

THE FAVERSHAM COMMUNITY LAND TRUST
12 MARKET PLACE, FAVERSHAM, ME13 7AE



*Everyone deserves a warm,
safe, secure place to call
home, they can afford.*

To Planning Committee Members
Swale Borough Council
Planning Department
Swale House
East St
Sittingbourne
ME10 H3T

Sent by email

31st March 2025

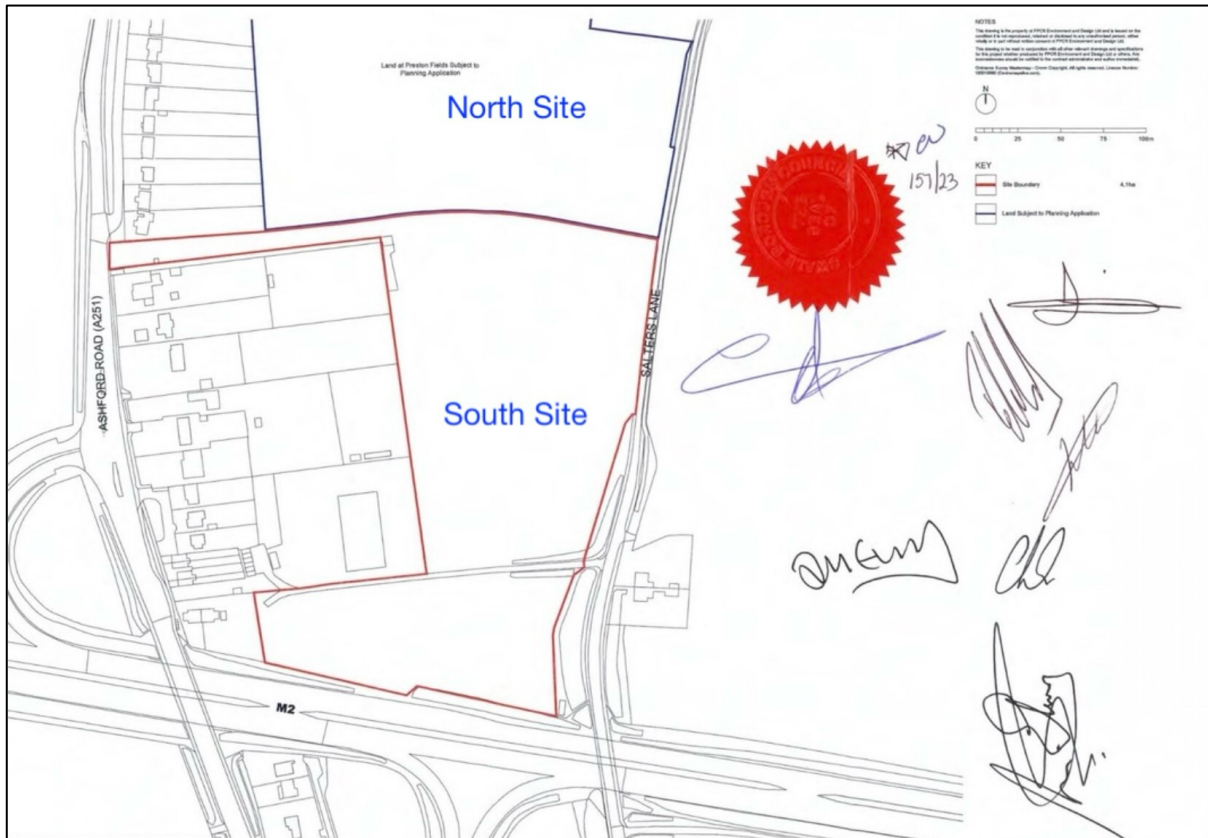
Dear Councillor,

Preston Fields Site A - 24/501929/REM - Submission of S73 to vary Condition 1 of the reserved matters approval (ref 23/501167/REM) pursuant to outline permission (ref 16/508602/OUT) for Site A, Preston Fields Faversham.

We were disappointed that members deferred rather than rejected this application. It's not surprising that no further interest has been shown by RSLs, limited affordable rent grants were available during the last government's austerity programme. However, following the Chancellor's Spring statement, £2bn has been allocated for affordable housing ahead of the June spending review. This funding will bridge the gap between current spending expiring in 2026 and the next settlement expected in June, enabling thousands of new affordable homes to begin construction by March 2027 and complete by the end of the parliamentary term.

The lack of affordable grants was initially cited as the main reason for the approved tenure mix's infeasibility, but this is no longer the case. In the light of this, our suggestion to replan the site to create a more balanced mix continues to be our preferred solution to this problem and we continue to maintain that the current application should be refused. There would be no grounds for appeal.

The Preston Fields Section 106 agreement includes a second site to the South, referred to as Additional Development, which has outline planning consent for 70 dwellings. Schedule 5 of the Agreement requires 35% affordable housing: 75% Social Rented housing (19 units) and 25% First Homes (6 units). No reserved matters application has been submitted yet; however, it is anticipated that applicants might seek to replace First Homes (a discredited form of tenure) with additional shared ownership units.



The Additional Development’s inclusion of social rented tenure is appreciated. These will address a significant need in Faversham, which has seen very few (if any) such homes delivered under the prevailing local plan. We expect that the unit numbers on this land will increase upon submission of the reserved matters application. The number of units on the North site increased by 28%, from the 250 approved for the outline consent to 321.

The applicants seek to reopen the S106 agreement, this will enable negotiations for amendments to the terms for the South site without requiring an additional application. We recommend that if members are inclined to support the current proposal, they should consider directing officers to explore substituting First Homes with social rented tenure. This will increase the value derived from the planning gain stipulated in the Agreement

Below is a table showing the tenure mix of the entire scheme for comparison purposes.

PRESTON FIELDS - WHOLE SITE TENURE MIX.

Whole Site	Market Sale	245	245	245
	Total Affordable	131 35%	131 35%	131 35%
	Combined Site Total	376	376	376
Affordable Mix	Affordable Rent	95 73%	54 41%	54 41%
	Social Rent	19 15%	19 15%	25 19%
	Shared Ownership/FH	17 13%	58 44%	52 40%
	Total	131	131	131


A - S106 Agreement dated 9th Feb 2023

B - Proposal tabled to Committee 6th March 2025

C - FCLT Alternative proposal for Committee 3rd April 2025

This proposal modifies the social rent offer from 19 to 25 with the potential to increase to 31 and reduces the shared ownership provision from 44% to 40%.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Atkins Land Director

CC Mr Ben Oates - Case Officer