

**Land south of Old Ashford Road, Lenham, Kent.**

**Planning Statement on behalf of Dean Lewis Estates.**

**Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved, save for access, for up to 100 dwellings and change of use of land for recreation facilities including public sports pitches with parking and changing rooms, LEAP play area and associated works and infrastructure.**

**HPPC Ref: 31153**

**Date: September 2019**



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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning statement is to support the outline planning application submitted to Maidstone for up to 100 dwellings and change of use of land for recreation facilities including public sports pitches with parking and changing rooms, LEAP play area and associated works and infrastructure on land south of the Old Ashford Road, Lenham, Kent.
- 1.1.1 In the statement we outline and discuss the relevant planning considerations, including a description of the site, planning history, proposal, relevant planning policy context, the key planning issues and the planning benefits. From this we draw our conclusions in support of the proposal.

## **2 SITE AND LOCATION**

- 2.1 The site in question lies immediately south of the Old Ashford Road at the junction of where this road meets the A20. The site lies to the east of Lenham centre by approximately 500 metres as the crow flies and is roughly triangular in shape for the residential element with a further area extending south comprising the playing field and proposed clubhouse area. The site is bounded along its entire length by the Old Ashford Road to the north. A single residential dwelling lies on the junction of the Old Ashford Road with the A20 just to the far north east of the site. A farmyard complex with lake, dwellings and agricultural buildings lies to the east. South of the site is open countryside. On the far west of the site at the 'point' of the triangle lie 4 dwellings known as Barnside Cottages. The site measures 11.6 hectares in total.
- 2.1.1 At present the land is in arable use with access to it obtained from the land to the south, within the applicant's ownership. A hedge runs along the entire length of the site where it fronts the Old Ashford Road. Geographically and geologically, the site fronts the Old Ashford Road just before it joins with the newer A20. The A20 runs east to west following the foot of the North Downs where the chalk of the Downs meets the Gault Clay beds that sit below it. The foot of the North Downs is characterised by the emergence of springs which travel south following the slight southerly fall in the land. The presence of these springs can be seen to the east of Lenham where the village pond lies, and on the farm to the east where again springs emerge forming a small lake before travelling south. These springs meet up with others to form the River Stour, the source of which is Lenham itself.

- 2.1.2 The site is Grade 1 agricultural land, relatively flat and as noted above, has a slight fall to the south. The northern boundary of the site sits at approximately 120m OD with the south at approximately 110 OD. There are no notable features on the land and other than the hedges and scattered trees along the boundaries, the site is devoid of any other vegetation or features. By reference to the paragraphs above it will be seen that there are few neighbouring dwellings.
- 2.1.3 There are a number of public footpaths and bridleways in this location. Immediately to the south runs public footpath KH400 travelling east on this leads you towards Lenham but before hitting the village itself the path turns due north to meet the Old Ashford Road by Barnside Cottages. From here it is possible to walk to the village on the footway alongside the road. Travelling west the path meets footpath KH399 and KH399A which meet it and turn due north up to the Old Ashford Road. Crossing the road the footpath becomes KH390 which takes you up to the Pilgrims Way on the crest of the North Downs.
- 2.1.4 Lenham itself is a mediaeval village halfway between Maidstone and Ashford. The village has a train station allowing travel to Maidstone (16 minutes) and Ashford (15 minutes) as well as London (1hr 20 minutes). The village is well served by bus routes with the 10X (Maidstone) and T11 (Ashford) stops within 400 metres of the site on the Old Ashford Road.
- 2.1.5 The village has a number of facilities including a co-op, public houses, village store, restaurants, coffee shops, baker, post office, news agents, estate agents etc. A bi monthly market is also held here. It has a wide range of shops and services available and is a popular destination in its own right. The village also has a primary, secondary school, doctor's surgery and community centre.
- 2.1.6 To conclude, Lenham is a sustainably located village with good transport links, a wide range of shops and services and community facilities. It is very popular to both locals and tourists who visit the region.

## Indicative Master Plan



Figure 1 Site Location

### 3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site has been subject to one planning application which relates to the EIA Scoping Opinion (19/503668/ENVSCR). An Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

### 4 PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 The NPPF (February 2019) clearly identifies that there is a strong need for public engagement prior to a proposal being formally submitted;

- 4.1.2 Pre-application engagement and front loading:

*Paragraph 39. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.*

*Paragraph 41. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a*

*timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.*

- 4.1.3 Maidstone Borough Council planning department is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to comment on plans who may be impacted by them and where possible we have tried to follow these guidelines as part of our pre application consultations.

The objective of our consultation strategy is to engage local residents, elected members and other stakeholders about the proposal at the pre-application or 'informal' stage, providing an opportunity to influence the final design and reach a mutually acceptable solution. The process is informed by the Planning Aids Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes. The consultation and engagement programme provides information through a number of traditional and online communication tools allowing stakeholders to gain knowledge, ask questions and receive a timely response directly from the developer if required. The approach has been designed in such a way to gain a representative cross section of the community and to engage a spread of age, gender and ethnicity in a meaningful way.

It is our intention that the proposed development sits comfortably within local community and that residents' concerns are listened to and acted upon if at all possible.

- 4.1.4 Therefore local residents are the primary focus of the stakeholder engagement process and it was decided that a combination of engagement methods would be made available to ensure maximum and accessible contact with the local community.
- 4.1.5 Parish Councils are statutory consultees with a good local knowledge of the area, and would be able to highlight local issues. Being locally democratically elected they are best placed to represent the local residents and other stakeholders.
- 4.1.6 Lenham Borough Council's local ward members for Lenham. As democratically elected local ward councillors for Harrietsham and Lenham Ward, Cllr Janetta Sams and Councillor Tom Sams hold a large amount of local knowledge and work at a decision making level of local government.

4.1.7 A flyer with information about the development and timings of the consultation drop-in event was delivered to 300 local residents prior to the event itself. Email invitations were also sent to the ward councillors.

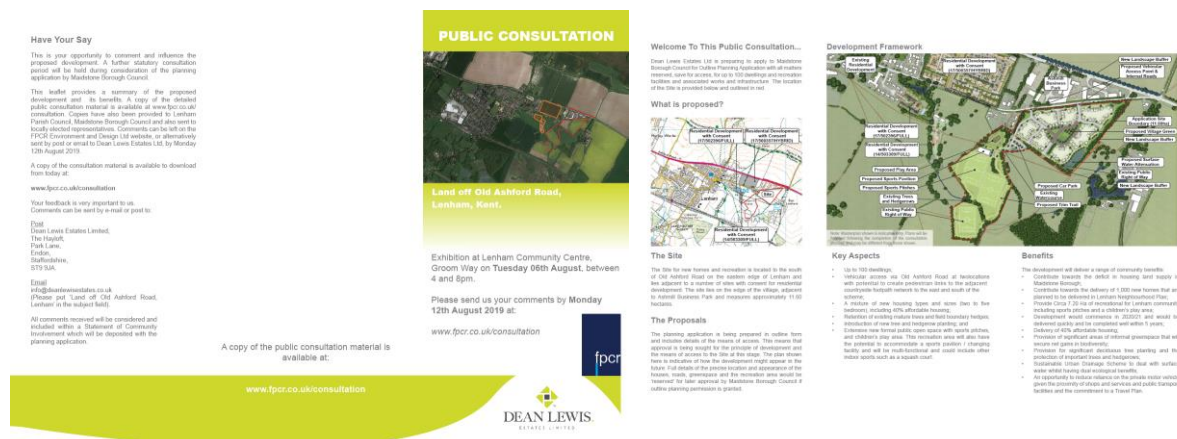


Figure 2 Leaflet distributed

4.1.8 Public Exhibition. On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2019 we held a public exhibition event at Lenham Community Centre between the hours of 4pm and 8pm. Around 40 people attended the exhibition, where they could view exhibition boards that detailing information about the proposals and next steps. Members of the project team were on hand to discuss the proposals and answer questions.

4.1.9 A hard copy feedback form was provided at the exhibition, which could be handed to the developers on the day or returned by post.

4.1.10 Feedback form results and other outcomes of the public consultation event. Three (3) hard copy feedback forms were completed at the public exhibition and their initial comments on the development was as follows:

- 1 form with a short reply stating they considered it was a pity to develop
  - 2 forms expressing concerns relating to traffic, pressure on roads and junction improvements being necessary. Stated that people would not walk from the site to the village. Stated that all developments in the village should be considered at the same time and not in isolation.
- Four (4) e-mail responses were received to the consultation. Issues raised included:
- Concerns about traffic onto the busy A20, could the junction be improved?
  - There are no benefits and those proposed only offset the damage caused.

- Concerns about parking in the village and schools, doctor's surgery and infrastructure generally not being able to cope.

4.1.11 Conclusion, results and outcomes - The level of response to the consultation was generally low. Notwithstanding that the public consultation process and event was constructive and produced some effective feedback that confirmed our design approach (particularly in relation to the junction of the Old Ashford Road with the A20) was in line with residents' concerns and this contributed to the design process.

4.1.12 On the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 we attended a members briefing at Maidstone Borough Council to outline the proposals and answer questions from Councillors and officers.

4.1.13 We believe that our pre-application consultation programme complied with the aspirations of Maidstone Borough Council as well as the Planning Aid and the RTPI's accepted methodologies and current best practice for undertaking public consultation.

