

**COUNCIL-LED GARDEN COMMUNITY UPDATE**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All, but in particular Harrietsham & Lenham and Headcorn Wards. Lenham Parish Council and Boughton Malherbe Parish Council are affected.

**Executive Summary**

The proposal was last considered by this Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the progress made since then in pursuing a council-led garden community, near Lenham Heath (Heathlands). As in the case of previous reports to this Committee, the contents of this report relate to the Council's position as a potential property owner/developer and not as Local Planning Authority (LPA).

**Purpose of Report**

For information.

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To note the contents of this report.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy and Resources Committee	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2021

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## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p><b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b></p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all the corporate priorities.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration &amp; Place</p>
<p><b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b></p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of all the cross cutting objectives.</p> <p>Through delivering much needed homes to include 40% affordable housing of which 70% would be for affordable rent. The emerging masterplan is landscape led with up to 50% of the total proposed as green space. Led by the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan the Council can ensure that the design principles of development where it is the master planner reflect the commitment to reduce health inequalities amongst other things.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration &amp; Place</p>
<p><b>Risk Management</b></p>	<p>See section 5.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration &amp; Place</p>

<b>Financial</b>	Investment in the Garden Community forms part of the Council's five-year capital programme and budgetary provision exists for the expenditure described in the report and the plans outlined here.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report as it is for information only.	Team Leader (Planning)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	No impact identified	Policy and Information Team
<b>Equalities</b>	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed if the proposal forms part of the draft spatial strategy of the Local Plan Review.	Equalities and Corporate Policy
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Head of Service or Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A.	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The revised masterplan brief seeks a biodiversity net gain within the proposed redline.	Head of Policy Communications & Governance

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is pursuing this project as it is consistent with its Strategic Plan priority of "embracing growth and enabling infrastructure" and the desired outcomes within it:

- The Council leads master planning and invests in new places which are well designed.
- Key employment sites are delivered.
- Housing need is met including affordable housing.
- Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth.

2.2 This report will provide an update on the progress made since the last report to this Committee and addresses the following areas:

- Promotion of Heathlands through the Local Plan Review (LPR)
- Homes England (HE) partnership update
- Principal Landowners

2.3 **Promotion of Heathlands through the LPR.** The contents of the stage 3 submission to the LPA to be made at the end of March 2021 has tentatively been agreed (with the LPA), to cover the following headings:

<b>Heathlands Stage Three Submission</b>
1. Updated Vision Statement
2. Stage 3 Masterplan Brochure
Proposed Structure for Heathlands SPD (Appendix to the Masterplan Brochure)
3. Landscape and Visual Appraisal (baseline to Land Visual Impact Assessment)
4. Update to technical constraints and mitigation assessments to inform revised masterplan, covering:
Trees and Woodland
Biodiversity
Ground Conditions
Agricultural land
Flooding and drainage
Minerals (see below)
Heritage and Archaeology
Utilities (including WWTW)
5. Sustainable Energy Statement
6. Biodiversity Net Gain Statement
7. Nutrient Neutrality Assessment
8. Sustainable Transport (inclusive of station & alternatives) & Highways Statement
KCC pre-app opinion and advice
Access to A20 locations
Network Rail opinion / support
9. Community Infrastructure Delivery Statement (i.e. education, health, library, community facilities)
10. Housing Statement
11. Employment Statement, to include district and local centre viability
12. Minerals / Aggregates Statement
13. Updated Financial Viability Appraisal Summary
14. Development Project Delivery Plan
15. Governance & Stewardship Statement
16. Engagement Statement and Schedule
17. Landowner letters of intent

2.4 The Council is working closely with HE and is on track to make the submission by the due date.

2.5 **Homes England (HE) Partnership update.** Heads of Terms have now been agreed with HE for the collaboration agreement, which is now being drafted and is intended to be brought forward for consideration by this committee in March 2020.

2.6 **Principal Landowners.** Constructive dialogue continues with the principal landowners and / or their representatives, with the discussion focussed upon the proposed terms put forward by HE.

2.7 It is probable that the overall redline will be refined within the stage 3 masterplan, so as to take onboard direction from the LPA, with a reduced number of landownerships within it. Regardless, the revised masterplan will once again safeguard existing homes in the locality inclusive of the provision of green buffers around them.

- 2.8 In previous reports, this Committee has been made aware that there are some (circa 18) landowners within the current redline who object to the current proposal. Officers are attempting to engage with the objecting landowners to understand their individual concerns and the extent to which these can be addressed. The third stage masterplan will refer to any remaining objections, and reasonable endeavours will be made to keep these to a minimum.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The report is for noting.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 N/A.
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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 When this proposal was presented to this Committee in September 2019, the likely risks were set out as follows:
- At risk consultancy expenditure.
  - A period of uncertainty for the community affected.
  - Possible negative perceptions of a broader role for the Council in the context of acting as master developer.
  - Maintaining cohesion amongst the landowner group.
- 5.2 These risks have to some degree crystallised and largely remain. However, the level of cohesion amongst what is now a smaller core landowner group, is now strong.
- 5.3 Further risks that have since been added and remain are:
- Terms cannot be agreed with the principal landowners.
  - Challenge from individuals or organisations that oppose the principle and/or the specific details of the Council's council-led garden community.

### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 Nothing further to report.

## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

7.1 The next steps will be to:

- Advance the commercial negotiations with the principal landowners.
  - Enter into the collaboration agreement with HE subject to approval by this Committee in March 2021.
  - Continue to engage with the LPA to refine and evolve the Heathlands concept.
  - Make the third stage submission to the LPA by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None.

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.