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# **Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan Examination**

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## **Issue 6 – Omission Sites**

Further Statement on behalf of Gleeson Strategic

Respondent ref: 816809

# Further Statement to the Basingstoke and Deane Draft Local Plan

On behalf of Gleeson Strategic (Respondent Ref: 816809)

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Savills incorporating Smiths Gore on behalf of Gleeson Strategic ('**Gleeson**') in respect of land to the north of Sherfield Road, Bramley, herein after referred to as '**the Site**'<sup>1</sup>. It sets out representations in response to Issue 6 of the Hearings Programme relating to the Examination of the draft Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan ('**the BDLP**').
- 1.2. The purpose of this Statement is to submit further representations regarding the inherent suitability of the Site as a greenfield allocation under Policy SS3 of the BDLP.
- 1.3. This Statement should be read in conjunction with both our previous representations to the draft BDLP and the separate Hearing Statements submitted on behalf of Gleeson in response to Issue 3 (Spatial Strategy & Housing Need) and Issue 4 (Other Housing Matters) of the BDLP Examination.

### **Omission Sites**

- 1.4. At question 12 of his 'Key Issues and Discussion Note', the Inspector asks the following question:  
  
***"Q12. Are there other sites, currently omitted from the Plan, which justify inclusion, and if so on what grounds?"***
- 1.5. The following Sections respond specifically to this question and seek to justify the inclusion of the Site as a residential allocation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Site is also known as Land at Strawberry Fields which has been assessed in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment under reference BRAM010.

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### 2. The Site

- 2.1. The Site, as edged in red on the plan at **Appendix 1**, extends to approximately 13.4 hectares and comprises arable fields which are located to the immediate east of the built-up urban area of Bramley, falling wholly within the civil parish of Bramley and administrative boundary of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council ('**the Council**'). The Site is within the sole ownership of the Stratfield Saye Estate and is immediately available for development.
- 2.2. The Site, in its totality, has previously been promoted to on behalf of Gleeson for up to 200 dwellings through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA ref: BRA010) process. This was assessed as being deliverable, available and potentially suitable for development, although the potential for impact on the adjoining Bramley Green Conservation Area was highlighted. We agree with this assessment; and whilst we acknowledge that this scheme would have some degree of impact on the Conservation Area it is our view that this can be adequately mitigated. As such the site can appropriately deliver 200 units over the first five years of the plan period. Notwithstanding (and without prejudice to) this view, a reduced scheme of 130 units on 7.5 ha of the site could also be delivered (by reducing the eastern extent of the site) which would have no impact at all on the Conservation Area – this scheme (and commensurately reduced site area) is also before the Inspector as an 'omission site' and is shown at **Appendix 2**, with the accompanying red line plan shown at **Appendix 3**.
- 2.3. Part of the Site is the subject of a recent planning application for residential development of up to 50 dwellings, including affordable housing, with associated access, highway works, drainage works (SUDS), public open space, landscaping and any other associated infrastructure. This scale of development accords with the objectives of the emerging Bramley Neighbourhood Plan in that it seeks to create no more than 50 dwellings on land which is contiguous to the established settlement boundary. The planning application (LPA Ref: 15/02708/OUT) has been submitted in outline with all matters, except access, reserved for future consideration.
- 2.4. The Site is not subject to any specific environmental designations such as Special Protection Area (SPA), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), nor does it form part of the Green Belt. Whilst the north-western part of the Site is partially within Flood Zones 2 and 3, no built development is proposed within this area and through the use of sustainable urban drainage techniques at the Site, the long-term flood management of the Site would be secured.

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### 3. The Case for its Allocation

#### The Need for More Sites

- 3.1. We have explained, within separate Statements submitted on behalf of Gleeson in respect of Issues 3 and 4, that the uplift in housing growth in the Borough to come forward in the BDLP should be commensurate across the spatial strategy, affording increased growth in the Borough's smaller settlements – which includes Bramley – in order to maintain a prosperous rural economy and ensure a supply of deliverable sites in the event that the strategic sites (as proposed in the BDLP) in Basingstoke do not deliver as anticipated.
- 3.2. The allocation of smaller, available sites in the more sustainable villages across the Borough would help address the Council's existing and future housing supply issues whilst supporting and maintaining local services as well as providing a mechanism through which much needed affordable housing can be provided.
- 3.3. As set out in our separate Statements to Issues 3 and 4, the Council's spatial strategy currently presents an inflexible approach to meeting five year housing land, particularly in view of its persistent under delivery.