## **5 PROPOSAL**

5.1 The proposal is in outline form for 100 dwellings with access reserved and includes for a change of use of land to recreation facilities including public sports pitches with parking and changing rooms, LEAP play area and associated works and infrastructure. 40% of the proposed housing will be affordable.

5.1.2 Access will be taken from the Old Ashford Road via a priority controlled 'T' junction. The 30mph speed limit will be extended beyond the site frontage to enhance safety. Improvements to the Old Ashford Road / A20 junction will also be undertaken. A new footway will be provided along the frontage of the Old Ashford Road which will link in to the footway to the west that runs to the village of Lenham.

5.1.3 The site itself can be broadly split into 3 areas. Firstly the proposed housing area lies immediately to the south of the Old Ashford Road and comprises a roughly triangular parcel of land, two vehicular accesses (a main and a secondary) which will enable a loop to be formed around the centre of the site which comprises a central village green.



- 5.1.4 Details of the likely vernacular architecture to be used, materials, styles, and inspiration for the design are set out in the Design and Access Statement.
- 5.1.5 The westernmost access will run down past the eastern boundary of existing properties at Barnside Cottages and lead into the main recreational part of the site and what will become the future playing fields area comprising 2 full size pitches and one junior pitch. It is envisaged that this access will culminate in a parking area for the future clubhouse with playing fields to the south as shown on the submitted plans. Between the residential area and the parking area will be a local equipped area of play (LEAP).
- 5.1.6 The eastern most boundary of the site marks the junction of the site with open farmland beyond and the group of agricultural buildings known as Barr Farm. At this juncture the site will be slightly bunded along the easternmost boundary to screen the farm and provide a bank for tree planting. In the far south eastern corner of the site will be landscaping including new structural planting and bunds, amenity and wildflower grassland and wetland habitats and the balancing ponds. Barr Farm marks the site of a spring and ponds running out of North Downs, the new balancing pond will feed into the system of ditches and streams running out from here that eventually form the Great Stour.
- 5.1.7 Taken as a whole, the development of the site identified as Lenham 1 will provide a tenth of the much needed housing allocation for the village, substantial sports pitch allocation as well as land for a future clubhouse and parking area as well as highway improvements, pedestrian access improvements and ecological benefits.

## **6 PLANNING POLICY**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that a planning application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (revised February 2019) is the overarching policy document that sits above the Maidstone Local Plan and the emerging Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. Each of these documents will be considered in turn below.

6.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

6.1.4 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following paragraphs have been considered in preparing the application, and are therefore relevant to the determination of the application.

**6.1.5 The presumption in favour of sustainable development.**

Paragraph 8 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At its heart the Framework has three overarching objectives:

An economic objective

A social objective

An environmental objective

Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

6.1.6 It goes on to say that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission. Unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

6.1.7 Development contributions are dealt with in paragraph 34. Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed

for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.

#### **6.1.8 Pre-application engagement and front-loading.**

Paragraph 39 states that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

#### **6.1.9 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.**

In paragraph 59 it is stated that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

#### **6.1.10 Rural housing.**

Paragraph 77. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.

6.1.11 Paragraph 78. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

6.1.12 Paragraph 79. Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:

a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

- b) the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- d) the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
- e) the design is of exceptional quality, in that it: - is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and - would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

#### **6.1.13 Building a strong, competitive economy.**

Paragraph 80. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **6.1.14 Supporting a prosperous rural economy.**

Paragraph 83. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Paragraph 84. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are

physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

#### **6.1.15 Promoting healthy and safe communities.**

Paragraph 91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

#### **6.1.16 Open space and recreation**

Paragraph 96. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.

#### **6.1.17 Promoting sustainable transport**

Paragraph 102. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;

- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

#### **6.1.18 Making effective use of land**

Paragraph 117. Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

#### **6.1.19 Paragraph 118. Planning policies and decisions should:**

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and
- e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

#### **6.1.20 Achieving well-designed places**

Paragraph 124. The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

#### **6.1.21 Planning for climate change**

Paragraph 150. New development should be planned for in ways that:

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design.

#### **6.1.22 Planning and flood risk**

Paragraph 163. When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate; d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

6.1.23 Paragraph 164. Applications for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments.

#### 6.1.24 **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**

Paragraph 170. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

6.1.25 Paragraph 172. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

#### 6.1.26 **Habitats and biodiversity**

Paragraph 174. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of



importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

## **6.2 Maidstone Local Plan - Adopted 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

6.2.1 The site lies just outside of the current identified village boundary of Lenham, being 100 metres to the east and situated in open countryside. The site lies outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Lenham itself is identified as a rural service centre. The following policies within the Local Plan are considered to relate to both Lenham itself and the application site.

6.2.2 By way of background, the pre amble to the Local plan contains a section relating to the Spatial Portrait for Maidstone. The Spatial Vision of Maidstone is to ensure that by 2031 sustainable growth will be delivered whilst protecting and enhancing the borough's natural and built assets. The Spatial Objectives are to provide for a balance of new homes and related retail and employment opportunities and to focus new development.

### **6.2.3 Strategic Policies - Policy SS 1 Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy.**

Within this policy Lenham is identified as a rural service centre where there will be a secondary focus for housing development with the emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the role of those centres and the provision of services to meet the needs of the local community.

6.2.4 Lenham has produced a Regulation 14 Consultation Draft of a neighbourhood Plan which now deals with this in much more detail. This is expanded in this statement within the section relating to the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.

6.2.5 Policy SP1 sets out that Maidstone will be the main focus for new development. Policy SP2 and SP3 set out the requirements for the other strategic development locations to the north-east and south-east of the urban area.

6.2.6 **Strategic Policy SP 5** identifies the rural service centres, Lenham is identified as one where new housing and employment development will be focused principally within the Maidstone urban area and at the strategic development locations at the edge of town, and at junctions 7 and 8 of the M20 motorway. The plan further states that development will also be focused to a lesser extent at the five rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.

6.2.7 **Strategic Policy SP 8** specifically deals with the Lenham Rural Service Centre. The text of this policy is reproduced in full below:-

6.2.8 **Lenham Rural Service Centre**

*Outside the Maidstone urban area, rural service centres are the second most sustainable settlements in the hierarchy to accommodate growth. At the rural service centre of Lenham, as shown on the policies map, key services will be retained and supported.*

*1. In addition to minor development and redevelopment of appropriate sites in accordance with policy SP5, approximately 155 new dwellings will be delivered on two allocated sites (policies H1(41) to H1(42)).*

*2. Two pitches are allocated for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in accordance with policy GT1(8).*

*3. Three existing sites are designated as Economic Development Areas in order to maintain employment opportunities in the locality (policy SP22).*

*4. Key infrastructure requirements for Lenham include:*

*i. Improvements to highway and transport infrastructure including junction improvements, a variety of measures to improve sustainable transport infrastructure, and improvements to pedestrian access in accordance with individual site criteria set out in policies H1(41) to H1(42);*

*ii. Provision of a one form entry expansion at either Lenham or Harrietsham primary schools;*

*ii. Provision of 0.34 hectares of natural/semi-natural open space; and*

*iv. Improvements to health infrastructure including extension and/or improvements at The Len Valley Practice.*

*5. The loss of local shops, community facilities and green spaces will be resisted, and new retail development, community services and open space will be supported to meet local needs in accordance with policy SP5(3).*

6. Lenham is also identified as a broad location for growth for the delivery of approximately 1,000 dwellings post April 2021, in accordance with policy H2(3). Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or through the local plan review to be adopted by April 2021.

*Housing sites should avoid significant adverse impact on the setting of the AONB and coalescence with neighbouring Harrietsham.*

6.2.9 The current application has been submitted in accordance with the emerging neighbourhood plan that sets out how the required number of dwellings will be delivered at Lenham. The site (identified as number 1 in the plan) can come forward at any time during the Plan period because it is independent of any other constraints such as highway improvements and other infrastructure matters.

**6.2.10 Policy SP 17 relates to the Countryside. It is reproduced in full below.**

*The countryside is defined as all those parts of the plan area outside the settlement boundaries of the Maidstone urban area, rural service centres and larger villages defined on the policies map.*

- 1. Development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.*
- 2. Agricultural proposals will be supported which facilitate the efficient use of the borough's significant agricultural land and soil resource provided any adverse impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape can be appropriately mitigated.*
- 3. Great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*
- 4. Proposals should not have a significant adverse impact on the settings of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*
- 5. The Metropolitan Green Belt is shown on the policies map and development there will be managed in accordance with national policy for the Green Belt.*

*6. The distinctive landscape character of the Greensand Ridge, the Medway Valley, the Len Valley, the Loose Valley, and the Low Weald, as defined on the policies map, will be conserved and enhanced as landscapes of local value.*

*7. Development in the countryside will retain the separation of individual settlements. Account should be taken of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document.*

6.2.11 The proposal accords with the policies in the plan and will not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area. The Landscape and Visual Assessment submitted with the application explores the impacts in more detail specifically in relation to views from the AONB which lies to the north of the site starting beyond the A20 road. The proposed landscaping scheme including a new tree planting strip to the north of the A20 will be extremely beneficial to the AONB by largely obscuring views of industrial site and the proposed residential site from the higher ground of the AONB.

6.2.12 **Policy SP 19 - Housing mix.** This policy is particularly relevant to the site and reproduced in full below.

