



Addressing the opportunities at Otterpool Park

Landowners' summary and response to the Stage 2 Community Engagement Report

The Stage 2 community engagement report has been published, following the events that took place in June 2017 to discuss proposals for Otterpool Park. The report has been prepared by Kevin Murray Associates (KMA), which also organised the sessions, and provides a breakdown and analysis of the topics discussed.

We've prepared this response paper to:

- explain the community engagement process in more detail
- explore how our work will address the opportunities and challenges raised by people at the events
- outline what happens next and how the community can be involved

The community engagement process so far

Otterpool Park is a long-term project that will provide the homes and jobs needed for young people and future generations to stay in the local area. We'll do this in a way that minimises the need to draw on the resources and facilities that serve existing communities and is sensitive to the landscape.

Because of this, it is important that our ideas and plans are informed by the needs and desires of the existing community in Shepway.

- Our first community events took place in December 2016 so that local people could share their ideas and concerns with the project team and explain their priorities for a new settlement.
- The second stage took place in June 2017, and the community and other stakeholders was again invited to share ideas and concerns through drop in events, meetings and business and civic workshops. At these sessions, the project team also presented a 'masterplan in progress'.

Addressing the opportunities

Many topics were explored at the events, the key themes that were raised by many people are laid out below. We'll address these comments and opportunities to make sure that Otterpool Park is a new community for everyone.

- There was support for the **significant levels of green space** and **landscaping** planned for Otterpool Park. The **woodland planting and the restoration of Westenhanger Castle's grounds** were highlighted, both of which are a big part of our plans.
- People liked the idea of **safely walking and cycling** to work or school, a key principle of the garden town model and one that has featured heavily in our draft masterplan.
- **New employment opportunities** near to homes were welcomed because they create a **sense of community** and promote a **healthier lifestyle**. This is crucial to our design - a key garden town principle is community creation. We want to make it possible for young people to stay local and for everyone to live a healthy, active life.
- For people at the events, **opportunities for young people** were vital in an ageing, rural community. Schools, employment and training were all important. This forms a big part of our proposals, bringing more wealth to the area too.



- Some people were concerned that Otterpool Park wasn't being built for local people, and wanted to know more details about **affordable housing**. While the number of homes that meet this definition hasn't been decided yet, there will definitely be provision for them, based on local need.
- Many attendees expressed concern that the new homes wouldn't be in keeping with the existing buildings. However, we're putting a **design code** in place to guide the builders and architects and make sure Otterpool Park is reflective of its setting.
- A number of people said our design approach wasn't innovative enough – they wanted to see more **new technology and renewable energy**. We want this too, and our work over the coming months will look at how we can include exciting new design elements.
- **Traffic** was a big concern for many people, as was **water**. While we don't know exactly how these issues will be managed yet, we're conducting studies and research, and working with utilities companies to make sure there is capacity for the people who will live in the new homes. The results of these studies, and for **healthcare** and **schools** (also key issues) will be available in the coming months.
- Lots of people felt that the garden town is too big and that the number of houses being considered is unnecessary. While we are looking to build lots of homes, we're doing so to meet the housing needs of the district – Shepway District Council's Core Strategy Review found that **14,600 new homes are needed between 2014 and 2037**. The area has existing plans for, or has completed, about 8000. So, 6,600 more homes are needed by 2037. The review hasn't looked beyond this time, but homes will continue to be needed – Otterpool Park will address this too.

What happens next?

We hope to submit the planning application for the proposed garden town in April 2018.

Before this happens, there will be another series of engagement sessions led by KMA, as well as ongoing opportunities for people to share their feedback with the team in other ways, such as through the website and social media.

There will also be workshops for new groups of people to make sure that the feedback received is reflective of local people from all backgrounds and aspirations – such as students, small business owners and the people who live within the site boundary. As Otterpool Park will be for all the people of Shepway we want to hear from everyone across the district, and especially the younger generation who will live and work here in the future.

Details of these events and updates will be provided in due course.