes required will need to be agreed with the Council’s Housing Officers, in order that they meet up-to-date local housing needs. However, the site can make provision for a wide range of unit sizes and types to match units to the needs of local residents.

The Planning Policy Framework

5.0 Planning in England operates on a plan-led system where planning decisions are to be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. This doctrine is given statutory force by s38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In Rochford, the development plan consists of the following adopted documents:

- The Core Strategy (2011)
- The Allocations Plan (2014)
- The Development Management Plan (2014)
- Hockley Area Action Plan (2014)
- London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (2014)
- Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2015)
- Rayleigh Centre Area Action Plan (2015)

5.1 It is the first three documents in the list above, which are of relevance to this proposal.

5.2 The Core Strategy 2011
Key policies of the Core Strategy, which will directly influence these proposals will include the following list of Policies:
Where they can be at this outline stage, these proposals have been prepared and designed to be fully compliant with the above policies. Where these policies seek specific requirements, the proposals have been designed to meet such requirements or to make suitable provision.

Policies H1, H2 and H3 - The application site has a key role in meeting the Council's housing growth identified within the housing policies of the Core Strategy. Policy H3 safeguards housing delivery on this site until post 2021, however the policy also allows some flexibility in delivery, where housing delivery expected elsewhere in the District, falls behind expectations. Housing delivery within the District has been delayed, as such Officers have accepted that these proposals can come forward early. A Housing Land Review is submitted with this application, which provides the necessary evidence to
support the early submission of a planning application on this site.

5.5 **Policies H4, H5 and H6** - The proposals make provision for 35% Affordable Housing which is to be secured via a s106 Planning Obligation. The final dwelling types and Lifetime Homes provision will be the subject of reserved matters applications. However, the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application demonstrates how provision can be made on this site to meet policies.

5.6 **Policy CP1** - Final design and layout is also a reserved matter, however the illustrative scheme submitted demonstrates a form of development, which adheres to Essex Design Guide principles, which has been reviewed and influenced through discussions with Essex County Council Urban Design Team.

5.7 **Policy ENV1** - The land to the south of the application site is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is not part of the development, but falls within the applicant’s ownership. As such, care has been taken in the preparation of these proposals to ensure that the wildlife site is both protected and enhanced. Extensive ecological assessments have been undertaken on both the application site and the LWS. Those assessments are submitted in support of this proposal and demonstrates that the LWS can co-exist with the development and be improved in the long term through better management. An additional attenuation pond is proposed as part of the sustainable urban drainage of the application site, which it is proposed, will allow the biodiversity of the area to be improved.

5.8 **Policies ENV 3 & 4** - Comprehensive Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Strategies are submitted in support of these proposals. These strategies illustrate the means by which the site will be protected from flooding and why the development will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. In the case of surface water, the joint applicants have prepared a Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy, which is submitted with the application, which utilises swales and other water attenuation techniques, to reduce surface water run off rates to meet current standards. The strategy will result in better surface water run off rates than are currently experienced with the site undeveloped.

5.9 **Policies CLT 1 to 8** - The joint applicants fully accept the need to make financial contributions in order to mitigate the impact of the proposals on the provision of
education, health and a range of community facilities. Initial engagement with
the relative bodies and authorities that govern the provision of such services
suggest that financial contributions will need to be made and be secured through
a legally binding agreement towards the provision of funds to local schools,
health centres and facilities to ensure the impacts of the development are
specifically mitigated within Great Wakering and its environs.

5.10 Policies T1, T3 and T8 - A comprehensive transport assessment has been carried
out on the applicant's behalf to ensure that the proposals do not impact
negatively on the capacity and safety of the local highway network. The
assessments have been scoped with Essex County Council Highways to ensure that
they are robust and take account of all relevant factors. The Transport
Assessment (TA) demonstrates that the local highway network can accommodate
the development, alongside other developments either recently implemented or
proposed. Some improvements to local junctions will however be required and
these works will be funded entirely by this development and put in place at an
early stage.

The Rochford Allocations Plan 2014

5.11 The application site is specially identified for housing development in the
Rochford Allocations Plan, given the reference, Site SER 9b.