*Maidstone Borough Council will seek to ensure the delivery of sustainable mixed communities across new housing developments and within existing housing areas throughout the borough.*

*1. In considering proposals for new housing development, the council will seek a sustainable range of house sizes, types and tenures (including plots for custom and self-build) that reflect the needs of those living in Maidstone Borough now and in years to come.*

*2. Accommodation profiles detailed in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 (or any future updates) will be used to help inform developers to determine which house sizes should be delivered in urban and rural areas to meet the objectively assessed needs of the area. In relation to affordable housing, the council will expect the submission of details of how this information has been used to justify the proposed mix.*

*3. Where affordable housing is to be provided, developers should also take into consideration the needs of households on the council's housing register and discuss affordable housing requirements with the council's housing team at the pre-submission stage of the planning process.*

*4. Large development schemes will be expected to demonstrate that consideration has been given to custom and self-build plots as part of housing mix.*

*5. The council will work with partners to support the provision of specialist and supported housing for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people.*

*6. Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation requirements will form part of the borough need for housing.*

*An Affordable and Local Needs Housing Supplementary Planning Document will be produced to expand on how the proposals in this policy will be implemented.*

6.2.13 The mix, type and tenure of the housing is set out in more detail in the accompanying drawings.

6.2.14 The Maidstone Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report is dated January 2014. Lenham is identified in Maidstone Rural East where the report expects market demand for housing to be:-

*Para 8.71 As in the rural north we would expect market demand for housing to be for principally for properties with 2 or more bedrooms. Table 58 sets out the expected profile of market demand. We would expect demand for 2- and 3-bed homes (including bungalows) from older households looking to downsize but wanting to remain in the local area because of existing family/ community ties. We would expect similarly some continued demand for larger homes with 4 or more bedrooms from local households trading up, as well as people moving to the area.*

*8.72 The affordable housing needs analysis suggests a net need for 25 affordable homes per annum of which 27% is for intermediate affordable housing (particularly shared ownership and shared equity homes), and 73% for social or affordable rented homes.*

*8.73 In the short-term the welfare reforms may increase the need for smaller properties. The longer-term demographic-driven modelling indicates a particular need for 3-bed affordable homes relative to other sub-markets in the HMA.*

**Table 58: Estimated dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms by Sub-Area (2011 to 2031) – Market Housing**

Sub-area	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Maidstone Town	8.0%	34.5%	43.3%	14.3%
Rural North	4.7%	25.3%	38.7%	31.3%
Rural East	4.5%	25.9%	46.7%	23.0%
Rural South	5.9%	28.2%	43.5%	22.5%
Maidstone	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>

Source: Housing Market Model

#### 6.2.15 **Policy SP20 – Affordable Housing.**

The policy relating to affordable housing sets out the requirements for 40% affordable housing to be delivered in the rural service centres (of which Lenham is one). There is a requirement for the affordable housing to be appropriately integrated within the site. Indicative targets for tenure are 70% affordable rented housing, social rented housing or a mixture of the two and 30% intermediate affordable housing (shared ownership and/or intermediate rent).

6.2.16 The submitted scheme will provide for full affordable housing provision via the Section 106 Agreement.

#### 6.2.17 **Policy SP 23 Sustainable transport**

All schemes should mitigate the impact of development where appropriate on local and strategic road networks. Key points include ensuring that highway network capacity and function at key locations is improved and Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence and protect and enhance public rights of way

6.2.18 Housing Policies H1 (41) and H1 (41) identify the current adopted allocations of housing for Lenham being at Tanyard Hill, Old Ashford Road (145 dwellings) and Glebe Gardens (10 dwellings). These allocations fall well short of the 1000 dwellings required within Lenham. The Neighbourhood Plan is the vehicle that will deliver the full allocation for Lenham and the proposed scheme accords with the emerging neighbourhood plan.

**6.2.19 Policy H2(3)** Lenham broad location for housing growth.

The rural service centre of Lenham is identified as a broad location in accordance with policies SP8 and H2 for approximately 1,000 dwellings post April 2021. Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review.

**6.2.20** It is important that development of Lenham takes place in a manner that is well integrated with the existing communities of Lenham, so that they are seen as, and function as, the village which they adjoin, rather than stand-alone communities. In order to ensure a coordinated and planned approach, proposals for development within Lenham which come forward prior to an agreed Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review being adopted will be refused.

**6.2.21** Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review which will illustrate how environmental, social, design and economic objectives of the local plan will be met and to demonstrate the physical and functional integration of the site(s) within Lenham. The Neighbourhood Plan and/or local plan will incorporate and address the following principles:

1. Make efficient use of land and provide a broad range of housing choice by size and tenure (including market and affordable housing) and cater for people with special housing needs;
2. Outline measures to mitigate the traffic impacts from development on the strategic and local road networks;
3. Identify appropriate provision of, or contributions towards infrastructure improvements;
4. Incorporate primary school(s) and secondary school(s) if the scale of development justifies on-site provision, or if not, contributions to provision off-site in order to meet the needs generated by the broad location;
5. Ensure development is fully integrated with the surrounding village through shared community uses, and a variety of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport;
6. Provide, commensurate with the scale of development, a network of open spaces and green infrastructure for amenity, play, sport and recreation, including allotments, local nature

reserves woodlands, green spaces and wildlife corridors. Such provision should respond positively to the wider area to ensure enhanced linkages and networks;

7. Incorporate appropriate landscape treatment which ensures that developments can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;

8. Protect and, where possible, enhance any features of biodiversity value on site or which are off-site but might be affected by the proposed development;

9. Incorporate an appropriate flood risk management strategy and measures for its implementation; and

10. Ensure adequate provision is made for enhanced and comprehensive sewerage infrastructure.

The development will provide for the relevant community infrastructure levies.

6.2.22 **Policy ID1** States that where development creates a requirement for new or improved infrastructure beyond existing provision, developers will be expected to provide or contribute towards the additional requirement being provided to an agreed delivery programme.

6.2.23 **Policy DM 1** concerns principles of good design. This policy is reproduced in full below:

*Proposals which would create high quality design and meet the following criteria will be permitted:*

*i. Create designs and layouts that are accessible to all, and maintain and maximise opportunities for permeability and linkages to the surrounding area and local services;*

*ii. Respond positively to, and where possible enhance, the local, natural or historic character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation and site coverage*

*a high quality, modern design approach and making use of vernacular materials where appropriate;*

*iii. Create high quality public realm and, where opportunities permit, provide improvements, particularly in town centre locations;*

*iv. Respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses and provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built*



*form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties;*

*v. Respect the topography and respond to the location of the site and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds worthy of retention within the site. Particular attention should be paid in rural and semi-rural areas where the retention and addition of native vegetation appropriate to local landscape character around the site boundaries should be used as positive tool to help assimilate development in a manner which reflects and respects the local and natural character of the area;*

*vi. Provide a high quality design which responds to areas of heritage, townscape and landscape value or uplifts an area of poor environmental quality;*

*vii. Orientate development, where possible, in such a way as to maximise the opportunity for sustainable elements to be incorporated and to reduce the reliance upon less sustainable energy sources;*

*viii. Protect and enhance any on-site biodiversity and geodiversity features where appropriate, or provide sufficient mitigation measures;*

*ix. Safely accommodate the vehicular and pedestrian movement generated by the proposal on the local highway network and through the site access;*

*x. Create a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour;*

*xi. Avoid inappropriate new development within areas at risk from flooding, or mitigate any potential impacts of new development within such areas whereby mitigation measures are integral to the design of buildings;*

*xii. Incorporate measures for the adequate storage of waste, including provision for increasing recyclable waste;*

*xiii. Provide adequate vehicular and cycle parking to meet adopted council standards; and*

*xiv. Be flexible towards future adaptation in response to changing life needs.*

*Account should be taken of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, Character Area Assessments, the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines SPD, the Kent Design Guide and the Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty Management Plan.*

6.2.24 The way in which the design of the development and the layout has evolved is clearly set out in the Design and Access Statement. The development responds positively to the local character of the area and incorporates the scale, height, materials detailing articulation and

design that can be recognised as typical of the vernacular of Lenham and the surrounding Kent villages.

6.2.25 There are very few surrounding residential occupiers and those that do exist (two dwellings to the far east of the site and the farm yard complex to the west as well as the cottages to the far west) are / will be sufficiently screened such that no detrimental impact will occur to their residential amenity.

6.2.26 The topography of the site is relatively flat with a gentle slope to the south. The site is currently in agricultural use and largely devoid of any features within it, but does have existing hedging and trees that will be incorporated within the development. The proposed landscaping scheme will be both within and outside of the site and will further assimilate and benefit both the site itself and areas such as the industrial estate to the north, especially when viewed from the AONB. The water attenuation areas will also significantly enhance the biodiversity of the area and fit in well with the pattern of lakes and springs that emerge here at the foot of the North Downs.

6.2.27 The vehicular access point has been accepted by Kent County Council and the provision of a footpath and cycle path will link the scheme into the existing footway that currently finishes to the west of the site where footpath KH400 links in to the Old Ashford Road. From here a direct footway runs along the Old Ashford Road to the village of Lenham approximately 600 metres to the west.

6.2.28 Adequate measures for the storage and recycling of waste will be provided as will adequate vehicle and cycle parking. The scheme is therefore fully compliant with Policy DM1.

