

Notes: Proposed Marden Garden Community - 2nd September 2020

Member meeting.

In attendance :-

Cllr Brian Clark
Cllr Bryan Vizzard
Cllr Clive English
Cllr Denis Spooner
Cllr Derek Mortimer
Cllr Fay Gooch
Cllr John Perry
Cllr Keith Adkinson
Cllr Lottie Parfitt Reid

Cllr Martin Cox
Cllr Paul Wilby
Cllr Steve Munford
Cllr Susan Grigg
Cllr Val Springett
Cllr David Burton (as local ward member only)

Apologies- Cllr Ashleigh Kimmance

MBC Officers : Rob Jarman, Gavin Ball and Marion Geary

DHA/Countryside plc

Chris Hawkins (CH), David Hicken, Paul Lulham (PL), David Moseley (DM) and Paul Vickery

Chris Hawkins (DHA) introduced the scheme (1750-2000 unit housing led development) which has been submitted under the call for sites in the Local plan Review (LPR) and explained that they had met with Marden Parish Council last year. He explained this meeting was in relation to a Planning Performance Agreement that covers the process up to the intended submission of a planning application.

David Moseley of Countryside plc talked through a presentation of the vision statement (circulated with the agenda and which formed part of their 'call for sites' submission), key areas being masterplanning, transport, sustainability and infrastructure. The Garden Community concept is based on green infrastructure links. He explained that Countryside was an FTSE-250 house builder with experience in creating garden communities with landscape led masterplans. Marden had been chosen as a "top tier" settlement with a train station and major employment to the west. Marden has low landscape constraints compared to other garden settlements in the call for sites. Marden village itself has services and these would be enhanced with new services on-site .

The company has options on 333 acres (135 ha). Countryside is a masterplanner and housebuilder and installs infrastructure/services. It will build but also sell parcels to other developers with an overall design code . This arrangement speeds up delivery rates, the buildout will be over a decade. Build rates would start at 50 per annum being increased 150 per annum.

The first phase would be train station improvements and improved linkages to it (more car parking, bus interchange, cycle parking/hire; new foot and cycle bridge across B2079), the local centre and the school site being made available. The detailing of the phasing has been on Countryside website throughout the year.

40% affordable housing that will be meet the local needs of Marden- mixed tenure scheme.

Noted request that affordable housing should be on a 70/30 split

7 hectares has been set aside for provision of education for early years, primary and secondary schools. Feedback from Kent County Council is there is no need at this stage for secondary. There will also be on site medical facility as existing healthcare in the village has no scope to be expanded

50% of the site is given over to green and blue infrastructure

A management community will give long term stewardship with sustainable funding arrangements

Paul Lulham of DHA said the site has both local accessibility to services and scope for non-car modes for longer journeys especially rail- commuting by rail is already important in Marden.

Bus service enhancements are proposed.

There has been liaison with KCC (Brendan Wright)- modelling assumptions for modal shift are conservative; there are achievable junction improvements that can accommodate the traffic from this development- Stage 1 work has carried out. He noted concerns re B2163 also being assessed.

Stated that current junction design schemes will accommodate the impact from this development, the landowner has an important role -he can add funding to any road improvements where there is a funding shortfall. Also made the point that the landowner of part of this site has land interests where the other improvements might be required (ie Linton Crossroads).

Station improvements would be carried out in phase 1- an extra car park and bus interchange and local centre north of the station Footbridge and pedestrian bridges will be improved.

Mentioned that trains serve Maidstone via Paddock Wood using the Medway Valley line which is an underused route . He advised that HS train services from Ashford had reduced the East Kent commuters using this line and that Network Rail have not flagged up any capacity issues.

Arriva and Nu-Venture have been spoken to regarding improved bus services -intention is a 30 minute service to Maidstone currently it is 2 hourly in the off peak and would benefit other villages en route into and out of Maidstone.

Noted suggestion for consultation with the North Loose Residents Association re measures for improvements of traffic flow.

He advised the idea of hubs served by hopper buses had been investigated for example at Linton or Loose.

In response to a query that rail improvements take a long time, DM replied most of the improvements to the train station will be on Countryside owned land. Network Rail have been engaged in discussions and aware of benefits of revenue increases

The bridge needs replacing - a short term strategy for step free access

Noted suggestion to consult Maidstone Cycling Forum, the need for well designed traffic calming, access by emergency vehicles to be well planned and plenty of fire hydrants.

DM advised that there would be local jobs in the industrial estate and jobs within the schools and nursery

Super-fast broadband to help working from home plus envisage creating work hubs within the dwellings

Said plenty of green spaces to allow for SuDS -site is in Flood Zone 1 and he is unaware of any existing drainage problems on the site

DM said that as a company they tend to build larger homes-need a national policy for minimum room sizes.

They needed evidence base of need for self-build but the scheme will be flexible.

Rob Jarman asked for evidence of Network Rail and BT cooperation.

He advised that delays in KCC transportation schemes appear to have been due to COVID-19 consultation delays and any funding gaps for road /unction improvements such as Linton could potentially use CIL money.

The LPR they would adopt minimum national space standards and also accessible open space.

Govt wants SMEs to play a bigger role in future (10% of sites) and a separate requirement for self-build and custom build units- the overall numbers will be set and broken down into self-build , housing for elderly, family housing etc.

General themes arising from this briefing as challenges for the developers to respond to

Health Centre (lessons from Coxheath GP Surgery)

Rail Capacity ? – eg platform lengths constraint but moreover the capacity of the network

Speed of achieving station improvements with Network Rail involved

Timing/funding of highway schemes realistic

Good access to Maidstone by train/bus so not a dormitory for London.

New bus services need to be viable over the long term- the hopper/hub idea was in principle supported

Cumulative impact on A229/A274 from other LPR sites

Working from home to be facilitated by both technology and layout/space.

Surface Water Drainage

Green/Blue Infrastructure

Access to recreational Open Space

20/25 mph Rd speeds, sensitive traffic calming

homes for life

minimum space standards

range of residential types – family housing, housing of elderly/Self build /custom build

Self build Homes for ex Forces.

Type and deliverability of employment space (including retail)

Themes for Future Meetings in conjunction with a future planning application

Highway Issues

Public Transport Improvements

Healthcare/Education/Employment/Retail

Green/Blue Infrastructure

Building for Life