5.12 Housing Capacity
Each allocation within the Plan is provided with a Concept Statement, which
provides a set of bespoke requirements for the allocation in question. The
Concept Statement, which relates to the application site has been used as a
"blueprint" for the development of the illustrative proposals submitted with this
application. The allocation, along with that of SER9a is for some 250 homes to
be provided across both sites. The application proposals involve up to 180 homes
and it is understood that the landowners/promoters of SER 9a, propose around
130 homes. Together therefore, these two sites if developed as proposed, will
result in the provision of 310 residential units, which is 60 units more than
anticipated.

5.13 This potential planning policy issue has been part of the pre application
discussions with Officers. In response, Officers have advised the joint applicants as follows:

"Policy SER9 identifies that together, the SER9a site and the SER9b site should have the capacity to accommodate a minimum of 250 dwellings. In your pre-application submission, you have identified that up to 200 dwellings would be proposed for the site. This together with the SER9a site is likely to result in more than 250 dwellings in total. This is not of concern in principle, but even if an outline application were proposed with all matters reserved, an indicative layout would be required to demonstrate that the site could accommodate up to 200 dwellings successfully, achieving the high standard of design sought by the Council together with all of the necessary on-site requirements, such as open space etc. The infrastructure requirements that development of the site would be expected to deliver are detailed Policy SER9. I consider that it would be beneficial to engage in further detailed pre-application discussions once an indicative first draft layout is available' at this stage it would be possible to provide a view on whether 200 dwellings could be accommodated".

5.14 It should be noted that at the time of the pre-application engagement, the scheme proposed 201 units, which has subsequently been reduced to 180 units. It is clear from the Officers advice above, that exceeding the 250 units anticipated in the policy documents is not in itself objectionable, provided the site can accommodate the quantum of development proposed and meet all other requirements.

5.15 Whilst the Allocations Plan was seeking 250 units across both sites SER 9a & 9b, it was also suggesting a development density on each site of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). The illustrative proposals for the application site, illustrates 180 units over 8.83 hectares, which equates to a gross development density of 20dph. Were the proposed layout to illustrate a density of 30dph across the application site, it could accommodate a development of some 265 units.

5.16 It is evident therefore from the illustrative layout, that the application site can comfortably accommodate 180 units and make suitable provision for open space and all other requirements. At 20 dph, the density of the development is
considered to more appropriate to this edge of village location and provides a greener more generous layout.

5.17  **Public Open Space**

The Allocations Plan requires landscape buffers to be provided between the site and the properties in the High Street, as well as on the boundary with Star Lane Industrial Estate. The illustrative scheme accommodates this requirement and has also provided landscape buffers to the west and southern boundaries.

5.18  Public Open Space provision as set out in the Concept Statement requires 1.8 hectares of natural/semi natural greenspace and a minimum of 0.2 hectares of amenity greenspace, across sites SER9a and 9b. Pro-rata, this will equate to 0.0072 ha per dwelling for natural/semi natural space and 0.008 ha per dwelling for amenity greenspace. On the basis of a proposal of 180 units, the provision required is as follows and as shown on the illustrative layout:

- Natural/semi natural greenspace = 1.29ha
- Amenity green space = 0.14 ha

5.19  The illustrative layout submitted, makes provision of 1.275 ha for natural/semi-natural greenspace, a shade below the pro-rata target and 0.211 ha of amenity greenspace, which exceeds the pro-rata target by 50%. The illustrative layout therefore clearly demonstrates that 180 units on this site can be comfortably accommodated at a suitable density, which reflects the character of the location and makes policy compliant provision of public open space.

5.20  **Development Management Plan**

The Development Management Plan sets out the Council’s detailed day-to-day planning policies, which are aimed at guiding detailed planning proposals. As such the majority of policy in this plan is less relevant to this Outline application. However, the plan does contain policies, which will need to be met at this stage and those policies are explored below in relation to the illustrative proposals.

5.21  **Policy DM1 Design of New Developments** The policy seeks to guide development to ensure that a range of requirements are met. Such requirements include accessibility, boundary treatment, retention of trees, parking, density, open space provision, residential amenity etc. Whilst the proposals are presently
indicative, the illustrative layout demonstrates that the requirements of this policy can be adequately met on this site. Further detail on how these requirements will be accommodated is set out in the Design and Access Statement.

