



OTTERPOOL PARK

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Q&A - Phase one at Otterpool Park

The following questions were received during the recent phase one consultations held on 26 March 2021.

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Housing

Why are all these homes needed in the first place?

The number of homes that need to be built in any area over a particular time is set out by the Government, based on housing need forecasts. After this point the local planning authority, in this case Folkestone & Hythe District Council works out how best to deliver the homes in the area through its local plan process.

Nationally and locally we simply haven't been building enough houses to meet need. Partly that need has been driven by the fact that people are living longer, and therefore houses are not being vacated as they once were. There are also a lot of small households living in bigger houses, which creates the need for more homes. The number of homes is intended to meet these supply issues.

What types of homes are you going to be building in phase one?

There will be a real mixture of homes in phase one to create a diverse, vibrant and active community around the town centre, and a lot of people within walking distance.

Homes will be of different sizes and types, from smaller flats to larger family homes. around the town centre there will be a higher percentage of flats and townhouses compared to other later phases of Otterpool Park.

What will the average house price be?

It is too early to be able give a specific figure, however our intention is to incorporate a choice of sizes, variety and prices of homes at Otterpool Park.

What is the price of the affordable homes, ballpark figure?

It is too early to be able give a specific figure, however our intention is to incorporate a choice of sizes and variety of affordable homes at Otterpool Park, and agreed with the council's housing team .

How many residential properties will there be in total?

Our plans are for 1,900 homes in the first phase, with allocation in our planning application of 8,500 over 30 years if approved, and the masterplan takes up to 10,000 homes into account.

Do you think developers will build cottage style houses for downsizers who do not want to live in an apartment?

Phase one will be more of an urban environment than later phases but other neighbourhoods in future phases will be more rural in character and will potentially include some bungalows.

Why is this development needed when Ashford is so close?

Folkestone & Hythe District Council is required to meet its own housing needs targets.

Otterpool Park is a sustainable location due to good transport connections (Westenhanger Castle and Junction 11 of the M20) – other areas within the district are constrained by flood plain and AONB.

If the project is intended to solve a housing shortage, then wouldn't it be more appropriate to build only one- and two-bedroom affordable properties as this is where the shortages are? Why? We don't need more four-bedroom homes, why only 22%?

We are working on defining the exact housing mix of phase one at the moment, but we expect it will contain a wide range of homes including smaller homes. In creating a town with a balanced community, homes need to be provided for people at every stage of life, so they can continue to live in the community if they chose to. If people move on to bigger or different homes this will free up the one and two bed homes for others.

We've conducted a local housing needs survey in the six parishes most local to Otterpool Park, but will also need to comply with various planning policies set out in the local plan that determines the range of sizes that we need to propose.

A housing strategy for the whole site is being prepared that looks at all housing need from the local needs assessment above to the needs of future key workers on site. The private sale unit mix will need to be informed by market analysis. 22% of the homes will be affordable, comprising a mixture of different types of affordable homes, including affordable rent, the intermediate rent products, as well as shared ownership.

Will there be a substantial amount of affordable housing and for council tenants, what types of homes? What does affordable mean for homes at Otterpool Park - what is affordable for one person is not for another a new homes often seem to be out of the price range of local people.

Sorry, the word "affordable" is a confusing one as what is affordable for one, is not affordable for another. I would like to see more Council/Housing Association Homes as I believe this a very strong local need. I see lots of homes being built, however they are often out of the price range of local people and the cost of private rent in the area is ludicrous. I'm hoping the

Otterpool Development will use this opportunity to provide homes for everyone.

Otterpool Park's purpose is to address what is the heart of the affordability issues, which is an under supply of housing. It's important to recognise that by simply building more houses, you start to help assist certain people with that affordability issue.

We're trying to plan for everybody, to create a mix of homes for everyone. As far as affordable homes, we're working within the council's planning policy. We will aim to provide a 22% proportion of affordable homes within our overall housing targets. Affordable homes will be offered to those on the council's waiting list.

Why only 22% affordable housing, given that the land is publicly owned, so there is less imperative for 'profit'?

The commitment to 22% affordable housing has been driven by data on local housing need and is included as a policy in the draft Core Strategy, which is currently going through public examination by the Planning Inspectorate . The net number of new affordable houses in the district will increase significantly over the project period over current figures.

It has been said that a pre-fabricated housing facility will be established on site, so that components can be produced on site as houses are built.....where will the employment sites be situated in these early stages?

Many housebuilders are increasingly interested in modular construction, but we will need to be reassured about the quality of the product before committing to this. A facility on site is a possibility but there are no plans as yet to pursue this.

The principle set out in Lord Matthew Taylor's original proposal for a series of Garden Settlements, was aimed at cutting out the national housebuilders.....how can we be reassured that the 'Land sales' referred to by Andy Jarrett will not include the likes of Taylor Wimpey, who will then ignore the 'design codes' (or at least amend them to suit themselves), and that we will end up with more of the same indifferent estate housing?

As Master Developer, Otterpool Park LLP will work with developers of all scales including volume house builders and smaller local builders. Innovation will be encouraged and house quality assured through design codes and contractual obligations put in place by the LLP.

How will developers be found to deliver the different tenures or property outlined today?

