

**Land to rear of the Foremans Centre  
High Street Headcorn TN27 9NE**

**Planning Statement  
On behalf of Town Centre Parking Ltd**

**Erection of a terrace of 5 dwellings with parking and turning areas and  
associated highway works.**

**HPPC Ref: 31279**

**Date: September 2022**



# Contents

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1. Introduction	3
2. Site & Location	3
3. Planning History	4
4. Proposal	5
5. Planning Policy	5
6. Planning Benefits	12
7. Planning Considerations	13
8. Conclusion	18

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning statement is to support the planning application to Maidstone Borough Council for the erection of a terrace of five dwellings on land to the rear of the Foremans Centre, High Street, Headcorn. The application is made by the site owner, Town Centre Parking Ltd.
- 1.2 In the statement we outline and discuss the relevant planning considerations, including a description of the site, planning history, the relevant planning policy context for the proposal, details of the development, design and access considerations, the key planning issues and from this draw our conclusions in support of the proposal.

## **2 SITE AND LOCATION**

- 2.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.16 hectares, comprising a roughly rectangular area of land at the southern end of the Foreman Centre access road. The site is relatively flat, mainly surfaced with pavements as well as an area of aggregate hardstanding. The site is currently used as a private car park, providing 26 spaces and is located next to a pay and display car park and the Tallow Court residential Development comprising 10 traditionally designed cottages, these were constructed in 2007. North of this there is commercial development comprising a retail building occupied by the Original Factory Shop and a Sainsbury's Local store which fronts the High Street, this comprises part of the main central area of the village. To the South the site bounds the mainline railway. Headcorn Station is located some 400 metres east of the application site. Between the station and the application is residential development in Rushford Close, comprising mainly semi-detached houses from the mid to late twentieth century and separated from the railway by the station car park. To the west of the application site is wooded area and beyond that the village hall.
- 2.2 Headcorn itself is a medium sized village long established, today it has a population of 5790 people. The village has a wide range of services, including a large village hall, two doctor's surgeries, a dental clinic, pharmacy, library, nursery and primary school, a range of shops and professional services, together with places to eat and drink found in the High Street, as well as a fire station and petrol filling station. As previously mentioned, the village has a railway station on the main line between Dover and London. There is a twice hourly service to Dover (49 minutes) and to London Charing Cross (67 minutes). The village is also served by the no.12 and no.24 bus service, providing a twice hourly service to Maidstone and Tenterden. Services not available in Headcorn can be found in the county town of Maidstone, nine miles to the north west of the village, along the A274.
- 2.3 The application site is within floodzone 1 land at least risk of flooding. The site, other than the

access road along Tallow Court, sits outside of the Headcorn Conservation Area, the nearest listed buildings to the site are located on High Street, well away from the application site. The wooded area to the east of the application site, identified as land rear of Headcorn Methodist Church, High Street, Headcorn, is protected by a preservation order No.30 of 2003. The map below shows the extent of the Headcorn Conservation Area (green), Tree Preservation Order (yellow) and listed buildings (red) in the vicinity of the application site.



**Conservation Area, Listed Buildings and Tree Preservation Orders relative to the application site.**

- 2.4 The application site sits immediately alongside the settlement boundary for Headcorn, which excludes land between the village and the railway. The High Street and retail units at the northern end of Tallow Court are within the defined local retail centre, that also includes High Street frontages. The site is outside of the defined minerals safeguarding area and falls within the Low Weald landscape of local importance.

### 3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning permission for the *Erection of a two-storey building for a mixed-use comprising Use Classes A2 & B1 and reorganisation of existing car parking spaces*, was approved under reference 17/502362/FUL on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017. Subsequently an application was made under reference 18/500982/SUB to discharge the pre-commencement conditions and some works

we were subsequently carried out on site. A Lawful Development Certificate has been obtained under reference 21/501905/LDCEX to confirm that the planning permission 17/502362/FUL has been awfully implemented. The works allowed by this permission can therefore be carried out in perpetuity.

