

**TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL
TENTERDEN SOUTHERN EXTENSION (TENT1 LAND)
STATEMENT, 5 APRIL 2012**



This statement has been issued by the Tenterden Town Council on the major residential development that is proposed to the south of the town on land known as the TENT1 land or the Tenterden Southern Extension. More details on this can be found in a planning document called the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document which was adopted by Ashford Borough Council on 21 October 2010.

BACKGROUND

The Tenterden Southern Extension was confirmed as a site for new residential development when the local planning authority, Ashford Borough Council, adopted the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD as part of its new plan, the Local Development Framework. This only happened after a lengthy planning process, after detailed consideration by both Borough Council officers and Borough councilors, and after two Hearings chaired by independent planning Inspectors. This process has been open to the public throughout with well publicized consultations and well attended meetings.

It is important at the outset to remember where the Tenterden Southern Extension has come from. The Borough Council states in its Core Strategy document that –

“The...areas outside the Ashford Growth Area are rural in nature. These areas are rich in environmental and landscape quality and protecting and enhancing these characteristics is paramount. However, rural towns and settlements need to be able to grow to sustain themselves. Providing balanced growth opportunities to enable people to live and work in their own rural town or village and the support of local services is a key recurring theme that comes through consultation with rural communities as is the strong desire to retain the qualities of an attractive environment that define the character of the rural settlements...” paragraph 6.1.

Also,

“Within the Borough, Tenterden is by far the largest settlement outside Ashford and its role as an important service centre is well established. Therefore, clearly it should accommodate the highest proportion of allocated growth outside the Ashford Growth Area” paragraph 6.31.

Policy TENT1 of the Councils plan proposes a significant development. The challenge that this presents is acknowledged by both the Borough and Town Councils, who will work closely together in bringing the site forward.

ROLE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Tenterden Southern Extension land is in different ownerships. The Town Council owns a small but key part of the land.

The Town Council has resolved to support the Tenterden Southern Extension.

The Town Council's role in bringing forward the Tenterden Southern Extension is to maximize the opportunities presented by this development for the benefit of town and its community. Having a stake in the land, the Town Council is ideally placed to influence the development as a whole.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

Whilst the Tenterden Southern Extension has been confirmed as a development site, much work still needs to be done before any planning application can be made. The Borough Council has said that a master planning exercise is first required.

The Town Council's first step was to appoint Batcheller Thacker (now Batcheller Monkhouse) to advise on how best to represent the interests of the Town Council both as a public body and as a landowner.

Following their appointment the advisors opened discussions with other owners of the land encompassed within the TENT1 allocation. The purpose of those discussions was to seek to agree a unified approach to the Master Planning of the site and eventual delivery of a suitable planning consent. Through its agents, the Town Council has been and is working closely with other land owners.

The strategy that is being pursued is for the appointment of a development partner to undertake the Master Planning of the site in full accordance with Ashford Borough Councils 'Processes Manual on Handling of Strategic Sites'. This includes the requirement to conduct formal public consultation and design workshops.

The Town Council has used its position to seek to ensure that as far as possible, any development will be an improvement to the town. This aim has to be balanced on the one hand by the need to keep the other landowners involved in the overall scheme and, on the other, by the need to comply with planning requirements.

The Town Council has drawn up and proposed to the other landowners a 'wish list' covering not just the site itself but the wider area too. This includes the protection of habitats, trees and woodlands, the preservation of the character of the town, ensuring a range of house types and sizes, the provision of land for community facilities, outdoor recreational areas and – possibly – allotments, access between the new development and the town centre, traffic schemes generally, and so on. Some of these matters, and others, notably affordable housing, will also be required as part of the planning process.

NEXT STEP

The next step is for an invitation to tender to be made, to interview and then appoint a development Partner. Prospective development partners will be required to demonstrate their ability to deliver a suitable Master Plan for the land to meet the requirements of Planning Policy. Within this context the Master Plan and eventual planning consent will also seek to secure best value for the land.

ENDS