Otterpool Park LLP is speaking to a range of different developers and, as Master Developer, will be in control of contracts with all of them, including housing associations.

Will conditions of sale for developers require that all self-standing dwellings are sold freehold to avoid a repetition of recent scandals where developers sold houses as leasehold, leaving purchasers in very difficult situations?

We are aware of this issue and it is a situation we want to avoid. It is likely that houses will be sold freehold but flats are likely to be leasehold. The Government is developing policy on this issue that we will follow closely.

Do you envisage Serviced Self Build plots along the lines of Graven Hill and would these be on the outskirts in phase 2 or 3?

Yes, we intend to provide self and custom build plots in all phases of the development. We want to offer a range of opportunities and locations - making self-build achievable to more people.

We have met with the promoters of Graven Hill and also members of the Self Build Task Force and hope to learn from their experience. It is anticipated that between 5% and 10% of the homes at Otterpool Park will be self-build.

The CGI shows an alarming number of buildings of 4 or more storeys. Is this really necessary to achieve the density you are targeting?

The taller buildings will be clustered in a relatively small area of the site to provide a focus of activity and mark the town centre out distinctively but also to offer a variety of different types of homes.

Town centre and community facilities

Is there a post office?

It is too early to give a definitive answer but certainly a development of this scale would expect to have this community facility.

Is there a Supermarket planned?

Yes, there is – and it will be phased to grow over time according to how many residents are there.

What provision is there for places to meet like churches and other community groups?

Phase one will include community space and space for worship.

Does the leisure centre include a pool?

Yes, it does. There will also be an indoor sports hall and smaller studios for exercise classes.

There will be a whole range of indoor and outdoor sporting facilities. Outside, we are looking at the opportunity for us to provide open water swimming and there will be a cricket pitch as well as outdoor playing fields.

They say that retail is dead. How will you address getting shops and businesses to locate here?

The town centre will provide what people need for everyday - the supermarket and a mix of smaller businesses. The pandemic has meant people also want to shop locally for certain goods and favour independent businesses.

There will be a broad range of different activities that drive people and attract people into the town centre. It will not rely on retail, but have a cafe culture and restaurants, community services, hairdressers and spaces for working.

What makes FHDC think that this new town centre will be more successful than the existing failing and dying centre of Folkestone?

This town centre will not rely on retail and will be focused around everyday needs, community uses, leisure and employment. It is not intended to compete with Folkestone, Hythe or Ashford town centres.

There will be lessons to be learnt from existing town centres. For example, there is a lot of success around Folkestone as a vibrant and creative town attracting visitors – and in addition a place plan is currently being created for Folkestone Town Centre. Information on this can be found here:

<https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/folkestoneplaceplan>

Education

Will the new schools be built to coincide with first residents or will local schools have to accommodate them in the short term?

Will the new school/s be built to coincide with people moving into the new homes in 2024 or will existing schools need to take in increasing numbers of pupils?

Two primary schools are proposed as part of phase one, and we expect that the first school will be provided for the September after the first occupation of homes.

There will be provision for early years children, and we expect the nursery schools will be co-located with those primary schools.

The first secondary school will likely be triggered around the delivery of 2,000 – 3,000 homes (subject to monitoring). It is likely that secondary schools will open at year seven and fill up from there.

We're working with the local planning authority and Kent County Council to establish our education proposals to ensure the need for school places is met within the town.

What are the plans for provision of childcare?

Otterpool Park will cater for all ages of children. There will be nurseries associated with the primary schools as well as commercial facilities within the town centre.

Healthcare

Can you give any reassurance regarding health facilities? What will be provided at Otterpool? Can you guarantee that there will be a doctor surgery?

Yes, we can guarantee that there will be a GP surgery and we are in discussions with the CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) to get clarity as to what will be required in terms of health services across the project.

Our commitment is that there will be services to provide for the population as it grows. We know health is an issue locally in existing settlements, and we want it to be something that works well from day one here.

William Harvey hospital cannot cope as it is without an ever-increasing population being added. How will this be addressed?

We are committed to providing health facilities on-site as early in phase one as is practicable to ensure we avoid putting pressure on existing facilities. Clinics can also be provided locally at Otterpool Park that would previously have meant a hospital visit.

What medical facilities will be provided to coincide with new residents moving in, given that the local hospital and surgeries are at full capacity?

We are committed to providing health facilities on-site as early in phase one as is practicable to ensure we avoid putting pressure on existing facilities.

Can you guarantee that there will be doctors surgery and not just if the NHS fund it. Also will the road from the M20 be made into a dual carriageway to allow for the extra traffic with the cost met by the developers not the local residents.

We can guarantee that there will be a doctors' surgery provided by Otterpool Park LLP and we are in discussions with the CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups).

Improvements are currently being designed to the A20 – which will be submitted as part of the resubmitted planning application, which the public will have the opportunity to comment on. These will be funded by the LLP.

Can you guarantee that there will be the doctors to service the health centre?? Kent already has a shortage.

This is role of CCG (Clinical Commissioning Groups), who we are in discussion with. The new medical school at Canterbury will help attract potential new GPs and medical students to the area.

We hope that Otterpool Park will be an appealing environment for healthcare staff to live and work in, including our provision of a wide variety of homes, including large detached family homes and affordable housing.