#### The Availability of the Site

- 3.4. The Site is owned by the Stratfield Saye Estate and is available now for development, offering a sustainable location for growth (see below). There are no constraints in terms of planning policy, or physical or infrastructure constraints, which would prevent the Site's development immediately. As such, the Site is deemed deliverable in the terms identified at footnotes 11 and 12 of paragraph 47 of the NPPF.
- 3.5. Gleeson, as the promoters for the Site, are committed to its delivery as evidenced through the current planning application for its partial development (LPA Ref: 15/02708/OUT).

#### The Appropriateness of the Site

- 3.6. The entirety of the Site was assessed for its suitability for residential use by BDBC, within their Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The previous version of this document, dated September 2014, found the Site to be "*...suitable and achievable...*" subject to "*....policy designations which need to be considered*". The Council's most recent SHLAA (August 2015) maintains this position and identifies the Site as being appropriate to deliver 200 homes in the early part of the plan period (100 homes in the first 5 year period; 100 homes in years 6-10)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding this acknowledgement that the Site is appropriate for development, it is not clear why the latest SHLAA has continued to assess the 13.4 ha site, for 200 homes, rather than the reduced Site of 7.5 ha which has capacity for 130 homes.

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- 3.7. Similarly, the latest version of the Council's Sustainability Appraisal (**SA**, dated April 2015) appears to assess the original Site area, rather than the reduced area that was submitted to the Council last year. The SA acknowledges that the potential negative impacts of development at the site – including potential impacts on the Bramley Green Conservation Area – would need to be addressed through a mechanism in the Local Plan (such as an allocation policy) to ensure sustainable development is achieved. However, the area of the Site has been reduced so as to avoid entirely any impact on the Bramley Green Conservation Area. Again, it is not clear why the revised SA has assessed the original (larger) site, rather than the reduced Site area – but it is noted that the potential constraint could be overcome through an allocation and that the Site is otherwise considered sustainable.
- 3.8. The Site is contiguous to the existing, and historically defined, Bramley Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) to the west and south. As recognised most recently by Bramley Parish Council within their emerging Neighbourhood Plan published for consultation between June and August 2015, “...*there is very limited scope within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) for further new housing development in Bramley*” (para. 5.35, Draft Bramley Neighbourhood Plan). The emerging Neighbourhood Plan therefore suggests that “...*the majority of new housing should be within or immediately adjacent to the Settlement Policy Boundary*”. Gleeson supports this recognition which is backed by the Framework where it recognises that “...*the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow garden city principles*” (para. 52, the Framework). The Site could therefore deliver housing in a location which the emerging Neighbourhood Plan accepts is appropriate.

### The Sustainability of the Site

- 3.9. The allocation of the Site for 130 dwellings would result in positive economic, social and environmental gains for both Bramley and the wider Borough. In particular, it would have the following roles:
- *A Social Role* – a residential development in this location would help support the creation of a strong, vibrant and health community through the delivery of new housing stock (both market and affordable) to meet the needs and present and future generations and the provision of green infrastructure.
  - *An Environmental Role* – development of the Site would protect and enhance existing boundary tree lines and hedgerows; promote the ecological value of the Site through the retention of key habitats and the creation of new open space; and encourage the use of sustainable transport linkages by virtue of its sustainable location (thereby reducing reliance upon the private car and encouraging trips made on foot/by bicycle/bus/train). The development would also maintain locally important key views by virtue of its reduced site area, which would ensure no adverse impact on views into and out of the Bramley Green Conservation Area.
  - *An Economic Role* – the allocation of the Site would perform an economic role, contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The development of the Site would provide new jobs throughout the construction phase, provide homes for more economically active residents, boost local economic investment and increased spending in the local economy, secure New Homes Bonus payments and increased generation of Council Tax payments.