5.22 **Policy DM2 Density of New Development** - The policy requires new development to be at a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), unless the site's immediate context suggests otherwise. The proposals illustrate a gross density of 20 dph, which includes landscape buffers and natural/semi natural greenspace. With the natural/semi-natural greenspace removed from the calculation, but including roads and amenity greenspace, the net density will be 24dph.

5.23 The supporting text to Policy DM2 explains that the Council do not seek to be prescriptive with regard to density, but encourage density appropriate to location. This site is on the edge of a settlement in the transition area between village and countryside. Given the location, it is considered that a lower density would be entirely appropriate. It is also the case that at 20 dph (gross) the scheme is that more generous, less cramped and less urban in character.

5.24 **DM4 Habitable Floorspace** - The policy provides minimum floorspace requirements for all new dwellings. These standards were adopted prior to the publication of the National Technical Housing Standards, which were introduced in March 2015 and exceed the national requirements. Officers have advised in pre application discussions that the proposals will need to at least meet the national standards, when the proposals are submitted at the reserved matters stage. The illustrative layout shows indicative house types that meet the national standard; further detail is provided within the Design and Access Statement, which illustrates how these standards will be met.

5.25 **Policy DM29 Air Quality** - Major development proposals are required to submit an Air Quality Assessment to determine the impact of a proposal on existing air quality. The applicants have carried out an Air Quality Assessment, which supports the proposals. The assessment confirms that the impact of the development will be negligible on the quality of the air in the location.

5.26 **Policy DM30 Parking Standards** - Rochford District Council has adopted its own
parking standards, which require 1 space for one bed units and 2 spaces for 2 or more bed units, plus 0.25 spaces for visitors. The illustrative layout shows each property with at least 2 (off-street) parking spaces, along with visitor spaces distributed across the site. Further information on parking is set out in the Design and Access Statement.

**The Material Planning Considerations**

6.0 The material planning considerations associated with this site are considered to relate to the following key matters: -

- The Principle of Development
- Ecology and the future of the Local Wildlife Site
- Traffic and Transport
- Health Provision
- Education Provision
- Community Youth Provision
- Affordable Housing Provision and Community Contributions

6.1 The Principle of the Development

The submission of this application is proceeded by a comprehensive planning policy framework, which has allocated the site for housing development. The proposals are coming forward earlier than expected in 2021, however adopted policy allows for such flexibility, where planned development has not been delivered. Evidence to support an early application is submitted with these proposals in the form of a Housing Land Review, the outcomes of which have been discussed with the Council in pre-application discussions and the principle of an early application has been accepted to assist the Council in meeting is five-year housing land supply requirements.

6.2 As the proposals are submitted outline, there is no details to be formally approved, other than the means of access, which has previously been approved as part of the consent issued on the former Brickworks Site BFR 1 (Phase 1). A key consideration for the Council in assessing the proposals is for it to be satisfied that the allocated site can accommodate 180 residential units, whilst
meeting all policy standards for off-street parking, garden sizes, public open space requirements and highway design.

6.3 In order to demonstrate that up to 180 units can be accommodated, the application is supported by an Illustrative Layout and Design and Access Statement, which together clearly demonstrate that the quantum of development proposed, can be comfortably accommodated within the identified allocation site boundaries, whilst making adequate provision to meet all requirements and standards. As such, it is considered that the principle of development proposed is acceptable and fully in accordance with relevant planning policy.

6.4 Ecology and the future of the Local Wildlife Site

The application site is located just north of Star Lane Pits (LWS). As such, it is important that the proposals are capable of successfully co-existing with the wildlife site and that no material harm results. The application site itself, along with the Star Lane Pits LWS has been the subject of a number of extensive ecology studies, which include:

- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Badger Survey
- Water Vole Survey
- Reptile Survey
- Great Crested Newts Survey
- Winter Bird Survey
- Bat Survey

6.5 A summary of the surveys and the impact of the proposals on ecology and the local wildlife site is set out below:

The site has been subject to extensive ecological surveys since 2015, and as such the ecological baseline of the site is well known. Each of the ecological surveys and assessments that have been undertaken is discussed in turn below.