Transport

**Where will vehicle charging points be located?
Where are home charging points for cars?**

EV charging will be predominantly provided in car and mobility hubs that will also be an access point for shared services including car clubs. Hubs allow energy provision to be managed more efficiently. There will also be some on-street EV charging and home charging points.

Will there be any car-free elements to the scheme? What if people want to pop for a pint of milk in bad weather? How will we discourage them?

We are designing Otterpool Park as an accessible environment for everyone, that embraces innovation and enables and encourages active travel, including low car use environments.

The masterplan incorporates a network of pedestrian and cycle routes, which are car-free. The intention is that they connect up with main locations from the town square to the school, instantly providing a car free network. We are also looking at incorporating car-free elements near the station.

Otterpool Park will feature small lanes and streets designed for low vehicle speeds, which we know from other examples that pedestrians are quite happy to walk down the middle of the road, to generate another low car element.

Generally, the aim is that nobody is further away than a few minutes' walk from their pint of milk, but of course they can make the choice to use their vehicle if they need or choose to do so.

Will there be car-free elements to the scheme for example in any flats that are being planned?

Please refer to answer above. In addition, we will encourage developers who are innovative in creating low car environments. We value all feedback on this idea.

Will some of the homes have dedicated bicycle sheds attached to them?

Yes - bike storage will be included in the design code that developers must follow.

Will the high speed train stop at the station, it is my understanding that high speed has stated that they will not stop.

The aspiration is for high-speed services to stop at the station. The Kent Rail Strategy, approved by Kent County Council's Cabinet, highlights aspirations for multiple high speed and mainline services an hour.

Will the train service be able to cope with the expected increase in passengers?

There is a wider drive across Kent to increase the amount of train capacity – Kent County Council's Kent Rail Strategy sets out the strategy for the next 10 years. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/transport-and-highways-policies/rail-policies-in-kent/kent-rail-strategy#:~:text=Our%20rail%20strategy%20sets%20out,freight%20to%20use%20rail%20services.>

Otterpool Park LLP is speaking to Network Rail, The Department for Transport and other partners about provision of services via Westenhanger station.

Are you planning to improve the facilities at Westenhanger station? Will there be a bus service and more parking available?

If westenhanger is upgraded how will the scheme accommodate an increase in users from surrounding towns and villages?

We're already in talks with Network Rail about how the station itself can be significantly enhanced and improved to accommodate additional future rail services. This includes incorporating a new station building and potentially new direct stopping high speed services on the HS one line.

Otterpool Park LLP has more control over what's happening around and outside the station building. It is an important gateway into the wider Otterpool Park development and we've already started designs for the Station Square and the whole arrival experience, looking at examples of this elsewhere in the UK such as in Cambridge.

The Station Square will be a public space, with shops and cafes. It will also be a transport interchange incorporating a mobility hub, so if you're walking or travelling there by bike you'll go straight to the door of the station. You'll be able to hire a bike from there and there will be blue badge parking spaces and traditional drop off facilities for cars and taxis as well. Bus services will be diverted up the high street from the A20, stopping at the station. Car parking will be provided slightly to one side of the station, with a two-minute walk to the station door. This parking will meet local need and address the current problems with illegal parking at Westenhanger.

What consideration has been given to the number of commuters from other local areas who use Westenhanger station and how the traffic and parking will be managed?

We recognise there will be some people in the wider area who use the station. Westenhanger station is not intended to be a parkway station and we want to discourage car use and the need for parking, although there will be some parking on site as noted above. We are encouraging use of more sustainable transport choices including buses, cycling and walking.

How are the residents of Lypne and other local areas going to access Westenhanger station which is currently used by many people?

Access to the station will be down the new station road, which will be designed to allow for drop offs. We are encouraging use of more sustainable transport choices including buses, cycling and walking, although there will be some parking on site. We will also be addressing the current issue with illegal parking at the station.

Can I hear more about bus services, what are the chances of having electric buses and will bus services serve the surrounding local villages.

There is a strategy for bus routing throughout Otterpool Park and delivering bus stops within a five-minute walk to all residents.

Discussions with bus operators have already involved how we can introduce either electric or hydrogen powered buses on those routes.

The way in which we use buses is also changing, and we know from talking to Kent County Council and Stagecoach, that in the future you won't necessarily have to go and wait at the bus stop for 20 minutes until the bus turns up. It's all done through an app on your phone – you will know when a bus is coming and sometimes it will even detour or deviate from its route to get to you.

We are really working towards incorporating this sort of technology at Otterpool Park, so that along with walking and cycling the bus becomes the first choice in terms of how you get around here.

Whilst walking and cycling are great strategies to have, people still need to have cars to travel further afield and shop. Many elderly and disabled people cannot walk far, and shopping on bikes is not practical (plus home delivery can be hit and miss on what you get!). Public transportation is expensive and slow (1h35 to Ashford from Folkestone on bus and 3h to Maidstone - train is very expensive but faster). It is disappointing that you favour discouraging cars rather than encouraging greener fuel sources. Is Otterpool a place for the young, fit and wealthy?

The strategy is to encourage walking and cycling, not to exclude cars completely and of course it is important to ensure accessibility for all. The transport strategy also recognises that people may still choose to use their car for some journeys.

Will bus and train be an integrated service?

Yes.