**6.2.29 Policy DM 2 Sustainable design.**

New dwellings are expected to meet (where possible) the Building Regulations optional requirement for tighter water efficiency, the strengthened on-site energy performance standards of Building Regulations and achieve the BREEAM Very Good standard (or any subsequent replaced national standard) for energy credits.

The proposed scheme will be designed such that 10% of the energy requirements are provided by on site renewables.

**6.2.30 Policy DM 3 Natural Environment.**

New development is expected to protect and enhance the natural environment by incorporating measures to protect positive landscape features, trees with significant amenity value, hedgerows public rights of way etc. The creation of new habitats is supported as well as the contribution of improvement of accessibility to natural green space and wider links to the Public Rights of Way network. Ecology and Arboricultural assessments are required where necessary and publicly accessible space should be provided as part of the layout of any site,

*'taking advantage of the potential for multiple benefits including enhanced play, wildlife, sustainable urban drainage, tree planting and landscape provision. The form and function of green infrastructure will reflect a site's characteristics, nature, location and existing or future deficits.'*

6.2.31 The proposal will increase substantially the public and environmental potential for the site by virtue of the provision of open space areas, play areas, pitches, water features and a substantial amount of new tree planting. The development is fully compliant in this respect.

6.2.32 **Policy DM 6** This policy relates to proposals that are likely to have a negative or significant impact on air quality. The residential development proposed as a whole is not considered to be likely to have a negative or significant impact on air quality.

**6.2.33 Policy DM 12 Density of housing development**

*All new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. Development proposals that fail to make efficient use of land for housing, having regard to the character and location of the area, will be refused permission.*

*Subject to this overriding consideration:*

- 1. At sites within and adjacent to the town centre new residential development will be expected to achieve net densities of between 45 and 170 dwellings per hectare.*
- 2. At other sites within and adjacent to the urban area new residential development will be expected to achieve a net density of 35 dwellings per hectare.*

*3. At sites within or adjacent to the rural service centres and larger villages as defined under policies SP5-10 and SP11-16 respectively new residential development will be expected to achieve a net density of 30 dwellings per hectare.*

6.2.34 As a development adjacent to a rural service centre the relevant density figure to be achieved is indicated as 30 dwellings per hectare.

6.2.35 **Policy DM 17** relates to district centres, local centres and local shops and facilities. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance the existing retail and community uses of the district centres of which The Square Lenham is one. The residential development as proposed will undoubtedly increase the footfall to Lenham to the benefit of the village and its facilities.

6.2.36 **Policy DM 19** relates to publicly accessible open space and recreation. A detailed breakdown of quantity standards, quality standards and accessibility standards for open space and delivery is given in the policy. Full details of the open space allocations are set out in the supporting documents.

6.2.37 **Policy DM 20** states that the adequate provision of community facilities, including social, education and other facilities, is an essential component of new residential development. The plans identify community facilities in the form of open space, playing pitches, space for a new clubhouse and parking area as well as a play area.

6.2.38 Social and educational contributions will be provided for via the Community Infrastructure Levy and via the Section 106 agreement.

6.2.39 **Policy DM 21** deals with assessing the transport impacts of development and policy **Policy DM 23** with Parking standards. The proposal fully complies with the requirements of these policies, further detail can be found in the Transport Statement by Prime Transport attached to the application documents.

6.2.40 **Policy DM 30** covers the issue of design principles in the countryside. The site does adjoin the built up confines of Lenham and does therefore sit within the countryside as defined by Policy DM 30.

The proposal accords with the requirements of the policy in as much as:-

1. The type, siting, materials and design, mass and scale of development and the level of activity will maintain and enhance local distinctiveness including landscape features.
2. Any impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape are to be appropriately mitigated. A landscape and visual Impact accompanies the application to support the development.
3. The scheme does not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads or any unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane or the erosion of any roadside verges.

### 6.3 **Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation Draft September 2018.**

The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan sets out the aspirations for Lenham over the period to 2031. The plan sets out the policies in relation to land use and development that will influence future planning applications and decisions in the area. The subject site is one of seven that will collectively form the allocations for the emerging neighbourhood plan to provide residential development at a minimum of 1000 dwellings as well as the requisite green infrastructure, roads recreational spaces etc.

site is identified in the draft neighbourhood plan as land south of the Ashford Road and identified as Strategic Housing Delivery Site 1 (SHDS1). The following policies are relevant:

#### 6.3.1 **Quality Design – Policy D1.**

This policy sets out the requirement for all new development to contribute to the creation of high quality places through a design led approach. Development must respond to the scale, character, materials, grain and architectural rhythm of the existing built form. Proposals must demonstrate how they respond to the landscape, local and longer-views (especially in relation to the AONB) the environment and historic assets. Designs that incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity are encouraged.

Design and Access Statements are expected to address the following:-

*(i) Interest and subtlety in site layout regards aspects such as street alignments, closes and small squares, rather than the straight roads and sweeping geometries which commonly may be seen in a town setting.*

*(ii) Frontage boundary treatments, which may include low hedges, low fences, low walls, or a combination of these rather than less well considered boundary treatments which commonly may be seen in a town setting.*

*(iii) Location and design of car parking shall be such that the street scape is not dominated by car parks.*

*(iv) Relationship between buildings and the street.*

*(v) Building massing regards height and form.*

*(vi) Construction facing materials.*

*(vii) Details such as fenestration, dormers and chimneys, hung wall tiles, ship lap cladding, open eaves, use of half hips in the roof, white windows and timber work. If and when elements such as outside beams and chimneys are used they ought to be structural and not only ornamental.*

*(viii) Landscape design and species. Native, eventually large trees shall be planted alongside roads and in areas which are kept as communal areas in order to achieve maximum screening of the development when viewed from the AONB.*

*(ix) New development shall incorporate habitat features such as bird boxes and bat boxes, which shall be built in as an integral part of the construction development.*

6.3.2 The applicant has been actively involved in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and the application has specifically addressed these points. Further details in relation to compliance with Policy D1 can be found within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

### 6.3.3 **Innovation and Variety – Policy D3**

This policy aims to ensure that innovative design that raises the standard of design in Lenham but which also promotes and reinforces local distinctiveness is welcome. Bespoke housing design solutions and residential typologies as opposed to ‘off-the-shelf’ designs are encouraged. The proposed designs are not standard house builder products, the scheme has been commissioned for this particular site and reflects the local vernacular of Lenham.

### 6.3.4 **Residential Car Parking Design – Policy D5**

Parking must be designed so that it is conveniently located, overlooked and avoids informal parking. It must be unobtrusive and use garages (where proposed) set back from the building

line using trees where necessary to soften the impact. Rear or separate parking courts will not be allowed. The proposal fully accords with this policy.

#### **6.3.5 Active travel - Policy AT1**

*Applications for development are encouraged to demonstrate how they support active travel through delivery of walking and cycling routes that reduce reliance on vehicular movement. Where new walking and cycling routes are provided as part of new areas of development, they must be direct, safe and convenient to use. The layout of proposed new development should allow for the natural surveillance of routes through overlooking with active development frontages.*

*Proposals for new development are encouraged to demonstrate how they link into the existing footpath and cycle network, providing connections between residential, retail, leisure, commercial and community uses.*

- 6.3.6 The scheme has been carefully planned to ensure that it taps into the excellent network of local footpaths that exist adjacent to the site. These new footpaths and cycle paths within the site ensure that residents will have easy access to the village and its facilities without recourse to using a car.

#### **6.3.7 Public Transport – Policy AT2**

Support will be given to proposals that, amongst others, are located in close proximity to public transport services and contribute towards improved connectivity to these. The site is extremely well located to the existing bus stops on the Old Ashford Road and the railway station a short distance to the west.

#### **6.3.8 Active and sustainable travel projects - Policy AT(3)**

*Public rights of way across the Parish and linking with the surrounding countryside will be retained and improvements to the quality and maintenance of the route sought, including new wayfinding. The provision of missing links within the network will be investigated, including provision of safe walking and cycling connections along and across the A20 to the AONB.*

6.3.9 Reference to the plans will show that the site has excellent links with the network of public rights of way and will enable new links from the Old Ashford Road to the open countryside and public rights of way to the south.

**6.3.10 Natural and amenity green space - Policy GS1**

*Support will be given to proposals for new development that:*

- *Create new wildlife habitats, connect, enhance and retain existing wildlife habitats.*
- *Provide opportunities for gardening, wildlife and food production within existing and new residential areas.*
- *Provide good quality outdoor space including private, community gardens and allotments as well as contributing to the provision of new tree cover.*
- *Improve links between Lenham and the surrounding countryside, upgrading the quality of the landscape along these routes and strengthening connections with the rural footpath network, including the North Downs Way.*
- *Enhance the quality of public spaces and the streetscape within the built-up area, including new tree planting, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage.*

6.3.11 The development creates new green spaces, planted areas, tree belts and large attenuation pond all of which will provide new habitats here. The open spaces and residential rear gardens will allow ample opportunities for gardening and provide good quality outdoor space. The large central village green will be well overlooked by the new houses and provide a high quality area for informal recreation. The network of paths within the site will provide excellent links to the surrounding network of footpaths.

**6.3.12 Open space within major development areas - Policy GS2**

This policy sets out the open space requirements for all new developments. The development as proposed provides open space (as detailed in the submission documents) that is substantially over and above the policy requirements.