## **4 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission for the development of the site with a terrace of five individually designed houses. Each house is proposed to be a three-bedroom property and will be provided with two parking spaces and set within a generous plot. The houses have been designed to accord with the national space standards. A parking area of 20 parking spaces will be retained by the Parish Council at the western end of the site. The design approach to the development is set out in more detail in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the application. Alterations to the kerb alignment to reduce the occurrences of traffic being impeded by inappropriate parking are proposed at the High Street end of the access road.
- 4.2 The previous landowner secured the previous planning permission by making a start on site in the hope that interest would arise, however interest in commercial office floorspace in this location has been limited and the changes to working practices resulting from the pandemic has further diminished the desirability of office development such as permitted here. There remains more than sufficient office space available to meet demand even despite the uptake of permitted development rights to convert offices to residential use.
- 4.3 Further evidence in support of the lack of interest for bringing this commercial proposal forward is outlined in the accompanying letter from Watson Day Chartered Surveyors, who were tasked with marketing the development. They also identify some specific issue relative to the rents achievable within Headcorn that contribute towards the site being considered uneconomic to develop. The issue of restrictive planning use is considered to reduce potential interest from occupiers as well as flexibility on lease terms which harms the ability to secure funding. As a result the landowner has sought to look at alternative proposals for the site and residential use is the preferred option.

## **5 PLANNING POLICY**

### *National Planning Policy Framework*

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2021. At the heart of the Framework is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and

promotes 'approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay' (paragraph 11).

- 5.2 Paragraph 11 addresses both decision making and decision taking; from allocating sites to granting planning permission for a scheme and requires consideration of three objectives of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental).
- 5.3 Where relevant policies are out of date, the Framework is clear that planning permission should be granted unless 'any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework when taken as a whole or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted'.
- 5.4 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF relates to development contributions and identifies that plans should set out the contributions required from development, for the provision of affordable housing along with other infrastructure such as that required for health and that these should not undermine the viability of the plan.
- 5.5 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way and should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. In accordance with paragraph 47 planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions should be made as quickly as possible.
- 5.6 The NPPF advocates the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 60 supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed. Furthermore paragraph 69 identifies the role small and medium sized sites can make in contributing to meeting the housing requirement of an area. It is also expected that local authorities will provide at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare. In addition, in accordance with paragraph 119 it is required to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses and make as much use as possible of previously-developed land. Paragraph 120 c) specifically supports appropriate opportunities to remediate derelict land.

- 5.7 The NPPF seeks to build a strong, competitive economy and to promote healthy and safe communities, that are attractive and well-designed, it also seeks to enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. (paragraph 92) and to take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health and to ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services, (paragraph 93). Paragraph 96 seeks to ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure, stating local authorities should work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities.
- 5.8 In accordance with paragraph 110 promoting sustainable transport is central to all development proposals, with the expectation that development will give priority to pedestrian and cycle movement, the needs of people with disabilities and create, safe, secure and attractive places (paragraph 112)
- 5.9 The NPPF aims to ensure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. (paragraph 126), whilst great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative design, while paragraph 134 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, specifically where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design. Importantly, it recognises that significant weight where such guidance and policies are met, paragraph 134 a) and where outstanding or innovative designs are proposed that offer high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design and are in keeping with the overall form and layout of their surroundings, paragraph 134 b).
- 5.10 Paragraph 159 requires the avoidance of inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing development away from areas at highest risk.
- 5.11 Landscape and biodiversity must also be considered and the impact or benefits to these matters given due consideration (paragraph 174 onwards).

*Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017*

- 5.12 The Development Plan relative to Headcorn comprises the Maidstone Borough Local Plan adopted on 25 October 2017.
- 5.13 The Local Plan Review document was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. An Examination In Public is scheduled to start on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022, for this reason in line with the NPPF the emerging policies contained within the review

can only be afforded limited weight.