What is the chance of the Otterpool buses being electric ?

Electric buses are already successfully used elsewhere in the county – for example at Ebbsfleet Garden City – and we are discussing the potential of powering buses at Otterpool Park in this way. Technology is constantly changing and there may also be other new technologies we could incorporate over time, for example hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles

Where will the proposed bus routes go to?

Please refer to slide 31 of our presentation:

<https://phaseone.otterpoolpark.org/app/uploads/2021/03/Otterpool-Park-phase-one-virtual-events-presentation.pdf>

Will there be public transport links to neighbouring villages such as Aldington?

We are actively working with Stagecoach to seek improvements to bus network services and frequency.

What is being done about keeping existing public footpaths open?

Existing footpaths will be retained and, in some places, enhanced. In addition, new foot and cycle connections will be created within Otterpool Park, that will connect to existing networks.

Have any impact assessments being made as to the effect on local roads?

Extensive traffic assessment and modelling work has been undertaken. As part of the outline planning application, that modelling has been updated more recently.

The modelling identifies the appropriate infrastructure and mitigation schemes that need to be put in place for a development of this scale.

The A20 is already gridlocked when operation stack is in progress. As it is a key access to the William Harvey Hospital, the Otterpool development will greatly exacerbate the difficulty the local community already faces in accessing essential services.

In circumstances where a local motorway is closed, the A20 would continue to act as the redirected route. Extensive transport assessment and modelling work has been undertaken and as part of our outline planning application, that modelling has been updated recently.

This is massively going to impact the Local Villages on already heavy road use, what are you going to do to reduce traffic affecting these villages especially when a motorway closure is in place?

In circumstances where a local motorway is closed, the A20 would continue to act as the redirected route. Extensive transport assessment and modelling work has been undertaken and as part of our outline planning application, that modelling has been updated recently.

You talk about the A20 corridor but there is a fundamental bottleneck with this at the railway bridges in Sellindge. What plans do you have to address this?

Our transport strategy encourages traffic to travel east to join the M20 at junction 11. That includes HGVs and other vehicles travelling from Link Park at Lympne.

Have you considered diverting the A20 through the new Otterpool Avenue?

Yes, we have - we considered this option but decided that splitting the traffic to encourage HGVs and larger vehicles to remain on the A20 would allow us to create a more pedestrian and cycle-friendly street.

How many metres of dedicated cycle lanes will there be which are not shared with cars?

The strategy is to keep cyclists segregated from vehicular traffic, and in some cases, pedestrians, particularly on busier trafficked roads such as the A20 and Otterpool Avenue in the high street.

In other areas, there may be less need to segregate cyclists on the local streets that have less traffic. Depending on the estimated demand and number of cyclists we may decide that a shared path is better.

Has consideration been given TOA light rail (trams) circuit?

Consideration has been given however it would not be viable for this scale of community. Buses are more flexible and enable wider links with existing communities.

Your philosophy is to encourage green space and outdoor activities, to that end are you planning to improve footpaths and foot crossings to the north to enable walking access to the North Downs and wider Countryside?

As well as providing a network of walking and cycling routes within the site it is also intended to provide a series of off-site routes, to improve access to the countryside and to nearby settlements. This will include proposals to increase access between Otterpool Park and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

General

What do you mean when you say self-contained?

Self-contained means as well as providing new homes it will provide facilities that will support the day to day needs of the community that will be created at Otterpool Park.

This includes new schools and healthcare, leisure facilities, shops, jobs, spaces for socialising, and this will help ensure that the new community Otterpool Park doesn't need to rely and put pressure on existing facilities elsewhere in the district.

Are you taking into account the huge number of developments that are already taking place in Ashford, Sellindge, Folkestone and Hythe?

Yes, we are very much aware of other developments that are coming forward in the district and taking those into account as we prepare our environmental and transport assessments. When it determines our application the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that cumulatively the effects of development are acceptable.

What are the advantages of a garden settlement over extending other towns?

If you try and imagine how you would add 10,000 homes to meet housing needs within this area, by extending for example Folkestone and Hythe, it would certainly cause problems. The towns are quite constrained meaning that land is not available to build in these quantities.

The advantages of a garden town are that we can plan all the facilities and services for a modern way of living, rather than try and retrofit an existing settlement. We can deliver facilities from day one, plan the infrastructure that is needed and we can ensure build quality here. There are all sorts of advantages that can be brought about which simply couldn't be delivered by extending other areas.

What will be the ongoing authority?

It is the intention that public buildings will be owned and managed by a new community stewardship body.

What is the planned assumed population for phase one?

At the moment, the plans are for 1,900 homes in phase one, equating to around 4,500 people.

Can you confirm when the first phase is likely to start and when it's likely to finish?

If we were to get planning permission early next year, we would hope to be on site in 2023, with the first houses being ready for occupation the following year 2024.

We often hear about stakeholders having an input into the consultation process of building a new town. The only ones that we seem to hear about are the ones that plan to make a profit out of it. The most important stakeholder of them all is the local resident. Where are those voices? In a number of polls, support for a new town was less than 3% across the area. Where is there mention of all the demonstrations that have taken place

showing residents opprobrium against an unwanted town within a rural setting?

All planning applications must evidence consultation with stakeholders and the local community as part of the planning process. All comments are taken into consideration – those raising objections are not excluded from this analysis.