- In June 2015, a preliminary ecological assessment of the site was undertaken. A number of nearby nature conservation sites were
identified, including Foulness Special Protection Area and RAMSAR site, and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation; both are situated 1.3 km from the site boundary at the closest point. The Star Lane Pits Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is contained within the site boundary and supports a number of rare species, including the Pyramidal Orchid. The preliminary ecological assessment identified a number of different habitats on site, including arable land, scrub, grassland, plantation woodland, buildings and hardstanding.

- In June 2015, a badger survey of the site was undertaken. No badger activity, such as footprints, hairs, latrines or setts was identified during the survey, either within the site boundaries or the immediate 30 m buffer zone around its edge.

- In June 2015, a water vole survey of the site was undertaken. The habitat assessment identified that two ponds, situated within the LWS, provided suitable water vole habitat. No evidence of water vole, such as burrows, footprints, latrines and feeding remains, were recorded along the banks of any of the ponds surveyed.

- In June 2015, a terrestrial invertebrate survey of the site was undertaken. A total of 259 invertebrate species were recorded, four of which are considered to be of conservation concern (a bee species, two wasp species and a species of fly). All of these species of conservation concern were associated with the open mosaic habitat in the western part of the LWS.

- In July and August 2015, a reptile survey of the site was undertaken. The site was considered to contain habitats suitable for use by reptile species, including open areas of grassland for basking, as well as very dense scrub and woodland for refuge. Low populations of common lizard, slow worm and grass snake were found during the surveys. The majority of reptiles were recorded within the LWS. However, reptiles were also recorded within scrub and grassland habitats along the access road to the south of the LWS, and along the ditch that bisects the arable fields to the south of the site.
• In June 2015, a great crested newt survey of the site was undertaken. A total of six ponds (including four ponds within the LWS) within a 500 m radius of the site were assessed to determine their suitability to support great crested newts. The four ponds within the LWS underwent further evaluation in the form of eDNA analysis, to determine whether great crested newts were present in these ponds. All ponds were considered to provide poor habitat for supporting great crested newts, and the eDNA analysis results were negative for all four of the ponds assessed, confirming that great crested newts are not present in the ponds within the LWS.

• In June and July 2015, a breeding bird survey of the site was undertaken. The surveys identified a total of 48 bird species across the survey area, of which 38 were identified as having bred on site. Of these 38 breeding species, a number are classified as species of conservation concern, including house sparrow, skylark, song thrush, corn bunting, linnet and cuckoo. The majority of these species of conservation concern are farmland bird species and were observed in the arable fields. However, song thrush and cuckoo were recorded within the LWS.

• In November and December 2015, and January and February 2016, a winter bird survey of the site was undertaken. The winter bird surveys identified a total of 39 bird species across the survey area. Based on the results of the winter bird surveys, the site is considered to be of low importance to wintering birds overall, but relatively important for a number of species of conservation concern, including house sparrow, pochard, and starling. The primary important habitats for wintering birds at the site were considered to be those within the LWS, and the areas of scrub along the northern and south western site boundaries.

The proposed development will primarily result in the loss of arable habitat in the northern half of the site. However, the Local Wildlife Site is to be retained and is unlikely to be significantly affected by the development, although access to the site is likely to be enhanced. The retention of the LWS means that the
site is likely to continue to provide suitable habitat for a number of ecological receptors, including reptiles and breeding birds.

6.6 Traffic and Transport

The vehicular access to the development will be from Star Lane via a priority junction that will also serve the former Brickworks site, which is currently under construction. This will be the site's sole means of vehicular access into and out of the site, however a second access/egress will be available from the High Street, which will strictly be for emergency vehicles only and controlled by lockable bollards. The route to and from the High Street will however be accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, which will provide a useful link to facilities within the village centre and to the local primary school. The site is also well served by bus stops, some 90% of the new properties are located a short walking distance from a bus stop 400m).

6.7 The anticipated number of new residents from the development has been assessed and the impact of those residents on existing bus services has been found not be significant. To some extent, an increase in bus users is more likely to improve services overall and may lead to additional services being viable.