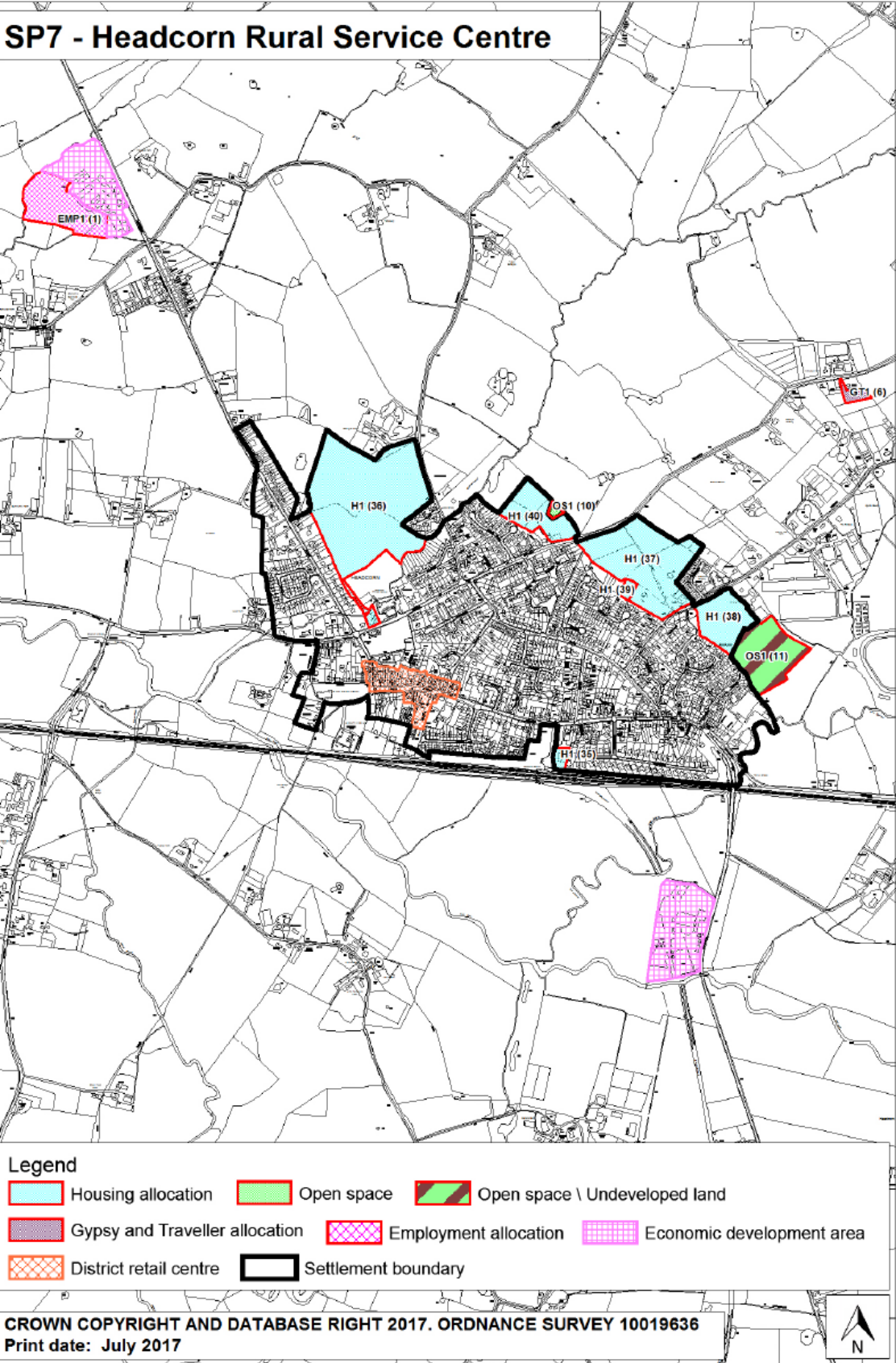
- 5.14 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP) covers the period 2011-2031. The Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives set out in the plan seeks to deliver sustainable growth and regeneration whilst protecting and enhancing the borough's natural and built assets. Maidstone is identified as the main settlement in terms of growth, and at the next level downward, the role of rural service centre is applied to the larger villages including Headcorn, with the intention of reinforcing their current role by having further suitable development and infrastructure directed their way.
- 5.15 Based on the calculated need the plan identifies a need for 17,660 dwellings to be provided within the borough over the plan period. This equates to 883 dwellings per year. Of these taking those houses already delivered, commitments and both site specific and broad allocations their remains a further requirement for 1,650 houses to be delivered by windfall development, The Local Plan anticipated that any shortfall in provision would be addressed through the local plan review with the intention of having this adopted by April 2021.
- 5.16 The MBLP recognises that the five rural service centres, including Headcorn, provide a good range of services which serve both the village and surrounding hinterland. All provide a nursery and primary school, a range of shops including a Post office, a doctor's surgery, at least one place of worship, public house, restaurant and community hall, as well as open space provision, all have a range of local employment opportunities. The centres are connected by at least four bus journeys / weekday and all have a frequent train service. The plan states that it is important that these villages are allowed to continue to serve their local area by retaining vital local services thereby reducing the need to travel. Some development at these locations provides for a choice of deliverable housing locations and supports the role of the rural service centres. The overall housing requirements and role of the rural service centres is confirmed in policy **SS1**, Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy.
- 5.17 The specific role of the Rural Service Centres is set out in policy **SP5** as follows;