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- 3.10. As a result of the reduction in the Site area (to 7.5 ha), development in this location would extend no further north than existing built development to the west and no further east than existing built development to the south of Sherfield Road and would therefore form a logical extension to the Bramley SPB.
- 3.11. The Site constitutes an accessible and sustainable location; it is within 250m of local shops and amenities within Bramley village in addition to Bramley primary school; and is served by a range of public transport facilities which includes Bramley Train Station, just 650m to the west, and bus stops directly south of the Site along Sherfield Road which are served by buses running to and from Basingstoke. A national cycle route (no. 23) runs along Sherfield Road, directly south of the Site, through Bramley village; the route extends from Reading to Southampton via Basingstoke, Alresford, Winchester and Eastleigh.
- 3.12. The Site also benefits from good proximity to a wide range of public open space provision in the form of Cliff Meadow which includes football pitches, a cricket pitch, tennis courts and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). In addition, several children's play facilities are within close proximity to the Site at Farriers Close (100 m to the south-east), St. Marks Close (530m to the south-east), Yew Tree Close (450m to the south) and German Road (670m to the south).
- 3.13. Safe vehicular access/egress to the Site can be achieved from Sherfield Road, and the development could promote sustainable patronage between the Site and such nearby facilities. It would provide an attractive network of footpaths and cycle routes which safely link with the existing network, connecting to higher order retail and employment opportunities in the wider area, thereby encouraging trips made on foot/bicycle and thus reducing dependency upon the private car.
- 3.14. There are no obstacles of a technical, physical or environmental nature which could not be overcome to prevent the development of the site and the Site represents the best location for accommodating the long-term needs of Bramley, contributing towards improved local infrastructure and delivering much needed market and affordable housing of a mixed tenure to respond to prevailing local need.

### **The Sustainability of Bramley Settlement**

- 3.15. The BDLP, in identifying Bramley as a location for growth, acknowledges its relative sustainability within the Borough – for example, where it recognises at paragraph 3.1 that *“New homes will be built in and around the edge of the borough’s main settlements, focusing growth primarily around Basingstoke and the larger settlements of Whitchurch, Overton, Bramley, Kingsclere and Oakley” (Basingstoke and Deane Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan 2011-2029 (April 2015)).*
- 3.16. Bramley is a settlement which despite its population size, is one of the more sustainable settlements outside of Basingstoke in the Borough by virtue of its existing services and accessibility to higher order centres by sustainable transport modes which includes a mainline rail station with frequent commuter services. This provides the opportunity to sustainably accommodate further growth than the 200 dwellings envisaged in the BDLP. Indeed, the SA for the BDLP assessed the potential of the settlement to accommodate growth of 300 dwellings and did not find that there would be any significant adverse impacts (over and above the accommodation of 200 dwellings) – this has been noted in our previous representations to the Main Modifications consultation (June 2015).

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- 3.17. Although Bramley does not have a strongly focused centre, its linear features are generally centred around the train station and include a general convenience store, a post office, a primary school, a public house, a bakery (with café), a beauty salon, a garage and an estate agents. The train station is served by frequent and direct trains to Mortimer (5 minutes), Basingstoke (9 minutes) and Reading (17 minutes), the latter of which benefits from direct and quick connections to London Paddington, Bristol and West Country destinations.
- 3.18. The importance of these facilities is noted within the Council's emerging Local Plan (2015) where it states that "...local centres, such as Kingsclere and Bramley will continue to act as a focus for shopping and other town and village centre uses..." and that these places will "...play a significant role in maintaining and enhancing the prosperity of the borough" (paragraph 3.8, Basingstoke and Deane Revised Pre-Submission Local Plan 2011-2029 (April 2015)). In addition to the aforementioned amenities, Bramley accommodates some small-scale employment uses at Bramley Green in the form of Campbell Court Office Park, approximately 700m to the south-east of the Site (as the crow flies).

### Summary

- 3.19. This Site has been demonstrated by Gleeson to be a sustainable and suitable location for housing. It is the closest site to the centre of the village that can deliver the scale of development which Bramley should be required to contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough. In this way, the Site can provide the housing necessary to secure the full delivery of objectively assessed needs, provide a significant boost the Council's five year land supply claim, and support the provision of key infrastructure necessary to secure the delivery of the Local Plan and maintain the objectives of the spatial strategy by affording growth around the Borough's larger settlements, particularly those, such as Bramley, which represent sustainable locations capable of accommodating growth without detriment to its character and setting.

