



HEATHLANDS GARDEN COMMUNITY

Matter J: Infrastructure Statement

Introduction

- J.1 This Infrastructure Statement further explores the social and community infrastructure to be provided within Heathlands Garden Community. Placemaking will be at the forefront of the provision of infrastructure and this is further illustrated by the 2nd Stage revised Heathlands Masterplan.

Education

- J.2 There have been subsequent discussions with KCC Education (since the May 2019 “call for sites” submission) relating to related education provision at Heathlands.
- J.3 We have been advised there is substantial spare capacity at the existing Lenham Secondary School, and that this should be utilised before the consideration of any new secondary provision. This will be secured in the form of off-site financial contributions (ie CIL), and Heathlands therefore no longer presently proposes its own new Secondary School.
- J.4 Heathlands would provide 2No. 3FE Primary Schools, suitably located close to the 2No Local Centres to provide accessibility for all and further enhance the “community heart”. This accords with DfE advice which recommends a minimum of 2FE primary schools in Garden Communities (Education Provision in Garden Communities, April 2019). The extent of Primary provision has been calculated on the established local formula of 1 Form of Entry per 700 dwellings, which equates to circa 6FE (based upon circa 4,000 dwellings).
- J.5 It is anticipated that Early Years provision would also be provided alongside the Primary provision, whereas Sixth Form provision would be accessible in either Maidstone or Ashford.

Primary Healthcare

- J.6 Preliminary discussions with the local GP Practice (the associated services of Len Valley, Lenham & The Glebe Medical Centre, Harrietsham) have indicated that it is still accepting new patients, ie that it has spare capacity. This understanding is reflected in the latest patient data (as of 30 Dec 2019) as there being 9,423 patients registered at the Practice and 6.1 FTE GPs. The GP to patient ratio is therefore 1:1,545 which is below the HUDU standard of 1:1,800. This indicates capacity at the surgery which is equivalent to 1,556 places.
- J.7 Established CCG practice is to utilise existing spare capacity before the commissioning of a new GP surgery. A new GP practice would be required for circa. 12,000 population, whereas Heathlands is currently predicted to have a population of circa 9,600 (based upon 4,000 homes). It is therefore anticipated that off-site contributions (ie CIL) would be required to provide expanded facilities at Lenham, once any spare capacity has been utilised.
- J.8 Whilst this may be the case in pure numerical terms, there may be the opportunity within the District or Local Centres to provide a 'healthcare hub' as part of the community facilities which would be easily accessible via public transport, cycling and walking. This would assist in promoting healthy, sustainable communities as per recognised Garden City Principles. This will be explored further with the local CCG.

Community Facilities

- J.9 The development provides opportunities to include a central community space, such as a Community Hall within the District Centre. There would also be potential for a smaller community area within one of the Local Centres, paired-up with a smaller working hub to provide a multi-functional space.
- J.10 Providing these community and working hub spaces within the District and Local centres would ensure maximum accessibility through sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, cycling and walking (as demonstrated by the revised Masterplan). Paring the two spaces together, or close to one another, would promote an interrelationship between those working within the community and economic support for the community facilities through the use of potential on-site cafes and exhibition spaces.
- J.11 Existing community facilities, such as Lenham Library, will be enhanced by increased use and the provision of off-site financial contributions.

Open Space, Play Space and Sport Facilities

- J.12 Heathlands provides vast opportunities to create significant open spaces and play spaces that would have a strong relationship with the surrounding built form, resulting in meaningful, inclusive spaces for the use of all, in line with Garden City Principles.
- J.13 The accompanying "Land Use Budget Plan" illustrates how MBC Policy DM19 requirements for open space, play space and sport facilities can be accommodated within the Garden Community. These include notably larger areas for amenity green space and natural/semi-natural spaces than the policy requires.
- J.14 The revised Masterplan includes the sizeable 'Royton Manor Town Park', which will provide a "Green Heart" for the Heathlands Garden Community - while ensure the important archaeological remains are protected.
- J.15 There would also be the potential for the history of these to be communicated to the Park users through information boards or similar, thus better revealing significance (NPPF Para 200).
- J.16 The proposal would also include a substantial Country Park, creating an integrated network of blue green infrastructure, utilising existing footpaths and providing a meaningful open space for users while providing significant biodiversity net gains in line with Garden City Principles. These spaces would be complimented by additional "Green Hubs" as illustrated by the revised Masterplan.
- J.17 The amenity greenspaces will provide opportunities for informal and formal play, with sport pitches provided close to the centre of the development and Primary Schools to promote accessibility.
- J.18 These will provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations as promoted by Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance (2018). MBC's Playing Pitch Strategy (2018) indicates that there is a lower provision for football, cricket and rugby in the Lenham area. The revised Masterplan provides several areas of sports provision, including the potential for providing '3G' football pitches, as recommended by the Strategy.

Retail and Services within Centres

- J.19 As discussed in the preceding sections, the proposed District and Local Centres within Heathlands provide the opportunity to create multi-functional spaces which provide a range of community facilities within one, easily accessible place.
- J.20 These community facilities could include a GP hub with a visiting GP on certain days of the week and pharmacy as service linked to the Lenham GP practice. This provision could be increased where necessary once the separate development around Lenham comes forward (currently circa. 1,000 homes).
- J.21 The District Centre also has the potential to offer small start-up retail units for local residents/businesses, thus promoting local, sustainable employment to create a self-sufficient Heathlands Garden Community.

Utilities

- J.22 The Utility Report undertaken by RSK (Feb 2020) has identified the areas of existing utilities both overground and underground. These are provided within the original report, but were also on the relevant RSK drawings (Ref. 194707-DB-01(00): Sheet 1 of 10 to Sheet 10 of 10) – sent previously.
- J.23 These have been considered as part of the revised Masterplan. For instance, the majority of underground sewers follow the route of existing roads, thus would require little interference. There is an area around the Sewage Treatment Plant where the sewer lines traverse north/south across open land rather than following a road. However, these areas will be retained as open space, thus demonstrating how the revised Masterplan has taken such utilities into account.
- J.24 Further conversations will be held with the utility providers as to the extent of any necessary local improvements to utility infrastructure capacity to accommodate the proposed development.
- J.25 It is acknowledged that Heathlands presently have certain “known unknowns”, particularly in respect of the Western Parcel following the recent revisions reflected in the 2nd Stage Masterplan, ie. the relocated Country Park (to the south of the M20) and development now being proposed in the Western Parcel.

- J.26 By way of an example only - this relates to the existing waste-water treatment works (WWTW) – and we recognise that further technical work is required in respect of:
- The capacity of the WWTW to be able to process the new development;
 - The present “odour contours” from the existing WWTW – to establish the necessary *cordon sanitaire* to surrounding development; and
 - Whether there are any potential technical improvements to the WWTW – to potentially reduce the odour contours/cordon sanitaire.
- J.27 It is recognised this may ultimately reduce the net developable area in the Western Parcel, but that such assessments will form part of the ongoing iterative technical/design process in the evolution of the Garden Community.