*Within the designated rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst, as shown on the policies map, the council will:*

1. *Focus new housing and employment development within the settlements when it is:*
  - i. *An allocated site or broad location in the local plan;*
  - ii. *Minor development such as infilling; or*



- iii. *The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village.*
2. *Retain and improve existing employment sites and encourage new employment opportunities provided the site is in an appropriate location for, and suited to, the use.*
3. *Resist the loss of local shops, community facilities and green spaces, whilst supporting new retail development, community services and green spaces to meet local need.*



5.18 The specific requirements for Headcorn are set out in policy **SP7**, this policy identifies the specific allocations and infrastructure requirements to be delivered in Headcorn, in addition

to this the role of minor development in helping to achieve the aims of **SP5** is identified, together with the need to safeguard existing services. The policy is accompanied by the plan copied above.

- 5.19 The plan also contains the following, more generally applied, non-place specific policies. Policy **SP18** relates to the protection of the historic environment, **SP19** requires consideration of a sustainable range of house sizes, types and tenures. Policy **DM1** sets out the Principles of Good Design, applicable to all development, and seeks for proposals to create high quality design, accessible to all and that respond positively and where possible enhance the local, natural or historic character of the area and to respect its amenity. Whilst **DM2** sets out the requirements for sustainable design, including the optional requirement for tighter water efficiency. Policy **DM3** seeks the protection of the natural environment, and **DM4** that of Heritage Assets. While **DM5** seeks to promote the development of Brownfield Land and **DM12** sets out the appropriate housing density for development to meet, which for the proposed site, adjacent to a Rural Service Centre, would be 30 dwellings per hectare. More specific development management policies relate to the use of external lighting, policy **DM8**, parking standards **DM23**.

*Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review Reg 19 Submission*

- 5.20 The regulation 19 submission version of the Local Plan Review document (LPR) seeks to update and superseded the MBLP whilst saving relevant policies within it. It seeks to extend the plan period to 2037/38 and to review and update the requirements of the plan accordingly, with an assessed new target of 17,355 houses being required in the period 2011-2031, meaning there is a need for an additional 5,455 dwellings between 2022- 2037. Including in this is a need for 2,738 dwellings to be delivered by windfall development between 2022 and 2037. In addition to the on-going allocations in the MBLP, the LPR seeks to allocate two new garden communities and provide two new significant employment allocations. The role of Headcorn and that of the other rural service centres will be strengthened through the retention of existing services, the addition of new infrastructure and the regeneration of employment sites. The role of the rural service centres is set out in emerging policy LPRSP6 and with specific policy for Headcorn being set out in LPRSP6(C). This contains the proposal to allocate a further site for the development of 100 dwellings in the village, LPRSA310, increasing overall allocated provision up to 275 new dwellings.
- 5.21 Other emerging policies to note are LPRSP14A which requires sites to deliver a minimum of 20% Bio-diversity Net gain and LPRSP14(C) which seeks to address the impact of climate change including the introduction of a water efficiency requirement, the use of SuDS, and the

provision of EV infrastructure. While emerging policy LPRSP15 sets out updated Principles of Good Design required of new development. Generally, the development management policies in the MBLP have been updated, whilst policies specifically relating to technical standards LPRQ&D6 and private open space standards LPRQ&D7 have been introduced, LPRQ&D6 requires for housing to meet the national prescribed internal space standards, and for the higher level of water efficiency as also set out in LPRSP14(c). While LPRQ&D7 requires new dwelling is to have a rear garden at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the property.

## **6 Planning Benefits**

- 6.1 The purpose of this section is to set out the benefits of the development proposals in relation to the three dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental. Overall the LPR seeks to further mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change.

