

Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation (SSA): Local Centre Location (Hearing Issue 8, 18 March 2015)

Further Information Supplied by South Gillingham Consortium

This note responds to the Inspector's request for the Council and the Consortium to provide further information to assist consideration of the options for the location of the local centre. Specifically, it provides information on:

1. Why the Council's preferred option for a local centre to be provided on the Shaftesbury Road corridor within the SSA as currently defined is not achievable or viable
2. Why appropriate flexibility should be built in to LP1 to provide for the local centre to be delivered on land adjoining Orchard Park Garden Centre (the Garden Centre)

These matters are considered in turn below.

LP1 Preferred Option

- Land owned by Mr Hopkins is not available (email from Grassroots Planning dated 2 September 2014 appended to its Issue 8 hearing statement)
- Land owned by Sydenhams is not available (established through dialogue with Sydenhams and accepted by the Council)
- Hine Brother's land is available and is controlled by the Consortium. However, it is required principally for the construction of the proposed southern link road and its new junction with Shaftesbury Road
- Appraisal work undertaken by the Consortium indicates that the remaining available land with visibility onto the Shaftesbury Road corridor is not large enough to accommodate a local centre that provides the full range of shops, services and facilities required by LP1 Policy 21
- The remaining available land controlled by the Consortium on the Shaftesbury Road corridor suffers from a lack of main road frontage and visibility/prominence, which will be required by the operators of the retail uses to make them viable.

Land at Orchard Park Garden Centre

The land is:

- Controlled by Lagan Farms (Dorset) Ltd, which confirmed by letter dated 16 June 2014 (letter and plan attached) that it is available to the Consortium for development of a local centre
- Located at the true southern gateway to Gillingham
- An established retail destination that should have been included in the settlement boundary in any event
- Visible from Shaftesbury Road
- Large enough to accommodate a viable local centre (based on appraisal work undertaken by the Consortium)
- Accessible by pedestrian and cyclists from the west side of Shaftesbury Road via a new signal controlled junction with Shaftesbury Road and the proposed southern link road (based on appraisal work undertaken by the Consortium)
- Located within 5-6 minutes walk of the majority of proposed housing within the SSA and within 10-12 minutes walk of all properties. Dedicated "Toucan" crossing facilities could be provided as part of the junction of Shaftesbury Road and the new southern link road (either a roundabout or signalled-controlled) to enable safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists across Shaftesbury Road.

The Consortium considers that the lack of flexibility in LP1 relating to the location of the local centre could jeopardise the delivery of a viable local centre that will sustain into the future.

The Consortium reiterates its objective to deliver the local centre as part of the wider SSA on land it either controls or is available to it. However, as drafted, it considers that LP1 could result in:

1. The Consortium being forced to secure all or part of the local centre on land outside its control but within the settlement boundary as defined in the submission version of LP1 OR
2. A reduced specification for the local centre so that can be accommodated on available land within the settlement boundary as defined in the submission version of LP1 OR
3. The local centre being located on Orchard Garden Centre which is outside the settlement boundary defined in the submission version of LP1 OR
4. The local centre being removed from the scheme in its entirety.

1 above would put the Consortium into a ransom situation with 3rd party landowner(s) which the Consortium can confirm has already been discounted and so would result in one of options 2, 3 and 4 above. These options would result in a Master Plan Framework and planning application that do not comply with the submission version of LP1.

The Consortium therefore requests the Council to extend the settlement boundary as defined in the submission version of LP1 to include the Garden Centre. This will provide flexibility to achieve a deliverable and viable local centre. We contend that this site should have been included within the settlement boundary in any event.

At the examination, an option was presented whereby the Garden Centre could be presented as a "reserve" location for the local centre. While this remains an option, the Consortium would be concerned that this still enables to authorities to reject the Garden Centre as a local centre location resulting in a dispute between the parties that could only be resolved through the planning application/appeal process. Accordingly, it retains a strong and justified preference for a simple extension of the settlement boundary and positive reference in the text to the Garden Centre being an acceptable local centre location.

BRIMBLE, LEA & PARTNERS

Planning Consultants, Chartered Architects & Surveyors

Wessex House, High Street, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4AG

Tel: 01747 823232

Fax: 01747 825363

blp@brimblelea.com

www.brimblelea.com

16th June 2014

Our Ref. AFGB/CMH/08129
Your Ref.

Mr D Lohfink
C G Fry & Son Limited
Litton Cheney
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9AW

Dear David,

Re: Land to the South and East of Gillingham

As you know I represent Lagan Farm (Dorset) Limited in connection with the above. My client is the freehold owner of land known as Park Farm which is currently optioned to C G Fry and Son Limited. This Option Agreement (re Land at Park Farm, Gillingham made 17th day of May 2010) and which forms part of a larger area of land allocated in the Draft Local Plan for a strategic urban extension to Gillingham. My client also controls additional land in the immediate vicinity of this land including Orchard Park Garden Centre.