6.8 The likely traffic generation resulting from the proposed development and from other sites, which are likely to emerge in future, has been modelled within a traffic study. The results of the modelling are set out in the joint applicant’s Transport Assessment (TA). The model has considered the impact of the development on the existing highway network and has assessed 7 local junctions to determine where if at all, congestion may occur as a result of the increased traffic generated by the development. Of the 7 junctions, 5 were found to be capable of operating within capacity with the projected traffic. However, 2 junctions were recorded as being at or above capacity, in both the present and future traffic scenarios. In order to alleviate the impact of the development at these junctions, improvements shall be carried out in consultation with the highway authority to increase junction capacity. These improvements will be funded by the development and carried out prior to the development being fully occupied.

6.9 Overall, the TA can demonstrate that the proposed development traffic can be
accommodated successfully on to the local highway network, subject to some
junction improvement.

6.10 Heath Provision

The development will be required to make financial contributions towards
mitigating the impact of the development on local health services. Early
engagement with NHS England revealed that a financial contribution would be
required from the development, which would be spent on the provision of
additional primary healthcare services at Great Wakering Medical Centre. It is
acknowledged that the local health centre is at times working at capacity,
however this is the case in most area in England and is a matter for the National
Health Service to address. The financial contributions, which will be made as
part of this proposal will mitigate the impact of the development locally. The
joint applicants have also carried out a Health Impact Assessment, which forms
part of the application submission. The assessment looks at the wider health
impacts of the development and demonstrates that there will be no significant
effects on health.

6.11 Education Provision

Initial discussions with Essex County Council Education revealed that the
development will need to make financial contributions towards Early Years and
Child Care, Primary and Secondary School place provision. The financial
contributions would be spent in local schools, namely, Great Wakering Primary,
Barling Magna Primary School and King Edmund Secondary School. Since the
introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, financial
contributions generated by development in relation to school places must be
spent on specific projects at identified local schools. These regulations will
ensure that the money provided is not pooled and spent elsewhere, which was a
concern voiced by members of the public in pre-submission consultation. How
this money is divided between the individual schools, will depend on the final
mix of units proposed. Once the scheme is under consideration, it is likely that
the education authority will advise the Council on the required level of
contribution and the split of the funds between early years, child care, primary
and secondary places. Contributions for secondary places will also require a
contribution for school transport, required to bus pupils between Great Wakering and King Edmund School. Secondary school transport in Essex is calculated at £4.30 x 190 school days x 5 years and is index linked to protect against inflation. The proposals are therefore able to make suitable provision to mitigate the impact of development on local education services in accordance with policy.

6.12 Community Youth Facilities

Of particular importance to Great Wakering is the need to provide or improve existing facilities for local youths. The level of contribution and how it is spent will eventually be a matter for the Council to determine. However, the joint applicants acknowledge the need to make suitable contributions towards appropriate for this sector of community. Rather than simply paying monies and in order to establish the most effective contribution required, the applicants intend to collaborate with the Council and the local youth community to learn what facilities are most appropriate to this group and how the development might best respond to the interests of the local youth community.

6.13 Affordable Housing and Other Contributions

The application proposals are qualifying development for the provision of affordable housing and other financial contributions. As such 35% or 63 units of the development of 180 residential units, will be provided as affordable housing, which will be secured via a legally binding Planning Obligation. Core Strategy Policy H4 also requires the affordable units provided in the development to have a tenure split of 80% to be available at an affordable rent and 20% of the affordable units to be given over to shared ownership. The affordable housing policy in Rochford also requires the affordable units to be provided in the scheme to be “tenure blind”, which means their design and appearance is the same as the market houses on the development. The precise mix of units for the affordable housing will be determined nearer the time of their construction, however pre-application discussions suggested a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed units. The proposals will therefore make full policy compliant affordable housing provision in accordance with Policy H4.
6.14 Other Contributions

Precisely what final contributions are required from this development will ultimately be determined by the Council in negotiation with the joint applicants. However, the key contributions required by adopted planning policy in the areas of affordable housing, educations, health and youth facilities, which were identified in pre-application discussions will be made and form part of the Heads of Terms submitted with the planning application. A requirement to make provision for other contributions may also emerge during the determination of the application and in response to consultation with statutory consultees.