**6.3.13 Community Facilities - Policy CF1**

Applications which provide additional community facilities will be supported. Community facilities are stated as including education, healthcare, childcare facilities and community halls. This policy would therefore appear not to rule out support for other community facilities



such as playing pitches and parking areas for new halls etc. The application will enable the provision of one playing pitch to be transferred to the parish Council and a parking area created within the application site. A further 2 pitches are also being provided, these additional 2 pitches are not required to address any adverse effects of the development which is the subject of this application. The two additional pitches are an additional community benefit which can be afforded weight in the planning process. However, these additional 2 pitches are separate from the development obligations that are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

It is important therefore that the Council separates the additional 2 pitches from any discussions relating to the Section 106 obligations, but does afford them due weight as part of the planning process.

**6.3.14 Policies ED1, ED2 and ED3** deal with education and state that the Strategic Delivery Sites (of which this site is one) will make proportionate and appropriate contributions towards education. That priority will be given to securing additional investment in secondary education at The Lenham School and investment in the existing Lenham Primary School should be the preferred option. The development will be subject to educational contribution requests which will be covered in the Section 106 agreement.

**6.3.15 Charging points for electric vehicles - Policy AQ1**

Electric vehicle charging points will be provided in accordance with the Council's requirements. It is likely that the exact number will be the subject of a planning condition for the detailed pursuant application. Connection to the EDF network will ensure that adequate capacity is available for future proofing buildings for the likelihood of individual electric car charging points, as well as the required cabling to the residential scheme. This can be dealt with via appropriate planning conditions.

**6.3.16 Strategic Housing Delivery Sites – Policy SHDS1** (This policy is reproduced in full below)

*The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for housing development in the period to 2031. The sites allocated under the policies in this Plan will deliver approximately 1000 homes of varying sizes and types including open space. In addition to the site-specific requirements, all development proposals will need to demonstrate that they will provide for the number of dwellings indicated and should meet the following criteria:*

- (i) Development proposals will be subject to the results and recommendations of a phase one ecological survey prepared to the satisfaction of Maidstone Borough Council in consultation with Lenham Parish Council.*
- (ii) Appropriate surface water and flood mitigation measures will be demonstrated on all development proposals which shall incorporate sustainable drainage systems to the satisfaction of the Maidstone Borough Council in consultation with Lenham Parish Council.*
- (iii) Development proposals will make provision for affordable housing incorporating a suitable mix of dwellings sizes and types in accordance with the policies of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.*
- (iv) Open space will be provided onsite and/or through contributions towards offsite provision/improvements elsewhere in Lenham Parish in accordance with the policies of this Plan. All open spaces will be fully equipped and laid out and will be offered for adoption by Lenham Parish Council or similar local organisation with the full agreement of Lenham Parish Council and will be offered together with an appropriate commuted sum calculated to finance their ongoing maintenance as open spaces.*
- (v) Development proposals will include a detailed Masterplan for the site to be submitted for approval by Maidstone Borough Council in consultation with Lenham Parish Council. The submitted Masterplan will be in general accordance with the proposals shown on the Illustrative Masterplans included within this Neighbourhood Plan. The submitted Masterplan will include details of the access (vehicular, cycle and footway) and drainage (foul and surface water) arrangements for the site and will demonstrate how these arrangements will work in conjunction with other SHD Sites within the Village Extension areas.*
- (vi) The submitted Masterplan will show arrangements for foul sewerage connections to Lenham Wastewater Treatment Works (LWTW) and will demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Maidstone Borough Council in consultation with Lenham Parish Council that adequate capacity will be provided at LWTW to accept foul drainage flows arising from the development.*
- (vii) The Western and Southern Link Roads including the scheme of shuttle working at Smokey Bridge will have capacity to accommodate all traffic movements arising when all the sites shown on this Plan are completed. The intention of the Plan is that all the sites shown will provide access drainage and services to each other as appropriate. In order to be acceptable any development proposal will have to demonstrate how the above intention is to be achieved in practice.*

### 6.3.17 Policy SHDS2 - Housing Delivery Sites: Design principles.

This policy reiterates the requirements for high quality design to achieve an attractive safe and accessible environment. Integration with the existing communities is encouraged as is a reinforcing of local distinctiveness. Layouts must be legible with good frontages and open space and well-connected routes for movement. A diverse mix of housing types and street scenes is encouraged as is secure and attractive clearly designed public and private spaces that sensitively address the any junction with countryside. The proposal addresses all of these requirements in a positive manner.

6.3.18 The application site is identified as a Strategic Housing Delivery Site. A specific policy exists for the site and this is reproduced in full below:

#### **Area 1: North-East of Lenham Village Extension**

#### **Land South of Old Ashford Road**

#### **Policy - Strategic Housing Delivery Site 1**

*Land South of Old Ashford Road, shown on Site 1 on the Lenham Local Policies Map is allocated for development of approximately 85 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare. In addition to the requirements set out in other policies of this Plan, planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met:*

#### *Highways, Access and Transportation*

*(i) Access will be via a new junction with Old Ashford Road and will include provision of a new road providing access to the area of Strategic Open Space to the south.*

*(ii) The development will provide for a footpath/cycleway link along the entire Old Ashford Road frontage to the site; incorporating the retention of as much of the existing frontage hedgerow as possible.*

#### *Open Space*

*Provision of a minimum of 4.0 ha of Strategic Open Space as shown on the Lenham Local Policies Map to include a play area of not less than 0.5 ha and an area of recreation facilities including a car park of not less than 1.0 ha to be laid out with an appropriate form of surfacing. The car park and one full sized grass soccer pitch will be provided at a very early stage in the residential development. The recreation area will be laid out in accordance with an approved scheme and will be transferred to Lenham Parish Council or other appropriate local organisation together with a commuted sum sufficient to ensure ongoing future maintenance.*

### *Design and Layout*

*The design and layout of the site will be informed by a detailed landscape and ecological analysis and Masterplan reflecting that analysis and will incorporate the following features:*

*(i) the provision of a robust tree-planted wildlife landscape corridor to the east of the site including*

*a demonstration of the mechanism whereby such corridor will be permanently retained.*

*(ii) appropriate footpath/cycleway linkages incorporating existing public footpaths within the site (diverted if necessary) to link in with a new footpath/cycleway link along the Old Ashford Road frontage to the site and a new footpath/cycleway link along the eastern boundary of the housing area.*

*(iii) the provision of a robust tree-planted wildlife landscape corridor at least 15 m wide along the north side of the A20 Ashford Road. The corridor shall include appropriate breaks to provide for views to Lenham Cross which lies to the north.*

*The design and layout will follow the principles established in the illustrative Masterplan appended to this Neighbourhood Plan*

6.3.19 In terms of policy compliance it will be seen from the submitted plans that:-

- Highways and Transportation - Access is provided as per the policy requirements and a footway / cycleway along the Old Ashford Road is provided and the existing hedge retained
- Open Space – Open space requirements are met.
- Design and Layout – A tree lined landscape corridor is provided to the east of the site. Appropriate footpath/cycleway linkages are provided and a tree planted wildlife corridor provided to the north side of the A20 Ashford Road.

### 6.3.20 **Community Infrastructure Levy - Policy CIL1**

*Developer contributions towards planning proposals in Lenham will be sought in accordance with the policies within this Plan and Maidstone Borough Council policies and guidance as may be updated from time to time.*

#### **6.4 Maidstone Borough Council Strategic plan 2019 – 2045**

This document sets out the aspiration for Maidstone through to 2045. It is relevant to the determination of the planning application. In that document it is stated that between 2019-24 the Borough Council will place particular importance on:

- Engaging with communities on the Local Plan review.
- Take a proactive role in creating and consider investing in new places.
- Expanding the Council's role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing.
- Working with partners to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered.
- Intervening where necessary in the market, to deliver key employment sites.

#### **6.5 Maidstone Building for Life 12 (Edition 2018)**

This document states that Maidstone Council is committed to good design at every scale, from new places that create thriving communities to individual buildings that minimise their environmental impact. It is everyone's duty to ensure that what is built here is of the highest quality. This document is intended to help designers and decision-makers improve design, by highlighting common design issues and suggesting simple ways to embed quality. 12 Key Principles are identified as:-

1. Connections. 2. Facilities and services. 3. Public transport. 4. Meeting local housing requirements. 5. Character. 6. Working with the site and its context. 7. Creating well defined streets and spaces. 8. Easy to find your way around 9. Streets for all 10. Car parking 11. Public and private spaces and 12. External storage and amenity space. These are expanded upon in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

### **7. Key Issues**

The key issues for the consideration of the application are considered to be;

- Need for the development;
- Appropriateness of Location;
- Character and Appearance;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Traffic and Access;
- Ecology
- Arboriculture
- Drainage and Flood Risk

- Archaeology & Heritage Impacts
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Soil and Agricultural Quality
- Public Open Space Provision
- Delivery and Timing

## 7.1 **Need for the Development**

As set out earlier in this statement there is a significant need for new residential development to meet the housing need over the Maidstone Local Plan period. The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted in direct response to this in order to allocate development to those areas deemed the most suitable for a minimum of 1000 dwellings. This site (known as Site 1) has been identified as being suitable for meeting a part of this need. There remains a clear demand to provide new housing across the borough to meet the population's requirements, the houses proposed by this development will positively contribute towards this need and the implementation of the requirements of the Maidstone Local Plan.

