

## **Background to Land South of the Swan Reserved Matters Application 20/00508/AS**

### **Why this site?**

The site is part of an allocated site in Ashford Borough Council's (ABC's) Local Plan which covers the period to 2030. Like other borough and district councils Ashford's Plan has to meet certain government requirements and one is to meet housing targets. Housing targets have to be based on projections of the number of households in each local authority district which are published every two years (currently by the Office for National Statistics).

When ABC's plan was originally compiled the intention was to focus new housing in and around Ashford itself with limited amounts in the rural areas. Charing was allocated two sites: S29, the land south of the Arthur Baker Playing Fields for 35 dwellings (plus the 51 dwelling Orbit Old People's home) , which had already been allocated in the previous plan, and S28, a 20 dwelling site at Northdowns Garage (Charing Motors). However, in 2016 new household projections were published which were much higher than the previous ones and meant that Ashford had to find an additional 1,300 or so homes.

While some additional sites were allocated in Ashford, ABC also turned to larger villages such as Charing. The Wheler Foundation, which owned the land behind the Swan, had earlier submitted the land for potential development and this, along with a parcel of land from the adjoining field owned by the Bromley family, was then included in Ashford's proposed plan as site S55 for 180 houses.

The Parish Council and others objected to this site partly as being too substantial an increase in the size of the village and partly for other reasons. However, when Ashford's draft plan was examined by the Planning Inspectorate the Inspectors ruled in favour of Ashford.

Ashford's Local Plan was formally adopted in early 2019 and in April outline planning permission for up to 135 dwellings was granted to the Land South of the Swan part of S55, again against the objections of the Parish Council and many others.

The development will therefore happen. The key objective now is to ensure that it is developed as well as possible to meet Charing's needs.