6.15 Play Space - The development includes significant areas of public open space, which will need to be managed by the developer through a management company. Planning policy will also require parts of the public open space within the development to be provided as a Local Area for Play and as a Local Equipped Area for Play. The levels of such provision and the funds required to support ongoing maintenance will need to be discussed and agreed with Officers.

6.16 Highway Improvement Works - It has been determined through the transport assessment that funds will be required to improve two local junctions. It is also standard practice in Essex for the developer to fund Travel Packs for the occupants of each new dwelling. Travels Packs give bespoke information to new home owners on local bus services and often include a limited number of free bus tickets to encourage new residents to use public transport. The precise works required to be carried out in the highway will be agreed with the highway authority and provision made in a suitable legal agreement for their implementation.

6.17 Local Wildlife Site Management - Some early discussions through consultation have taken place, which suggest that the local wildlife site adjacent to the development becomes the subject of a longer term management plan and perhaps placed within the stewardship of the Essex Wildlife Trust or similar body. Further discussions need to take place to identify a means by which such a plan can be arranged, delivered and maintained. The joint applicants are willing to enter into discussions on this subject and any agreed solution may need to form part of a Planning Obligation to ensure some funding is directed towards a plan and to secure a management arrangement as part of any planning approval.
Conclusions

7.0 The proposed development of the site follows the initial identification of Great Wakering as a broad location for housing growth in the adopted Rochford Core Strategy published following consultation in 2010. The Core Strategy was followed by the allocation of this specific site by Rochford District Council in its Allocations Plan published in 2014. The choice of this site, along with all other allocations within the adopted plan was influenced by extensive public consultation and following an Examination in Public.

7.1 Since the site was selected, along with the redevelopment of the neighbouring Star Lane Brickworks, work was begun to consider the most appropriate access arrangements and to determine a form of development that would allow the adjacent local wildlife site (LWS) to be retained and to thrive alongside a new residential neighbourhood. Through consultation with the Council and highway authority, it was determined that vehicular access to the site will come from Star Lane, via the former Brickworks site, and that the existing access to the High Street, would be for emergency use only. In relation to the LWS, extensive ecological surveys have been carried out over the last 18 months to assess the richness of the site and to inform a scheme of development, which would ensure the ongoing retention and enhancement of this important ecological resource. The proposals are considered to be capable of achieving this objective.

7.2 The planning policy background associated with the application site, safeguards its development until post 2021, unless other allocated housing site planned for delivery sooner are not delivered as expected. Development of a number of sites identified within the Core Strategy and allocated in the Allocations Plan, which were scheduled for delivery between 2012 and 2015 are behind, or have not been commenced. The Council has therefore accepted that the application site can now come forward early. That said, actual development on the site is unlikely to begin until early 2018 and completion is expected in late either 2021 or in 2022.

7.3 The application site itself has few constraints that might hinder its development. One area of particular sensitivity is the Star Lane Pits Local Wildlife Site (LWS).
The wildlife site does not fall within the application site, however it is owned by the joint applicants, which allows for its enhancement and longer term maintenance, which can be delivered via the approval of this application.

7.4 Following extensive ecological assessment, the advice of the joint applicant’s ecological team, is that the development will not significantly affect the LWS that it will be able to continue to provide a suitable habitat for a number of species, protected or otherwise.

7.5 Along with ecology, matters such as the development’s impact on traffic and transport, flooding, surface water, air quality, archaeology, landscape, health and noise have all been comprehensively assessed in a range of technical studies submitted in support of the proposals. These studies have found that the proposed development will have no significant impact on any matters of acknowledged importance.

7.6 As required by national and local planning policy, the proposals will make suitable provision for affordable housing, education, health, youth and other community facilities, in order to mitigate the impact of the scheme on community infrastructure and services. The final levels of contribution will need to be agreed with the Council, however the joint applicants anticipate that such contributions will be fully policy compliant. For affordable housing, that means 63 of the 180 residential units, will be provided for affordable rent and shared equity. In terms of school places financial contributions will be provided to be spent in local schools and monies provided for health provision.

7.7 Overall, it is considered that these proposals will deliver a development of high quality, which is entirely in accordance with all relevant up-to-date planning policy. The proposals will play an important role in providing much needed sustainable, family housing, which is specifically required to meet the Council’s market and affordable housing needs in the short to medium term. As such the application can be approved without delay.