## 7.2 **Appropriateness of Location**

This particular site has been identified in the Lenham Neighbourhood plan as being suitable for allocation for residential development. In this respect the site will has been thoroughly assessed relative to local services, public transport links and other connections to assess the overall sustainability of the site, including against other developable sites in the local area. The master plan allocation identifies the site with a notional capacity for 85 dwellings and a density of 30 dwellings per hectare. This is considered to be appropriate in terms of the scale of development being in keeping with the character and pattern of development in the surrounding area.

Overall the site was found by the assessment process to be suitable for allocation and therefore must have been accepted by the council as a sustainable location. We agree that the proposal is a sustainable location and its development as a result would accord with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

As demonstrated by the accompanying Contamination Report, the site is not known to have any constraints, such as from contamination that would preclude its development. Also the noise and vibration screening report identifies no noise constraints that preclude residential development in this location.

### **7.3 Character and appearance**

The approach to the form and design of the development is set out in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) that accompanies the application. This sets out the steps that have been taken to assess the site and its surroundings, its physical context and the character of the area. The DAS then describes the design objectives underpinning the proposals. The proposals are considered to demonstrate a scale and form of development that accord with the surroundings without any unacceptable harm. The indicative layout plan that is submitted with the application assists in demonstrating how 80 dwellings can be laid out on the site and meet with the expectation of layout and open space identified in the emerging local plan policies. The design approach looks to reflect a range of vernacular styles that will ensure that the proposals are in keeping with the built form of the surrounding area.

### **7.4 Landscape Impact**

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) in March 2019. The purpose of the LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

- 7.4.1 The site is situated along the eastern settlement edge of Lenham, a small market village in Kent, on the southern edge of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). The site runs adjacent to Old Ashford Road and is located approximately 750m from the village centre.
- 7.4.2 The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape quality or value, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Special Landscape Areas although, the site is located immediately south of the Kent Downs AONB.
- 7.4.3 The site is located within 'Hollingbourne Vale East' Landscape Character Area (The Landscape Assessment of Kent, 2004) and the 'East Lenham Vale' Landscape Character

Area (Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment, March 2012 - Amended July 2013), and lies approximately 500m east of the Lenham Conservation Area. 7.4.4 The site, although currently farmland, is by no means rural in character and is already heavily influenced by the adjacent built form of Ashmill Business Park to the north and several residential properties to the east and west. Permitted development / residential development in progress will expand the settlement further east, towards the site and the adjacent business park.

- 7.4.5 The existing built development along Old Ashford Road contains the site to the north and west however, there are elevated views from higher ground to the north within the Kent Downs AONB, including views from Pilgrim Ways (part of the designated National Trail – North Downs Way). Views from the south and east will mostly be restricted by the existing woodland planting and field boundary vegetation between the site and the railway line to the south.
- 7.4.6 The existing business park to the immediate north forms a relatively harsh built edge which currently detracts from the character and setting of the site. The site also forms an approach into Lenham from the east, and there are opportunities for high quality landscape proposals along the Old Ashford Road frontage, which will have positive effects on the character and appearance of the site and the immediate surroundings.
- 7.4.7 Consideration has been given to the proximity of the Kent Downs AONB and the proposals include a 5m landscape strip along Ashford Road and a new village green within the heart of the development. This will reduce the impact of the proposed built form to the north and mitigate the impact of the development on the setting of the local area and the nearby Kent Downs AONB. A new landscape buffer and bund is proposed along the site's eastern boundary to reduce the visual impact on the neighbouring property to the east and the surrounding countryside beyond. The new green spaces can be appropriately managed for wildlife, landscape and informal recreational interest.

The proposed development will be seen within the existing built form context of Lenham. The visual influence of the proposed development may be limited to a number of nearby residential receptors, adjacent roads, and the Public Rights of Way through the site and on parts of the higher ground within the Kent Downs AONB.



## 7.5 Traffic and Access

The application is accompanied by a thorough Transport Statement undertaken by Prime Transport in accordance with paragraph 102 of the NPPF. The proposed access has been the subject of discussion with Highways Officers at Kent County Council.

- 7.5.1 The site is proposed to be served by two priority-controlled junctions on to Old Ashford Road. The eastern access will primarily provide access to the residential element while the western one will primarily provide access to the sports facility. Both accesses have been designed in accordance with local and national design standards and have been subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit.
- 7.5.2 A 2m wide footway will be provided along Old Ashford Road inside the northern boundary of the site. Pedestrian connections will also be made to the PRoW that cross the site, providing alternative walking routes and enhancing access to countryside walks.
- 7.5.3 A mitigation scheme has been proposed at the of the A20/Old Ashford Road which consists of the introduction of a flare on the minor arm of the western fork as well as rumble strips and slow markings on approach to the southern give-way to help reduce speeds on approach to Old Ashford Road .
- 7.5.4 As part of the necessary highway improvements the applicant is willing to provide funding for a Traffic Regulation Order and associated gateway features to extend the 30mph speed limit on Old Ashford Road further north-east to help reduce local speeds and provide a safety benefit to all road users.
- 7.5.5 The report concludes that the proposed development would not result in an '*unacceptable impact on highway safety*' nor have a '*severe*' impact on the operation of the highway network in terms of capacity. As the proposal complies with local and national planning policy and guidance with respect to sustainable accessibility, safety and impact on the highway network, there are no highways or transportation related reasons why planning permission should not be granted. Should the highway authority have any concerns, we are happy to consult further

with them. The impact is best described as negligible and therefore the proposal accords with Paragraph 108 of NPPF.

## **7.6 Ecology**

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by FPCR Environment and Design Consultants with a survey taken in 2018. The application site comprising predominantly grassland was found to be of low intrinsic importance with no rare or notable species recorded. There are no international or statutory designated sites within 15km and 2km respectively of the site and the only non-statutory sites present within a 1km radius are St Mary's Church Yard Local Wildlife Site located approximately 430 metres west of the site and Kiln and Oxley Wood located approximately 520 metres south-west. The development proposed is not considered likely to impact on these sites.

7.6.1 Bat surveys identified common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bats. The boundary hedges and trees will be maintained and dark corridors maintained around the periphery of the residential and the sports pitch areas. Dormouse nests (two) were also recorded, one of which was occupied. One was within the treeline bordering the stream to the eastern boundary of the proposed sports pitch and the other within offsite but connecting habitat to the south. The proposal will be designed to specifically enhance the habitat for dormice.

7.6.2 Great Crested Newts (GCN) were discovered in low populations in two of the five water bodies within 250 metres of the site (there are no water bodies present on the site). Mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure that no GCN are harmed during construction works.

7.6.3 Likewise the low populations of slow worm, common lizard and grass snake that were recorded will be mitigated by passive displacement where suitable habitat is to be lost.

## **7.7 Arboriculture**

An Arboricultural Assessment has been carried out by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd in accordance with guidance contained within British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations'. To facilitate the proposed development no significant tree loss will be required for the built development. Existing trees

will need to be removed to facilitate the proposed access into the site, although the proportion of loss is considered to be low in comparison to the number of trees being retained. The proposed development should be considered an opportunity, in terms of arboriculture, to improve and increase tree cover in the local area without the loss of any arboriculturally significant trees.

## **7.8 Drainage and Flood Risk**

The application is submitted with a Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Enzygo. The report concludes that the risk of fluvial flooding is assessed as negligible. There is however a residual risk of fluvial flooding from onsite watercourses.

The risk of groundwater flooding is assessed as negligible at the surface and low risk below ground.

### **7.8.1 Surface water runoff from the site will be restricted to greenfield rate, which offers a betterment to existing conditions with uncontrolled runoff across all return periods.**

Surface water runoff from the proposed development would be attenuated on-site up to and including the 1 in 100-year event, plus 40% climate change.

A SuDS drainage scheme is proposed to manage excess runoff from the development, comprising a detention basin designed to maintain runoff at pre-development rates, with an outfall to watercourse. The risk of surface water flooding is therefore assessed as negligible for the site. The SUDS scheme will be designed such that any water run-off from for example car washing etc. will be treated before entering the water course. This mitigation may be in the form of reed beds, oil interceptors etc. that can be dealt with at the detailed pursuant stage.

### **7.8.2 For foul water it is proposed that foul flows will discharge to a Ø225mm public foul drain to the south west of the Site.**

### **7.8.3 The FRA has considered the potential impact of the development given the increase in impermeable surfaces that will be present post-development. The report demonstrates that the surface water can be managed such that there will be no increase in flood risk. This will be achieved by managing discharge rates to the water retention basin located to the east of the site. The report concludes that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere**

and nor will there be any grounds to refuse the development relating to surface water and foul drainage.

## **7.9 Archaeology & Heritage Impacts**

Of the Listed Buildings, Tanyard Farmhouse is nearest to the proposal site, lying around 260 m to its north-west, while the former Vicarage on Old Ashford Road, Lenham, is at 480 m distance and the east end of the Church of St Mary is at 500 m distance. There are houses and treed hedges intervening between the Listed buildings and the residential area of the proposal site. Further details of the proposal would be required in order to identify any required mitigation.