The outline planning application for Otterpool Park (submitted in February 2019) received 165 responses (as of 11 July 2019).

DCLG Criteria for a new town was to have local support - there is none, albeit 3% as stated. It also states that new towns should not be dormitory towns. It would appear that that is not the case, emphasising main transport links to London. There should also be a local housing need. The town is over and above the local plan. Will there be migration into the area, possibly from London or overseas?

The garden community is part of the Council's strategy to address local needs based on local housing needs assessment - this is a longer-term plan that goes beyond the Local Plan period.

Within Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Full Council there was unanimous support for the decision to apply for Garden Town status, plus support from other organisations.

While there is significant local housing need that will be met at Otterpool Park, naturally there will be migration in and out of any area over time, and the district is an appealing location owing to its connectivity and coastline, amongst many other factors. Creating a vibrant, diverse community is important and attracting people of working age will positively impact the local economy.

Isn't this soi-disant consultation a case of the cart before the horse. We still have to hear back from the Inspector on adopting the Local Plan and also the Planning Application for Otterpool. I would suggest that this is just another box ticking exercise by FHDC to help the application along the way.

The phase one work will be submitted in support of the outline planning application and it will help the Council to test the planning application and help people get a better understanding of the proposals for the town centre which will form the heart of the town.

The advertising literature advertises that the new town will be close to the coast and beaches. How do you marry that with being 'self-contained' and not having an impact on local roads?

All day-to-day needs of local residents and employees will be met with facilities within the town. Extensive transport modelling has been undertaken to assess the growth in travel in the district as a result of Otterpool Park and ensure that this is managed and mitigated. The full transport assessment can be viewed as part of the outline planning application

<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/otterpoolpark/planningapplication>

Once the green infrastructure has been established, can we make progress on planting early, so that the landscape will mature as the project progresses later (2023/4). Involving children in planting now, will secure their involvement with the landscape in later years....

Yes, we plan to invest in advanced planting to allow the landscape to mature. Your suggestion about involving children is also noted, thank you.

Can we monitor the effects of development on clean air, and make this an exemplar of a research and monitoring strategy?

An air quality assessment has taken place as part of the outline planning application which has provided baseline assessment, this suggestion is of value and noted, thank you.

The planning application was submitted by Cozumel and FHDC, has a new application been made as both are now defunct and LLP is taking Planning Application forward?

The name on the planning application has now been amended.

In Nov 2015 Mr Jarrett made it clear in emails that the land was to be developed for housing. So if the Council knew it was to develop the land before it bought the Champney land, why didn't it have a consultation at the "formative" stage?

The land was bought with a long-term view in mind but due to the Government Garden Communities programme plans were enacted more quickly than originally intended. A public consultation exercise followed which informed the preparation of the planning application.

What are the 3 key lessons you've learnt from previous new town developments, such as Milton Keynes? ... and the effect on surrounding villages?

Our highly experienced LLP delivery team and consultants working on the project are aware of the many lessons that can be learned from new town developments.

The Council are members of the Town and Country Planning Association and the Garden Communities Forum where research and lessons from around the country are shared across a range of different topics, including employment, health provision, long-term stewardship of green spaces and other assets.

Can you expand on what support you will offer to individuals and groups of people who will be devastated by the intrusion of all the extra people living in an area they valued for its beauty and accessibility to natural countryside? In addition, people will be devastated by additional traffic, litter, etc. and the increased population inevitably spilling over into their treasured mature communities? Equally the devastation around access to the seafront which will be curtailed by the additional population?

We are talking to each of the parishes about the impact on their communities and how they can benefit from new development, including ensuring the identity of their villages can be protected through measures such as green spaces and buffering. Otterpool Park will offer these communities enhanced access to facilities within walking distance from their homes.

We are fortunate in the district to have over 26 miles of coastline – the intention is that the increase in population will have a positive impact on businesses in Folkestone and Hythe who thrive on their seaside destination – and provide a sustainable income from local residents as well as visitors.

How are you working with the bordering parishes?

We have regular meetings with the six parishes that are most affected by the project. We have a good working relationship with them and we have met with them regularly from the outset of the project to listen to views and make necessary changes to our plans. These discussions do not prejudice their ability to object to the planning application through the formal process if they so choose.

In all of this presentation I've heard precious little about how any of the proposal respects existing neighbouring or adjoining communities, or involves them, or even how you think they will benefit from any of this. Far too much 'look at me I'm so beautiful' in all of this. So how do you respond to that?

We are talking to each of the parishes about how their communities can benefit from new development and to ensure that the identity of their villages can be protected through measures such as green spaces and buffering. Otterpool Park will offer these communities enhanced access to facilities within walking distance from their homes.

What assurances can you give that Sellindge will not be subsumed into the new town following these initial phases?

Sellindge has its own community; keeping its identity is important and Otterpool Park will be kept separated. We have incorporated a buffer at Barrow Hill to help differentiate the communities.

What plans are there to curb light and noise pollution?

Assessments of light and noise pollution have been made as part of the outline planning application. We are working within Ashford Borough Council's Dark Skies policy that exists, covering the west of the town, that sets out standards that we need to be adhered to.

How do local people get onto the lists for social housing allocation?