There are challenges with delivering the Local Centre on the land broadly identified for it in the draft Local Plan i.e. land either side of Shaftesbury Road. Accordingly, my client is prepared to offer an alternative site for this purpose in order to secure the proper planning and delivery for the development as a whole. This land is hatched red on the attached plan.

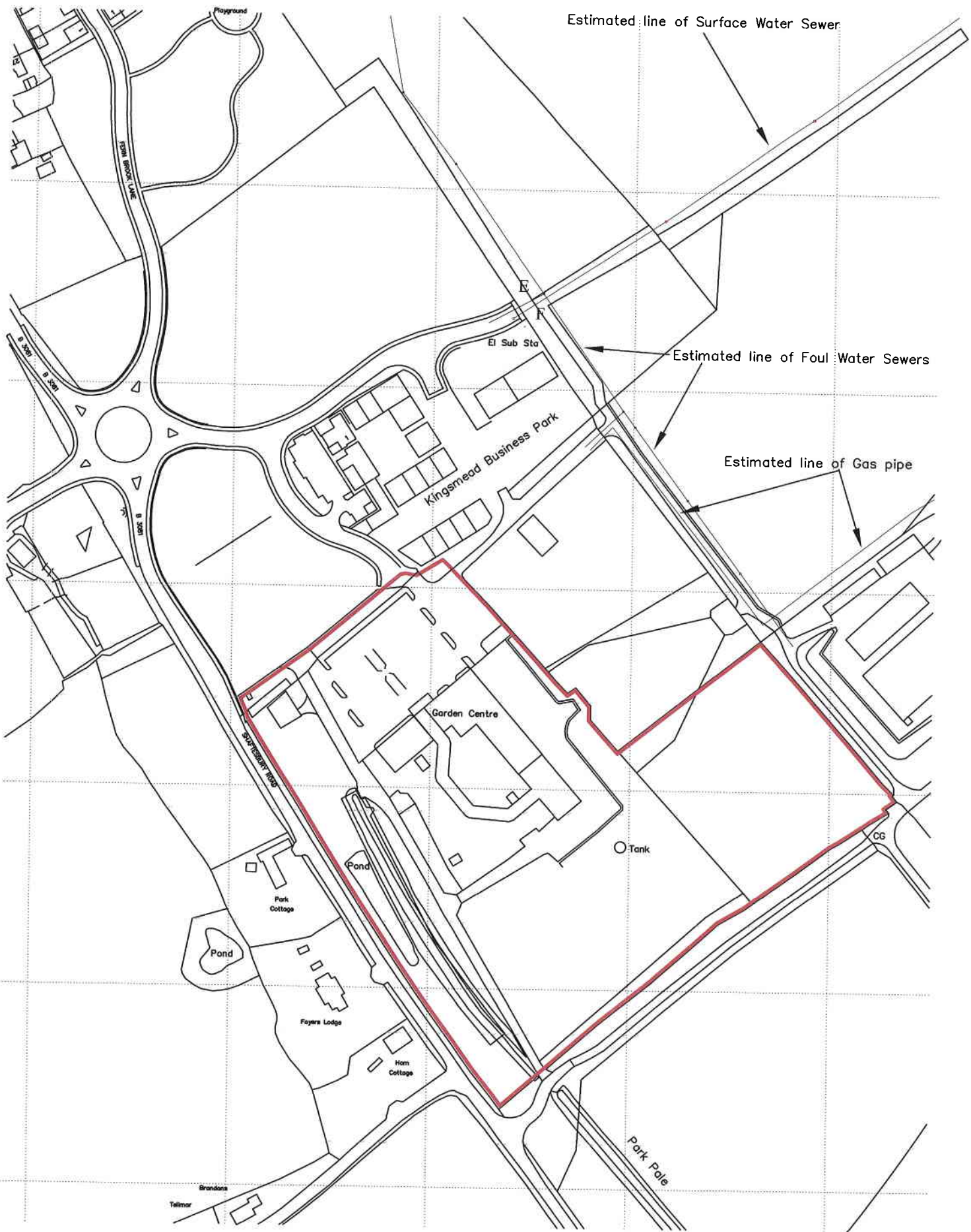
Once the scale and nature of the Local Centre and any temporary uses are established alongside the delivery timescale it would be important to consider a legal structure for the transfer of this land to ensure it is available to the consortium and that the Local Centre can be delivered. However, we trust that this letter will be sufficient to confirm the landowner's intentions for the time being.

Yours sincerely,


A F G Brimble
tony@brimblelea.com

A.F.G. Brimble, Planning Consultant. J.L. Lea, B.Arch.(Hons.), RIBA.

Mrs J. Montgomery, B.Sc(Hons.), MRICS, MRTPI. P.D.M. Carpendale, MA, Dip.(Arch.Cons.), MRTPI, IHBC.



Estimated line of Surface Water Sewer

Estimated line of Foul Water Sewers

Estimated line of Gas pipe

Kingsmead Business Park

Garden Centre

Playground

El Sub Sta

Surrey Way

Pond

Park Cottage

Pond

Foyers Lodge

Horn Cottage

Tank

CG

Park Pole

Brandons

Talmor