- 7.9.1 It is considered that impacts of the proposed development on the nearest listed buildings within the Study Area, noted above, would principally comprise views to lit sports pitches. Subject to further information, screening and planting proposals and an agreed lighting strategy, it is considered that impacts on listed buildings from the proposed housing would be no greater than slight.
- 7.9.2 Impacts of the proposed development on undesignated cultural heritage assets - There are no confirmed undesignated sites of heritage interest within the area of the proposed development, although there is evidence of activity in the form of surface finds of metallic objects ranging in date from Roman to Post-Medieval. There are reasons to be cautious in considering the nature and significance of the finds evidence within this parish due to anomalies pertaining to the dating of finds in relation to recorded depths. However, it would be unwise to ignore their totality and a programme of evaluation excavation may be proposed and implemented as a condition of planning approval.
- 7.9.3 Statement of Heritage Significance of the Site - There is no field evidence to suggest that the proposal site has heritage significance. It is noted that there is a quantity of metal finds of Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval date from the proposal area, but it is also noted that these are restricted solely to its northern part.

## 7.10 **Air Quality**

An air quality assessment has been carried out by Wardell Armstrong. The assessment has applied 2018 background concentrations and vehicle emission factors for a conservative and robust 'worst-case' scenario. The impact assessment predicts that the development will have a negligible/imperceptible impact on concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> at all fifteen existing sensitive receptors considered in 2024.

7.10.1 The effect of the proposed development on existing sensitive human receptors is therefore considered to be not significant.

7.10.2 PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations within the proposed development site are predicted to be below the relevant objectives and limit values. The effect of the proposed development on proposed sensitive human receptors is therefore considered to be not significant.

7.10.3 The impact of the proposed development is predicted to be not significant. However, mitigation measures will assist in reducing any potential impact and general best practice measures in relation to air quality could be implemented. It should also be borne in mind that the development will propose substantial new tree planting and a balancing / habitat pond all of which will be beneficial to air quality.

7.10.4 The air quality assessment demonstrates that the proposed development will not lead to an unacceptable risk from air pollution, nor will it lead to any breach of national objectives as required by national policy. Therefore, there are no material reasons in relation to air quality why the proposed scheme should not proceed.

## 7.11 **Noise**

A noise assessment report has been undertaken by Wardell Armstrong. The noise survey shows that proposed dwellings across the majority of the site would be likely to meet external and internal noise guideline levels without the need for any mitigation. However, some mitigation measures would be required to meet noise guideline levels in areas of the site closest to Old Ashford Road and Scrap My Car Kent.

7.11.1 The survey showed that no mitigation would be required to mitigate external noise from Old

Ashford Road, however mitigation would be required to mitigate external noise from Scrap my Car Kent. This can be achieved by locating gardens on the screened sides of dwellings, without a direct line of sight to the road. Alternatively, noise guideline levels could be achieved with the use of close boarded fencing of 2.2m in height.

7.11.2 Internal noise guideline levels will be met in most dwellings across the site, even with windows open for ventilation. In those noise sensitive rooms closest to and facing Old Ashford Road, where internal noise guidance levels might not be met with windows open, standard thermal double glazing will ensure that the noise guideline levels are met.

## **7.12 Soils and agricultural quality**

The National Planning Practice Guidance states that the planning system should protect and enhance valued soils and prevent the adverse effects of unacceptable levels of pollution. This is because soil is an essential finite resource that provides important ecosystem services, for example as a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, as a store for carbon and water, as a reservoir of biodiversity and as a buffer against pollution.

7.12.1 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system classifies land into five grades, grade 1 being the highest quality and grade 5 being the lowest, with grade 3 divided into two subgrades (3a and 3b). A soil and agricultural land report was undertaken by Land Research Associates.

7.12.2 The survey concludes that the soils within the site range from Grade 2 to subgrade 3a and 3b. These soils are not the highest grades that would usually be reserved for agricultural purposes and accord with the principles of the NPPF to use areas of poorer quality land first instead of higher quality land.

## **7.13 Public Open Space Provision**

7.13.1 The development proposals provide landscaped areas within the development and around its boundaries that will in turn produce a high quality landscape setting. On the site itself will be provided a central village green overlooked by a large number of dwellings. A neighbourhood play area will also be provided and a car parking area to serve the future

playing fields that will eventually be provided along with a pavilion to the south of the site as part of the wider masterplan.

7.13.2 In addition, the development will secure sufficient land to provide for 2 full size and one junior size playing pitches with run off areas. This land will be conveyed to the Parish Council.

7.13.3 The planning submission provides for a total of 3 playing pitches within the red line area. In effect, if outline consent is granted there will be a change of use permission for part of the land to provide 3 playing pitches, a pavilion and associated car park.

7.13.4 Only one of these pitches is being provided to address any adverse impact of the scheme in terms of pitch provision. The quantum of residential development proposed necessitates the provision of 0.3712 of a pitch. This has been rounded up so that one full size pitch is provided.

7.13.5 The landowner wishes to provide a legacy to the residents of Lenham by also making available 2 additional pitches which will be gifted to the Parish Council to provide the 3 pitches envisaged by the master plan.

7.13.6 As set out earlier in this statement, these additional 2 pitches are not required to address any adverse effects of the development which is the subject of this application.

The two additional pitches are an additional community benefit which can be afforded weight in the planning process. However, these additional 2 pitches are separate from the development obligations that are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

7.13.7 Sufficient land to enable provision of all three playing pitches and associated pavilion and car park will be commuted to the Parish Council via appropriately worded Section 106 obligations, their provision should be treated as follows in terms of the planning balance.

7.13.8 Weight should be accorded to the provision of the single playing pitch as it required to address the impacts of the development.

7.13.9 Weight can be accorded to the residential area of sports of recreation land and whilst it is recognised that this provision is not required to serve the needs of the development of the 100 dwellings, it is however of material benefit in terms of addressing the needs of the new resident community arising out of the growth proposals for the residual 900 dwellings that are planned as part of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan.

## **7.14 Delivery and Timing**

### **7.14.1 Implementation**

Following the grant of outline planning permission the site will be marketed to the housebuilding industry on a conditional basis which will be subject to the approval of reserved matters. This is important as it will mean that the landowner and promoter will retain overall control of the land and the detailed design of the scheme throughout the reserved matter approval process. Thereafter the land will be the subject of private covenant that will require the developer not to alter the approved detailed design that has been approved under the auspices of the reserved matters approval.

7.14.2 This ensures certainty for Maidstone Borough Council that the scheme implemented on site will closely adhere to the design principles established within the approved outline planning permission.

## **7.15 Timing for Delivery**

7.15.1 Following the grant of outline planning permission, the site will be marketed immediately. We anticipate a period of three months will enable the selection of a preferred bidder and a total of nine months to agree contractual terms and to work up a reserved matter submission. Allowing three months for the approval process and three months for the implementation of any conditions to be complied with prior to the commencement of development, it is considered that development should commence on site within 15 to 18 months from the grant of the outline planning permission.

7.15.2 The anticipated timescales for the construction of the site from commencement to completion is circa 2.5 years. This is based on delivery of around 35 to 40 market dwellings per annum



together with the simultaneous delivery of the requisite delivery of 40% affordable dwellings alongside the market dwellings.

#### **7.16 Sports Facilities Delivery and Management Strategy**

The sports facilities comprise two senior football pitches and one junior football pitch, provision of car park and land to accommodate pavilion building which is of sufficient size to accommodate to changing facilities for users of all three pitches and space within the building capable of accommodating one single squash court or or another appropriate indoor sports facility.

7.16.1 The developer of the residential permission will be responsible for the laying out of the car park, laying of services to enable the development of the changing facility/pavilion building (electricity and water) and providing one senior football pitch. The remaining two pitches and changing facility/pavilion building will be laid out by Lenham Parish Council following the sale of William Pitt Field for development. Upon satisfactory completion of the works that the developer will be responsible for the whole of the land that is subject to change of use for the sports pitches, changing facility/pavilion and car park will be transferred in its entirety to Lenham Parish Council.

7.16.2 The Section 106 obligations set out the appropriate mechanism for this to be executed together with the relevant timing triggers.

7.16.3 The transfer provisions will make an appropriate contribution for the maintenance of the playing pitch that will have been delivered as part of the development. Future management and maintenance arrangements will then become the responsibility of Lenham Parish Council.

#### **8.0 Planning Benefits**

8.1 The purpose of this section is to set out the benefits of the development proposals in relation to the three dimensions of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

### **8.1.1 Social Benefits - Provision of Market Housing**

The provision of market housing will boost the supply of land for housing, providing for high quality market family housing within a sustainable location. The development proposals will make a valuable contribution to the council's 5 year supply.

8.1.2 The proposed development will provide a balanced mix of dwellings providing a choice of type and size in response to the identified housing demand and market assessment for Maidstone. New homes in Lenham will enable people to access the housing market locally rather than being forced to move away due to lack of available housing.

8.1.3 The proposals will assist in helping to maintain and enhance the vitality of this thriving market town community.

Density of development as well as storey heights will respond to the context of Lenham. Dwellings will overlook the central open space area and a range of house types and setbacks from the street will ensure that the new development does not replicate some of the generic housing estates that so often fail to pick up on their setting.

### **8.2 Provision of Affordable Housing**

The application proposals would deliver circa 40 affordable homes and provide the full range of affordable housing at a time when demanding for such homes is extremely high. This should be regarded as a significant material benefit of the application proposals.

#### **8.2.1 Housing Delivery Timetable**

Subject to a successful outcome it is envisaged that the first occupation of dwellings could be in 2021 this timetable is deliverable and will make a substantial contribution to the Council's housing requirements.