Information on this and how to apply for social or affordable housing can be found on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website <https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/housing/kent-homechoice>

Otterpool is in addition to Folkestone so the problems of making Folkestone a more sustainable place will still exist. There is a risk that Otterpool will replace Folkestone and the existing town will just be abandoned to sink into further decline. what will be done to share the benefits with the existing communities in the district?

Otterpool Park will not compete with or replace Folkestone. The Otterpool Park town centre will not rely on retail and will be focused around everyday needs, community uses, leisure and employment.

The intention is that the increase in population will have a positive impact on Folkestone and Hythe, providing a sustainable income from local residents as well as visitors. Income to the council generated by Otterpool Park can be reinvested in Folkestone town centre and elsewhere in the district, so the benefits can be more widespread.

There is a lot of success around Folkestone as a vibrant and creative town attracting visitors – and in addition a place plan is currently being created for Folkestone Town Centre to plan future investment. Information on this can be found here: <https://folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/folkestoneplaceplan>

How will the plans reach the zero-carbon objective?

Please can you confirm that the houses will be carbon neutral?

What efforts are being made to ensure that the houses will be built in accord with sustainable principles?

The question of sustainability and how we address it is one of the most significant questions we face. At Otterpool Park our general approach is to look at sustainable environmental, economic and social measures in a holistic way rather than focusing on any one element.

We have already fixed certain sustainability targets for Otterpool Park; we've committed to a standard of 50% green space, which also exceeds most standards for new towns.

20% biodiversity gain across the site is another important target for us and exceeds the current Government target. Our ecologists are satisfied that that is achievable through retaining and managing important habitats, and also creating new habitats.

More recently, we've been dealing with concerns raised by Natural England around nutrient neutrality of the water that will be discharged into the river Stour. We can now commit to neutral impact of this owing to an on-site treatment works and a sustainable urban drainage system.

Our ambition is to ensure that that people use their cars less, by investing in more sustainable ways of getting around - walking, cycling and public transport.

In the early stages of Otterpool Park we also set ourselves a target of not permitting gas to be used in any of the new homes.

We are currently undertaking an extensive piece of work to understand what's possible and what's not in terms of carbon zero goals, working toward the council's own policy of achieving zero carbon by 2030 and taking into consideration Government targets.

Whilst the street view pictures show summer and sunshine, the UK isn't always like that, how do you plan to keep it alive and vibrant in the winter months?

We have incorporated activities and facilities that can be accessed in all seasons – nature trails, play areas and indoor activities such as the new leisure centre.

We are also all more used to living an outdoor lifestyle owing to the pandemic and businesses such as cafes are more set up for outdoor dining, so we hope to be able to provide a vibrant community year-round.

There is very little provision of private gardens. The greenery is provided by communal areas. Who maintains these and who will pay?

Phase one at Otterpool Park is more urban in nature and other phases will be lower density of housing with larger gardens. Communal areas of greenery will be maintained by a new stewardship body.

Why is it called Otterpool Park?

'Otterpool' is taken from a historic name within the site. Otterpool Manor and Upper Otterpool are existing listed buildings within the area.

History shows that such briefings sound great and have a positive ethos, drive and philosophy. However, over a project duration of 30 years how do you plan to ensure you maintain that ethos, drive and philosophy over such a long-time span?

As the project's Master Developer, Otterpool Park LLP has been set up with a long-term role to ensure the vision is delivered.

With the flexibility provided on development options how will you maintain look, feel and continuity of development over time?

As Master Developer, Otterpool Park LLP is responsible for controlling the quality of all development. Design codes for each phase at Otterpool Park will set out all rules of the design that developers must follow.

It's not at all clear what the extent of phase 1 actually is. What does it contain?

Phase one centres around a new town centre and castle park. It will include 1,900 homes including affordable homes, family homes, self- and custom-build homes and intergenerational living. There will be two primary schools, a health centre, leisure centre and community / library space. In addition, there will be workspaces, space for shopping, eating, drinking and socialising.

Can you be a bit more specific of just which garden town principles you are subscribing to in this?

The Garden City Principles have driven our masterplan and delivery of Otterpool Park at many levels. It has been designed with sustainability and longevity at its core and will be a place for everyone with a wide range of home types, tenures, activities and landscapes.

The Garden City Principles we have been working to are:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.

- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Can you share your infrastructure plan and timescale?

We are working on a detailed infrastructure plan for phase one now and this will be shared in due course.

Hundreds of comments were submitted in response to the outline planning application. When do we see a response to those?

We are currently working on revisions to the planning application in response to all the comments received and a summary of the responses will be included when this material is submitted to the planning authority.

Heritage

I'm pleased to see a heritage focus with other excellent examples being the exceptionally rare hammer beam roofing in the barn and of course, the Roman villa. Will there be a museum? And will the villa be publicly viewable or buried, never to be seen again?

We are exploring how heritage can be protected, interpreted and presented on the site. there are no plans for a stand alone museum at this stage, but we're looking conservation solutions for the barns and ways it might be used by the local community going forward. The barns might offer an opportunity for an exhibition and interpretation space, or it might be that the new visitor centre that we're considering within Westenhanger Castle Park takes that function.

