

Planning Context

The existing Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's (TMBC) development plan is significantly out of date with the council now at consultation stage on a new Local Plan, although the process is not expected to conclude until late 2027. Within the emerging Plan, West Malling is identified, alongside Snodland, Borough Green and Kings Hill, as a location well suited to accommodate additional sustainable housing growth.

Over the last three years TMBC has delivered only 60% of its required housing, as confirmed in the Housing Delivery Test (December 2024). The borough's annual housing requirement, set by Government's standard method, is 1,097 dwellings per year, compared with an average delivery of only 450 homes per annum since 2021.

The latest Housing Land Supply Statement (January 2025) shows that TMBC can currently demonstrate just 2.89 years of housing supply land, well below the Government's minimum requirement of five years. A Neighbourhood Plan for West Malling is also being prepared but remains at an early stage.

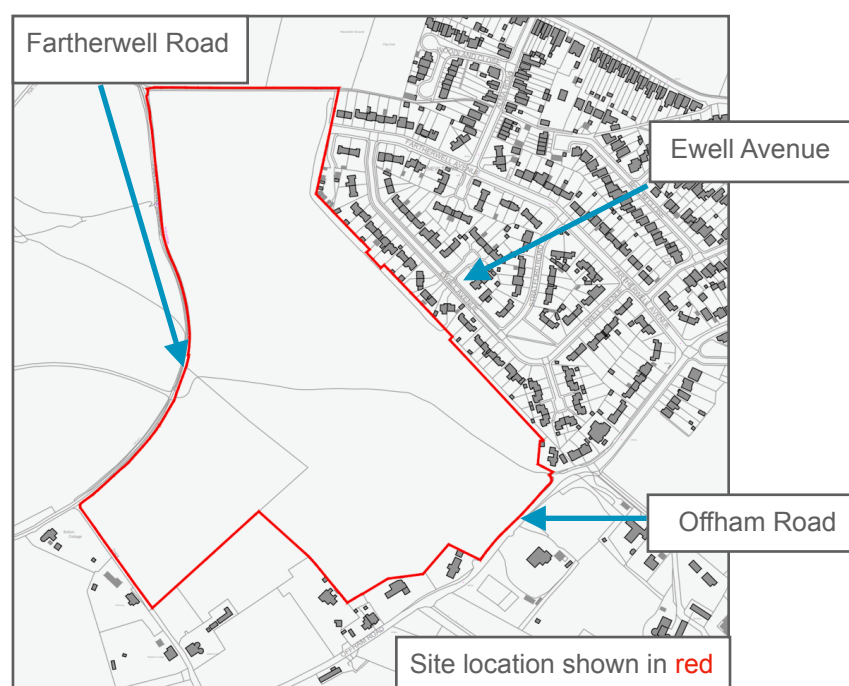
The Site

Land north of Offham Road, West Malling, is currently designated as Green Belt, although it directly adjoins the existing settlement boundary. The updated National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) allows for development within areas identified as Grey Belt, which is land that makes a limited contribution to existing Green Belt.

This site meets this definition: it performs weakly against Green Belt objectives, contains no environmental or heritage assets, and lies in a highly sustainable location. The proposed scheme will deliver around 50% affordable housing, up to 115 homes, together with significant new open space and landscape improvements for both new and existing residents.

Summary

Given the out-of-date Local Plan, lack of a five-year housing land supply, and recent Government policy changes to existing Green Belt land, this proposal is being brought forward to help address TMBC's acknowledged shortfall in local housing provision, to contribute positively to West Malling's sustainable growth and importantly provide homes for local young people and families.



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