### *Social Benefits*

- 6.2 The provision of market housing will boost the supply of land for housing, providing for high quality market family housing within a sustainable location. The development proposals will make a valuable contribution to the council's 5-year supply.
- 6.3 The proposed development will provide dwellings providing a specific choice of type and size satisfying a specific element of the identified housing demand and market assessment for Maidstone Borough. New homes in Headcorn will enable people to access the housing market locally rather than being forced to move away due to lack of available housing.
- 6.4 Overall the proposals will assist in helping to maintain and enhance the vitality of the local community, by providing the identified social benefits for Headcorn and its surrounding area in line with its role as a rural service centre.

### *Economic Benefits*

- 6.5 The economic benefits of the proposed development will be apparent from both the construction and the operational impacts of the subsequent occupation of the houses. The construction will involve spend on the works and provide employment opportunities. Whilst the housing once completed will add to the borough's economically active population and add to the gross household expenditure which in turn will support further local employment. On top of this the additional housing will provide additional council tax income to the borough council.

### *Environmental Benefits*

- 6.6 When finished the development will significantly improve the visual amenity and general environment of the immediate area. The development proposes measures in line with the development plan to address and adapt to climate change and accords with the guidance within the Manual For Streets; *“Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which residents may access comfortably on foot... Manual for streets encourages a reduction in the need to travel by car through the creation of mixed use neighbourhoods with interconnected street patterns, where daily needs are within walking distance of most residents.”* The location of the site is considered to provide a wide extent of the future occupiers needs without placing an undue reliance on private car journeys.
- 6.7 The proposed development will add to the ecological biodiversity of the site. The proposal aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the protection of the important habitats in the surrounding area and through the provision of significant areas of planting to provide green infrastructure, ecology and wildlife benefits. Habitat creation measures to ensure biodiversity is retained with enhanced hedgerows and green corridors. These measures will ensure a net biodiversity gain in accordance with requirements of Paragraphs 8, 174 and 180 of the Framework. The surface water drainage design will attenuate water run-off to less than the existing greenfield run-off rate and take account of future climate change in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance.

## **7 Planning Considerations**

- 7.1 The key issues to be considered as part of the assessment of this development are;
- Need for the development;
  - Appropriateness of Location;
  - Character and Appearance;
  - Landscape impact;
  - Traffic and Access;
  - Drainage and Flood Risk;
  - Ecology
  - Trees
  - Residential Amenity and Noise
  - Air Quality
  - Heritage Impact and

### *Need for the Development*

- 7.2 As set out earlier in the policy section of this statement (paragraph 5.15 above) the MBLP identifies a significant need for new residential development to meet the borough's housing need over the plan period. The site is previously developed land and previously regarded suitable for a small-scale commercial development. Why the approved commercial scheme is not being progressed is set out at paragraph 4.2 and 4.3 above. The residential development of the site will make a small but valuable contribution towards the overall level of housing provision across the borough and contribute towards the council's increased requirement to provide part of this through windfall development.

### *Appropriateness of Location*

- 7.3 The application site is located immediately south of the settlement confines of Headcorn, within the open countryside for planning policy purposes. It has previously been accepted that the site is well related to existing commercial premises and the commercial centre of the settlement and is currently used as a surface level car park. It is not a greenfield site and is surrounded on all sides by built development. The council have previously granted planning permission for a small-scale commercial scheme on the site. The site was not previously allocated but found to be suitable for development, which the applicant seeks to continue with albeit with a residential scheme rather than a commercial one. The commercial development proposal for the site has been lawfully commenced but not advanced so far that other proposals for the site cannot be reasonably brought forward. It is considered that the site should be considered suitable for development and that reasonably there is no reason for the council not to amend the settlement boundary or otherwise consider this a site that is not in principle appropriate for development.

- 7.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location within walking distance of the services provide within the village and the public transport links that would allow other unavailable services to be accessed without reliance on private motor car journeys.

### *Character and Appearance*

- 7.5 The design approach to the development is set out in more detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This document also sets out in more detail how the proposals address the requirements of the National Design Guide. The five terraced houses proposed are of a modest scale and designed to ensure they suitably respond to the form of the site and the character of the surrounding area. The design approach is not dissimilar to that of the ten houses in Tallow Court. The scheme therefore respects and continues the design of the

residential development on the surrounding land. It uses the land less profligate manner than the nearby development of semi-detached properties in Rushford Close. The scheme therefore makes best use of the land and provides a design response appropriate for the site.