The Roman Villa is an interesting technical challenge. The archaeology will remain buried and protected as green space in the short term, but there is the option for the site to be excavated in future. Long-term management solutions would need to be put in place for its protection. We are exploring these scenarios as part of our heritage strategy, making sure that all of the technical challenges around proper preservation of that significant archaeology are fully understood.

How does the design of the park respect its history?

Heritage is a key part of our design strategy for the park, with lots of elements featured.

This includes reinstating the original causeway access to the castle; the reimagining of a 16th century walled garden, and recreating a historic watercourse. We will be retaining the winner's circle on the racecourse and introducing a number of follies based on the racecourse watch towers. New pocket parks will celebrate the racecourse history of the site.

There will be interpretation and information boards for users who walk around the site so that they can learn about the history of the site.

What facilities will there be at the new castle park?

Westenhanger Castle Park will be a new accessible public park with lots of connectivity through it.

People will be able to explore different landscape areas around the park and do all the usual things that the people do in parks like walking, running, sitting, relaxing, picnicking, and so on.

Specific elements include three play areas, a cricket pitch and pavilion. There will be water features, a walled garden, community orchards and the castle itself.

Where will visitors to the castle park from outside Otterpool Park park their cars?

There will be parking at the station and in small parking areas around the park; in due course parking will be provided to the west of the castle. We will encourage use of sustainable transport to access the park including public transport, walking and cycling. Provision will be made for blue badge holders.

I'm pleased to see a heritage focus, with other excellent examples being the exceptionally rare hammerbeam roof in the barn and of course the Roman villa. At the previous public engagement, I asked where the museum was going and got a sheepish look and was told there isn't one. Has this been

rectified? And will the villa remain publicly viewable (possibly with a covered building like Roman Painted House in Dover) or buried never to be seen again?

There are no decisions yet about a museum but there is capacity for archaeological finds to be displayed in public buildings including the castle. The villa will remain protected as public open space and the heritage strategy will set out options for future interpretation and excavation.

How can we engender trust in the establishment that the value of the heritage assets will be protected in the future, given their track record with other Ancient monuments in their ownership?

Heritage is an important part of our plans for Otterpool Park and our approach to protecting and preserving heritage assets will be set out in the heritage strategy. The purchase of Westenhanger Castle by Folkestone & Hythe District Council is one example of protecting the long-term future of heritage assets on site and phase one sets out some other examples of the work we wish to achieve – for example improving the setting of the castle with the new Castle Park.

This will be submitted with revisions to our outline planning application, with the opportunity for the public to comment.

What are the anticipated entrance charges for Westenhanger Castle? And how does this celebration of the castle fit in with the self-contained aspect of the development and not making it a "destination"?

Work on the future use of the castle has begun as part of our heritage strategy. There are no plans at this point in time to charge entrance fees to the castle or for the castle to become tourist attraction - in the short term it is leased to an events company for weddings and other events.

The barns have great potential to be brought back into use for use by the community. Further feasibility work on the future use of the castle and barns is planned as part of the heritage strategy.

Utilities

In relation to connectivity, will it be a condition of sale for developers that they must provide fibre optic broadband to every dwelling?

Yes, developers will need to be able to commit to this.

Has any thought been put to the possibility of having only electricity and no gas supplies to the development? After all, we should not be building in a reliance on fossil fuels?

That's something that we took a quite an early decision on when we decided that we wouldn't allow any houses to be built that and be dependent on gas.

Will you be using solar and wind generation for sustainable electricity?

Solar panels will be an important part of the energy strategy for the town as a whole and more detail on this will follow. There are no plans for wind generation.

How will you manage water supply to Otterpool Park, when this area has the designation of having water scarcity status?

Water will be supplied by Affinity Water, brought in via reinforced works from Paddlesworth, which is to the north of Folkestone.

Affinity Water has guaranteed that they can meet that supply for the whole town.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.otterpoolpark.org/app/uploads/2019/11/Otterpool-Park-Ensuring-sustainable-water-supply-for-the-future.pdf>

The East Stour River floods regularly, how will the optimal development manage runoff and not cause more flooding downstream?

We understand the difficulties further downstream and we're absolutely certain that we can avoid making that any worse.

We've done a lot of design work on the whole water and drainage strategy within the Otterpool Park catchment.

We've agreed to a standard which means that we will not do anything to allow more water to be discharged from our site at any point in time. That's done through a sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) scheme where water is all held and redistributed in different ways. We have been working with the Environment Agency and Kent County Council to ensure plans are robust.

The East Stour River floods regularly. The Otterpool development will accelerate runoff into the river and cause more flooding downstream.

Otterpool Park has been designed to avoid any additional run off into the river Stour through a sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) scheme.

How are you dealing with the Stour nutrients issue?

The issue affects East Kent as a whole. As far as the Otterpool Park site is concerned, because of our scale, we're able to deal with it for our own purposes by constructing an on-site wastewater treatment works.

The water will be treated through this engineering process, and then it will go down to the level where natural reedbeds treat it further. We have an operator who can deliver it and Natural England are satisfied that that approach will work here to the required standard.

This area has the designation of having WATER SCARCITY STATUS. The population of the Stour region, as set out by Affinity Water is 160,000 or thereabouts. The proposed increase in the population will have a detrimental effect on Groundwater resource, which cannot be denied. If the population increase is allowed to go ahead, this decade will see the onset of a desalination plant somewhere along our coastline. This has been documented in Hansard (July 2006). How can this be squared against the current government's policy of all development to have an environmental gain?