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### Appendix 1 - Site Location Plan

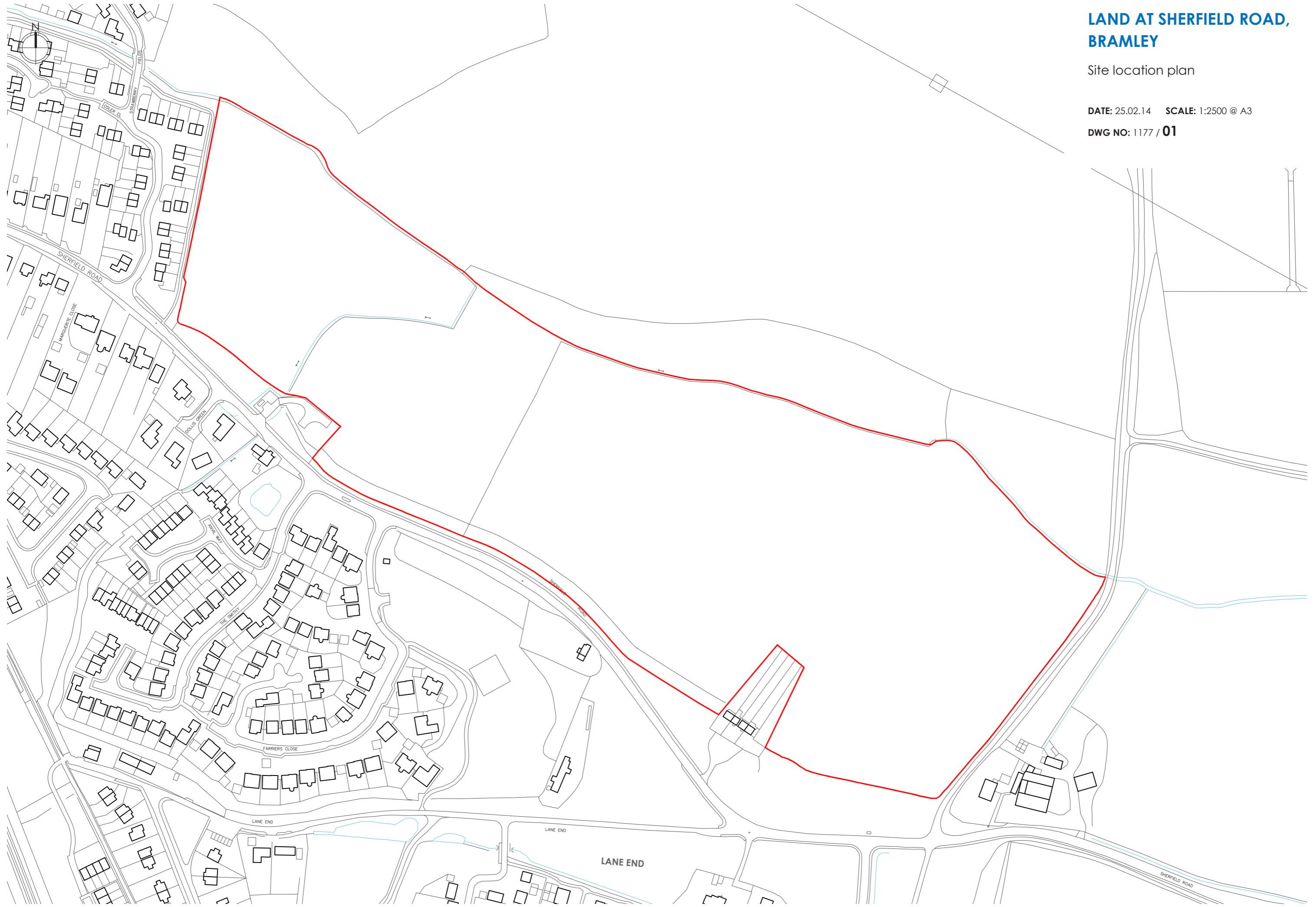
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# LAND AT SHERFIELD ROAD, BRAMLEY

Site location plan

DATE: 25.02.14    SCALE: 1:2500 @ A3

DWG NO: 1177 / 01



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### Appendix 2 - Reduced Area Indicative Scheme

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Site  
**LAND AT STRAWBERRY FIELDS,  
 BRAMLEY**

Drawing  
 Illustrative masterplan

Date 27.02.15 Scale 1:1250@A2 Drawing ref: 1177/03

KEY

- Existing housing
- Proposed housing
- Public open space
- Primary vehicle access
- Existing pedestrian route to school and station
- Potential pedestrian / cycle links
- Views into and out of the site retained
- Potential location for additional parking for school drop off