### **8.3 Public Open Space Provision**

The development proposals provide landscaped areas within the development and around its boundaries that will in turn produce a high quality landscape setting. On the site itself will be provided a central village green overlooked by a large number of dwellings. A neighbourhood play area will also be provided and a car parking area to serve the future

playing fields that will eventually be provided along with a pavilion to the south of the site as part of the wider masterplan.

- 8.3.1 In addition, the development will secure sufficient land to provide for 2 full size and one junior size playing pitches with run off area. This land will be conveyed to the Parish Council.
- 8.3.2 The planning submission therefore provides for a total of 3 playing pitches within the red line area. In effect, if outline consent is granted there will be a change of use permission for part of the land to provide 3 playing pitches.

Only one of these pitches is being provided to address any adverse impact of the scheme in terms of pitch provision. The quantum of residential development proposed necessitates the provision of 0.3712 of a pitch. This has been rounded up so that one full size pitch is provided. The landowner wishes to provide a legacy to the residents of Lenham by also making available 2 additional pitches which will be gifted to the Parish Council to provide the 3 pitches envisaged by the master plan.

As set out earlier in this statement, these additional 2 pitches are not required to address any adverse effects of the development which is the subject of this application.

The two additional pitches are an additional community benefit which can be afforded weight in the planning process. However, these additional 2 pitches are separate from the development obligations that are necessary, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

It is important therefore that the Council separates the additional 2 pitches from any discussions relating to the Section 106 obligations, but does afford them due weight as part of the planning process.

- 8.3.3 Overall the scheme provides for significant areas of open space comprising the central village green area, as well as a locally equipped play area (LEAP) and the transfer of the playing pitches, parking area and future sports pavilion land to the Parish Council.

#### 8.4 **Economic Benefits**

- 8.4.1 The economic benefits of the proposed development will be apparent from both the construction and the operational impacts of the subsequent occupation of the houses. The

construction will involve spend on the works and provide employment opportunities. Whilst the housing once completed will add to the district's economically active population and add to the gross household expenditure which in turn will support further local employment. On top of this the additional housing will provide additional council tax income to the borough council.

## **8.5 Environmental Benefits**

- 8.5.1 The proposed development will add to the ecological biodiversity of the site. In particular the provision of additional tree planting, hedging, buffer strips and water attenuation features will ensure that biodiversity is retained and enhanced to allow a linking up with existing hedgerows ponds green corridors. These measures will ensure a net biodiversity gain in accordance with requirements of Paragraphs 8(c) and 117 of the Framework. In addition the provision of domestic gardens which provide an opportunity to improve biodiversity over and above limited ecological diversity provided by the current arable agricultural use of the site.
- 8.5.2 Further material environmental benefits are obtained from providing flooding betterment on the site. The surface water drainage design will attenuate water run-off to less than the existing greenfield run-off rate and take account of future climate change in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance. The site lies at an important junction of the source of the River Stour where the proposed water attenuation feature will provide a valuable pre discharge storage area, reducing runoff and increasing biodiversity.

## **9.0 Heads of Terms**

The development will be subject of a Section 106 Agreement in respect of planning obligations in association with this development. The scope of the planning obligation that the applicant considers should support its proposals for the development of this site are set out below.

- 9.1 The Draft Section 106 Agreement sets out the areas to be considered as part of the planning application. It is recognised that these obligations will be subject of further detailed discussion once the Council has had opportunity to fully appraise the development proposals. This part of the Planning Statement is proposed to lead into those discussions, rather than be a committed set of obligations. The Section 106 Agreement will be expected to include

the usual provisions relating to conditionality relating to the grant and implementation of planning permissions, and will be secured against the relevant land interests.

9.1.1 National Policy in the form of the Framework advises that ‘planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests: necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development’ (paragraph 56).

9.1.2 The level of any contributions is to be agreed during the negotiation of the Section 106 Agreement, but all contributions will be reasonable, proportionate and necessary to the scale of the development being sought.

9.1.3 The S106 will be expected to secure the following:

## 9.2 **Children’s Play Area**

The Developer will Provide a Children’s Play Area in the indicative location shown on the accompanying plan the details of which shall form part of the reserved matter approval application.

9.2.1 The Children’s Play Area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved details and in compliance with any relevant planning conditions and shall be available for public use prior to occupation of the 20<sup>th</sup> dwelling.

## 9.3 **Playing Pitch**

The Developer will layout the Playing Pitch identified indicatively as pitch number 1 on the accompanying plan, the details of which shall form part of the reserved matter approval application and shall thereafter be laid out in accordance with the approved details and in compliance with any relevant planning conditions.

9.3.1 The specification of the Playing pitch shall be in accordance with the relevant Sport England and PFA standards at the time of construction.

9.3.2 The Playing Pitch will be provided and made available for public use prior to occupation of the 60<sup>th</sup> dwelling.

9.4 **Car Park to serve Sports & Recreation Area**

The Residential Developer will provide a Car Park to serve the Sports & Recreation Area of the type shown and in the indicative location indicated on the accompanying plan, the details of which shall form part of the reserved matter approval application and shall be implemented in accordance with any relevant planning conditions and shall be available for public use prior to occupation of the 60th dwelling.

9.5 **Transfer of the Land to Lenham Parish Council**

Within 30 days following the completion of the 60<sup>th</sup> dwelling the Developer, having provided the Children's Play Area, Playing Pitch and Car Park in accordance with the S106 obligations and any relevant planning conditions, shall offer the land for Transfer to Lenham Parish Council for £1 (one pound). Lenham Parish Council shall have a period of one month from the date that the land is offered to them to complete the transfer and take possession of the land.

9.5.1 Should the Parish Council decline to take ownership of the land the Developer shall submit details of suitable management arrangements to the council for their approval, (approval not to be unreasonably withheld).

9.5.2 Whilst not a matter for the S106 it should be noted that sale of the land by the present owner to the Developer will include provisions in the form of restrictive covenants to be imposed by the landowner to ensure that the land remains in sports and recreation use only in the future. Any other use would require their express permission and removal or variation of the covenants. Further, a 'claw back' arrangement in favour of the present landowner of 50% of the uplift in land value arising in respect of any alternative use will also be imposed by the landowner.

9.6 **Maintenance Contributions**

Coincidental with the transfer of the land to Lenham Parish Council the Developer shall pay to the Parish Council appropriate maintenance contributions in respect of the of the Play equipment and Play Area and Playing Pitch.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

- 10.1 The Maidstone Local Plan 2017 is a recently adopted plan that identifies Lenham as a rural service centre within which 1000 houses should be delivered between 2021 and 2031. This policy states that the allocation of these dwellings should be via the neighbourhood plan or master plan.
- 10.1.2 The Lenham Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced and as of September 2018 was at the Regulation 14 consultation draft. It has however, been delayed. The same is true of the Local Plan review.
- 10.1.3 In order to deliver the 1000 dwellings required it is vital to determine applications for residential development in the identified sites for Lenham. It is highly unlikely that any of the allocated sites for Lenham will be removed.
- 10.1.4 Notwithstanding the above points, the proposed development accords with the planning policies for Lenham as set out in the Local Plan and the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. The development will allow for the addition of 100 houses as well as much needed additional playing pitches and open space, affordable housing, ecological improvements as well as other significant planning benefits.
- 10.1.5 This planning statement has brought together all of the issues for consideration as part of this planning application, having carefully considered all issues the development is considered to be acceptable, and as such it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.



## Appendix 1

### Policy Compliance Table

#### Maidstone Local Plan Adopted October 2017

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
SS1	<b>Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy</b>	<b>YES</b>
SP5	Rural Service Centres	<b>YES</b>
SP8	Lenham Rural Service Centre	<b>YES</b>
SP17	Countryside	<b>YES</b>
SP19	Housing Mix	<b>YES</b>
SP20	Affordable Housing	<b>YES</b>
SP23	Sustainable Transport	<b>YES</b>
ID1	Infrastructure Delivery	<b>YES</b>
H2(3)	Lenham Locations for growth	<b>YES</b>

DM1	Principles of good design	<b>YES</b>
DM2	Sustainable design	<b>YES</b>
DM6	Air quality	<b>YES</b>
DM12	Density of housing development	<b>YES</b>
DM17	District centres, local centres and shops and facilities	<b>YES</b>
DM19	Open space and recreation	<b>YES</b>
DM20	Community facilities	<b>YES</b>
DM21	Assessing transport impacts of development	<b>YES</b>
DM23	Parking	<b>YES</b>
DM30	Design principles in the countryside	<b>YES</b>

## Policy Compliance Table

### Lenham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy	Title	Compliance
D1	Quality Design	<b>YES</b>
D3	Innovation and Variety	<b>YES</b>
D5	Residential Car Parking Design	<b>YES</b>
AT1	Active Travel	<b>YES</b>
AT2	Public Transport	
AT3	Active and sustainable travel projects	<b>YES</b>
GS1	Natural and amenity Green Space	<b>YES</b>
GS2	Open space within major development areas	<b>YES</b>
CF1	Community Facilities	<b>YES</b>
ED1, ED2 & ED3	Education	<b>YES</b>

AQ1	Charging points for electric vehicles	<b>YES</b>
SHDS1	Strategic housing Delivery Sites	<b>YES</b>
SHDS2	Housing Delivery Sites : Design Principles	<b>YES</b>
Strategic housing Delivery Site 1	Areas 1 North-East of Lenham Village Extension	<b>YES</b>
CIL1	Community Infrastructure Levy	<b>YES</b>