Water will be supplied by Affinity Water, brought in via reinforced works from Paddlesworth, which is to the north of Folkestone.

Affinity Water has guaranteed that they can meet that supply.

We are not aware of any proposals for a desalination plant.

As Kent is known to be drier than countries in the middle east where will water be sourced from.

This is the responsibility of Affinity Water, who have guaranteed they can meet supply.

Paddlesworth is only 13 megalitres, and is literally a transfer pool, from groundwater sources. The pipeline of 11Km has not been accounted for in the £30m Utilities budget. Jarrett knows this. He is being economical with the truth.

Funding the pipeline is the responsibility of Affinity Water. The connections within the site have been included in the LLP utilities budget.

How do you intend to provide 8,500 new homes with sustainable water supply when Affinity Water have stated that they can only provide potable water to 1,000 of the proposed homes at Otterpool Park? Is Council leader Mr Monk's suggestion of a desalination plant still on the table?

Water will be supplied by Affinity Water, brought in via reinforced works from Paddlesworth, which is to the north of Folkestone.

Affinity Water has guaranteed that they can meet that supply for the whole town. The first 1500 homes can be provided with water using the existing infrastructure, with the improvements noted above planned to meet the needs for the rest of the town.

We are not aware of any proposals for a desalination plant.

You haven't mentioned the problem at Stodmarsh? And what about the Southern Water plans to build a desalination plant?

This is an issue that Natural England raised with us through the planning process and our initial intention was to pump wastewater to Sellindge treatment works to be processed by Southern Water.

This option was not viable and the solution that we presented to the inspectors at the examination in public is to construct a new on site treatment works which will treat the nutrients and phosphates and then they'll be allowed to run into what will be 25 hectares of newly created reedbeds on our site. Natural England has confirmed this is a satisfactory solution.

We are not aware of any proposals for a desalination plant.

Please explain how the term 'sustainability' squares with Southern Water building a desalination plant, similar to the Beckton unit in London.

We are not aware of any proposals for a desalination plant.

Where will the wastewater treatment works be located?

The exact location is to be determined but it will be in the north-west of the site.

If the project is genuine in its aim to deliver housing in 'the most sustainable way possible' are you then considering distributed energy networks eg combined heat and power?

An assessment of the provision of a combined heat and power network at Otterpool Park was carried out as part of the process of developing the outline planning application. This concluded that such a scheme would not be viable, and as such would undermine the delivery of other sustainability objectives. The situation will however be kept under review.

The study can be found in the energy strategy within the planning application. <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/article/244/Otterpool-Park-planning-application>.

Solar panels on every home to charge vehicles with green energy?

Solar panels will be an important part of the energy strategy for the town as a whole and should be achievable on most houses where orientation allows. More detail on this will follow.

Nature

What ecological surveys have been undertaken and what biodiversity has been found? Eg Bats, Otter, Shrews, Voles etc?

A full range of ecological surveys have been undertaken that set out a range of different species and their habitat, which can be viewed as part of the planning application. Further surveys are underway to update the original work where necessary. A range of methods will be put in place – protecting habitats, buffering habitats and creating new habitats including wetlands, ponds and areas of tree planting. We have set a target to increase biodiversity across the site by 20%.

What's the green infrastructure has been established? Can we make progress on planting early, so that landscape will mature as the project progresses later.

That's very much our intention. We are working on detailed plans at the moment to set out our advanced planting strategy.

The town is surrounded by the AONB. How are you mitigating and overcoming pressures on the ecosystem?

A lot of work has gone into assessing and minimising the impact on the ecosystem and we have set a target for biodiversity net gain of 20% across the site through protection, mitigation and introduction of new habitats. Creating new green spaces will offer alternative locations for walking to avoid putting additional pressure on the AONB routes.

What considerations are being made in light of the Kent Downs AONB, likely to becoming a UNESCO World heritage site in the near future?

I refer to the AONB unit's new project.

The setting of the AONB and the views to and from it have always been formative in the design of the masterplan. Strategic planting will help to mitigate and enhance views.

Tree lined avenues and green hedge lines are only of value if they are native and support biodiversity. Explain why evergreen low biodiversity value shrubbery is being advertised as a positive living 'Garden' town? Why is every blade of roadside grass cut to withing 20mm? How is provision for pollinators being threaded through this humanised estate (garden- town)? KCC pollinator plan??

We have set a target to increase biodiversity across the site by 20%. As a garden town that is designed to have 50% green space, our comprehensive landscape strategy will contain measures to be undertaken, including specifying native plants and trees.

How do you ensure you have control over the developers once you sign land over? They surely have their own agenda and their own profit aspirations and this 'vision' for Otterpool means nothing on paper and all these visions are diluted. The model may be attempting to balance people, landscape, ecology and climate but can you confirm that developers have to work to this across phase 1 development AND across future phases where it is recognised that developer increase housing densities and do not complete ecological mitigation. Confirm?

Yes – the role of Otterpool Park LLP as Master Developer is to set standards and strategies including ecological mitigation that developers will have to conform to over the long term. Our long-term stewardship strategy will have responsibility for owing and managing all strategic open space and habitats.