- 7.6 The character and appearance of the dwellings, like Tallow Court, reflects both the scale and the traditional palette of materials and design cues found in the vernacular, red bricks and clay tiles, weatherboarding, roof and window forms. Overall, the proposals provide a cohesive palette of traditional materials and forms that reflects and compliments the character of the neighbouring development also found within the conservation area.
- 7.7 The proposed layout provides communally enjoyed, naturally surveilled open space to the front of the dwellings and private garden areas to the rear. Parking provision that is readily accessible from each property but that does not compete or detract from the setting or appearance of the individual homes. Each property has two parking spaces. A further two public parking spaces are retained on the site to supplement the parking available in the public car park to the north. However, experience of the use of this existing area, shows very little use is made of this parking area, and the continued provision of 20 spaces will more than satisfy the occasional demand generated for the use of this parking area. This parking area will readily accommodate any visitor parking requirements generated by the five houses.

#### *Landscape Impact*

- 7.8 The proposed development has been assessed in a Landscape Visual Appraisal. This assesses the significance of the surrounding landscape and the impact of the development upon it. The report assesses the viewpoints from which the development would be seen, these are mainly glimpsed views and identifies the significance of impact being low to at worst moderate. The report also recommends that boundary landscaping should be retained and reinforced. The application is accompanied by a Landscaping Planting Plan (drawing no.0535/22/B/20) setting out a detailed planting scheme for the site, including reinforcement of the site boundaries using native trees and shrubs chosen to reflect the existing landscape character. Overall, the report concludes that no unacceptable harm to the landscape setting of the surrounding area would be caused, pointing out that once built existing landscaping on and around the site will obscure views of the development and that within 5-10 years the mitigation planting will have matured and created an appropriate landscape to reflect the surroundings on the site.

#### *Traffic and Access*

- 7.9 The impact of the development in highway terms is addressed in the supporting transport

Statement, it demonstrates the acceptance of the site as a sustainable location, accessible by means other than the car. It sets out the level of vehicle movements the development would generate and assesses the impact this would have on the local road network. It identifies the highway impact as not being considered as severe and concludes there are no unacceptable highway or transport impacts as a result of the proposed development. A dedicated bin storage and collection area is provided for the development.

- 7.10 The works proposed to the kerb line at the site entrance onto High Street are proposed to address unauthorised parking that obstructs the road, the width of the road at this point, facilitates this unwelcome activity. Narrowing the road will ensure that the area is not suitable for parking. It will also enhance the character and appearance of this area by providing some landscape softening to what is otherwise a hard surfaced area devoid of any vegetation. This specific aspect of the proposal is being brought forward with the support of the Parish Council.

#### *Drainage and Flood Risk*

- 7.11 The site is in floodzone 1, land at least risk of flooding. There is therefore no adverse impact on development in this location. Furthermore, the scheme will follow a similar approach to drainage to that previously approved. Surface water flows from the site will be attenuated on site and discharge to the local surface water drainage system. Foul water will be connected to the foul drain.

#### *Ecology*

- 7.12 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted with the application assesses the ecological standing of the site. In terms of the presence of habitats and species on the site it identifies a moderate impact level for nesting birds, low impact on bat activity and negligible impact on Great Crested Newts. And a negligible impact on other protected species. It sets out a number of recommendations, including designing external lighting strategy sensitive to bats, site clearance outside of the bird nesting season, and clearance work being undertaken with a Ecological Clerk of Works present. The report also makes suggestions regarding biodiversity enhancement measures. Otherwise, there are no ecological reasons for holding back the development proposal.

#### *Trees*

- 7.13 A total of 27 trees have been identified within the site. The majority of these are at the west end of the site and found along the northern boundary. A total of six trees are needed to be removed to facilitate the development. Four of these are category C trees, these are young specimens and can readily be replaced. The other two trees are classed as Category B, they



are of moderate value and require removal due to their proximity to the development works, it is not considered that these trees can be safeguarded and would best be removed to ensure no ongoing conflict between the trees and the development. This matter is addressed in greater detail within the accompanying arboricultural report. The report also sets out the mitigation required to protect trees during the course of development. It is also proposed that tree protection measures will be put in place within specific areas on the site and areas of ground will also be retained during construction to further protect trees and will only be addressed once the main construction work is complete and by handheld tools. On this basis it is considered that the justification for removal of the small number of trees is proven and that adherence with the mitigation measures proposed will ensure that the impact of the development on trees is satisfactorily minimised and overall is acceptable and necessary.