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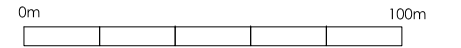
### Appendix 3 - Reduced Area Red Line Plan

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# LAND AT STRAWBERRY FIELDS, BRAMLEY

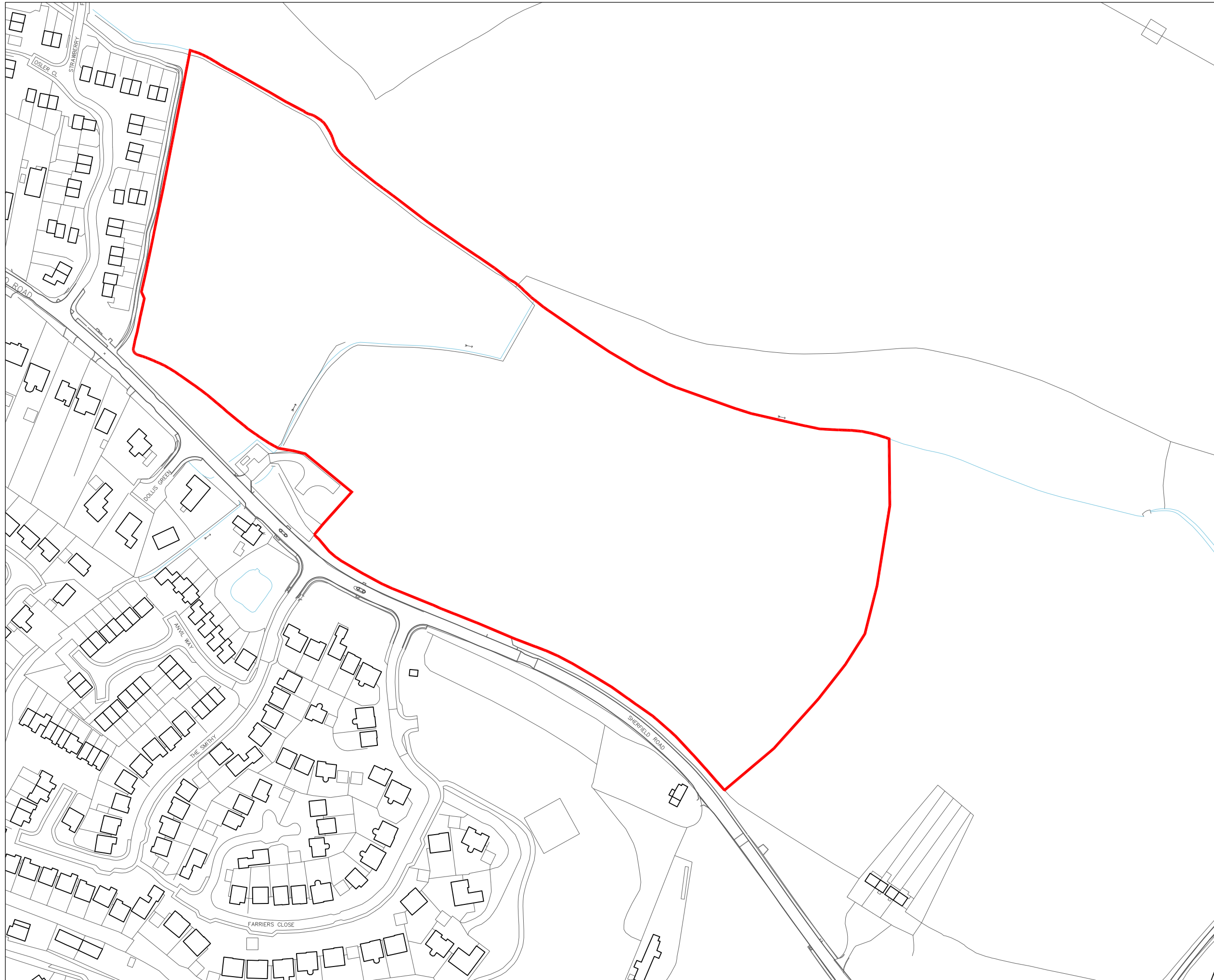
Site location plan

DATE: 06.01.15 SCALE: 1:2000@A3 DWG NO: 1177/01



## KEY

 Site boundary (7.4ha)



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