#### *Residential Amenity and Noise*

- 7.14 The scheme has been designed to ensure the amenity of the occupiers of each of the proposed dwelling is satisfactory. In this respect the proposals create no unacceptable conflicts over overlooking, loss of privacy or daylighting between the units. Likewise, the proposals do not create such issues in terms of their relationship with the surrounding development to the north and east, there being no direct interrelationship with these sites due to the orientation of the properties to the new development, the distance separation and the intervening trees and hedges. Each property is provided with an outdoor amenity area and the homes meet national minimum space standards.
- 7.15 The acoustic report prepared by Sharps Redmore accompanying the application identifies that the main sources of background noise affecting the site are from distant road traffic, birdsong and the intermittent trains arriving and departing the station. Daytime ambient noise levels without trains present are typically between 47-51dB LAeq. This is defined as a borderline low / negligible noise risk that the assessment considers to be acceptable from a noise perspective. While with trains present the noise levels were typically within the range 67-71dB LAeq, It was also noted that there was a drop of about 10dB between the trackside measurement point on the site and that on the northern edge furthest from the railway. In assessing the overall impact of railway noise on the development, including the potentially worsened impact from occasional freight trains and at night it is considered that this can be fully mitigated by sound reduction requirements being incorporated into the construction of the properties, such as the use of a cavity wall construction, roof insulation, double glazing and the use of acoustic ventilators. Daytime impact of noise on the gardens of the properties can be mitigated by the use of imperforate fencing to a height of 1.8metres. None of these requirements is considered to be out of the ordinary. The requirement for such specific

measures can reasonably be dealt with by condition.

- 7.16 The report also assesses vibration affecting the site and finds that measures are required to address this. However, there is concern within the report that the findings are giving a false impression of ground vibration as the measurements are taken using equipment placed on the car park surface rather than affixed to a solid foundation, typical of the scheme, the report therefore recommends a condition requiring further testing once the foundation is constructed so that, if required, appropriate vibration amelioration measures can be agreed and provided.
- 7.17 On the basis that the mitigation measures identified in the report are adhered with the relationship of the development with the nearby railway line is not considered to raise any unacceptable concerns regarding noise and vibration and that such matters can be dealt with by condition.

#### *Air Quality*

- 7.18 The site is not within an area identified as having air quality issues and is of a scale that would unlikely lead to issues arising in the future.

#### *Heritage Impact*

- 7.19 The development of the housing is not considered to have any direct impact on nearby designated heritage assets. The visual impact assessment identifies the site will not be prominent from views into or from the conservation area and no listed buildings and their setting will be directly affected. He works to the kerb line at the junction in High Street will enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area within which they are located. On this basis it can be concluded that the proposals will have less than substantial harm on the designated heritage assets and this harm will be significantly outweighed by the public benefit of the new housing that would result from the development taking place.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The application proposes a sustainable form of development on previously developed land close to the centre of the village. Although the site is adjacent to the settlement boundary for Headcorn, it already benefits from planning permission for redevelopment and its development would not result in harm to policies seeking to restrain the scale and pace of development into the surrounding countryside. The development will contribute towards the borough's housing requirements and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this underused area of the village.

- 8.2 Paragraph 11 of the Framework calls for decision takers to approve development which is consistent with the development plan without delay and to grant planning permission unless the harm of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In this case, the application proposals comprise sustainable development in accordance with the definition set out in the Framework and when tested against all of the relevant sections. There is no apparent conflict caused by the development proposals with the policies contained within the NPPF or development plan.
- 8.3 Headcorn is defined by the development plan as a Rural Service Centre, it is therefore a preferred location for residential development and the application proposes a scale and form of development that will assist with this whilst also respecting the inherent character of the historic village. The proposals will make a contribution towards meeting the social elements of sustainability through the provision of homes as well as the economic benefits from the construction phase, while the provision of housing will benefit in supporting the activities and services provided locally. The environmental benefits are further realised through the opportunities that development provides to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- 8.4 In light of the benefits highlighted above and demonstrated in the supporting information that accompanies the application the proposal is shown to constitute a wholly acceptable development proposal for this site and should be granted planning permission.