

# Land at Bobbing

Second Stage Submission to Swale Borough Council in  
response to the New Garden Communities Prospectus

August 2018





# The Vision

## The Brief

The Swale Borough Council New Communities Prospectus has been published by the Local Authority to invite developers to put forward potential sites for growth. The document sets out a vision together with a set of key principles to adhere to. As stated by the prospectus, a successful approach will:

- *Create a development that is well designed, delivering superb environments in which to live, work and play;*
- *Achieve economic development and employment growth, with strong links to large labour markets, to build resilience and ensure prosperity, allowing us to retain and attract a skilled population;*
- *Deliver sustainable and long term solutions to our transport issues, particularly in relation to congestion and air quality;*
- *Achieve strong environmental protection and real and significant net gains in biodiversity, to support economic prosperity, health and well-being;*
- *Create a variety of flexible housing products for everyone and achieve greater levels of affordable provision;*
- *Deliver a high number of housing completions, to a high quality sustainable design and construction, across the plan period to 2038 and beyond; and*
- *Ensure all infrastructure is funded by the development out of land values.*

The prospectus outlines a total of 12 questions to be answered. Follow up discussions with the Council have also resulted in a series of site specific questions. Within this submission, we have therefore sought to address all key matters with the information available at this early stage.



## The Vision

This proposal has been formulated after careful consideration and analysis of the most sustainable locations to locate significant growth within the Borough of Swale.

This analysis has carefully considered landscape, infrastructure, economic benefits and the opportunity to enhance the amenity of existing residents. We believe that proportionate growth to the west of Sittingbourne provides a unique opportunity to address all of these matters.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that 'to be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged'. We have set out within this response how this site can meet not only the strategic housing need of the Borough but also a more immediate housing requirement particularly the provision of affordable housing.

As set out, the Council has provided specific requirements that any proposal put forward should adhere to and we believe that this proposal in this location can bring about all the benefits highlighted, but can also deliver housing and employment opportunities in the short term without the requirement for significant infrastructure improvements.

This proposal will be of a significant scale. It will deliver:

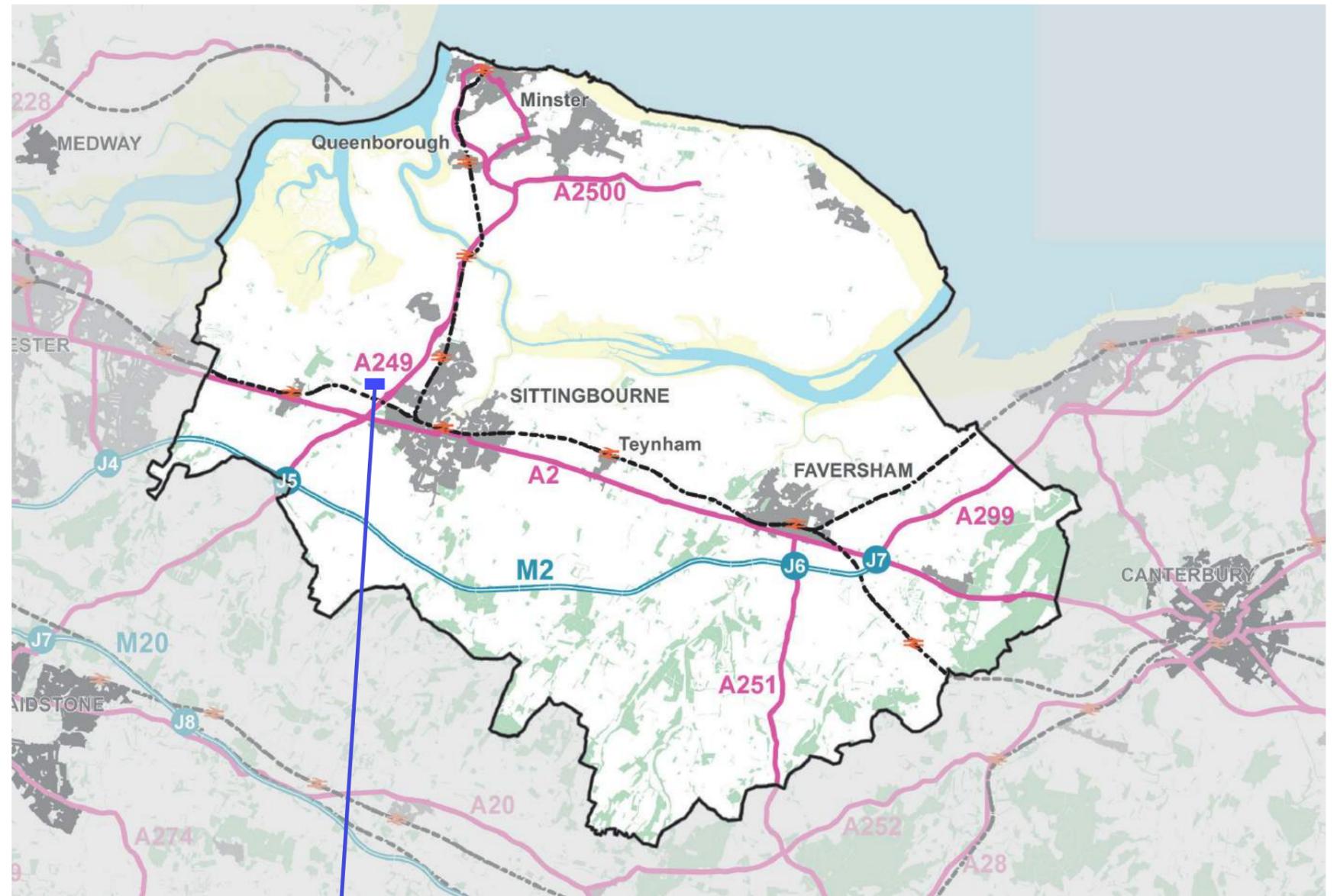
- Up to 2500 new homes including 40% affordable;
- A new 3FE primary school
- Improved parking facilities for Bobbing Primary School;
- A new Village Hall and Community Centre;
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play;
- Public art;
- Multi-functional open spaces allowing for public events;
- Strategic highway improvements;
- Improved sports facilities;
- Community gardens and allotments;
- A Public House and local retail centre; and
- Flexible commercial space.

Through the evolving masterplan, it is considered that the TCPA Garden City Principles can be achieved whilst retaining the specific and historic qualities of Bobbing as a small village.



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**Bobbing Village**

# 1.0 The Study Area

## 1.1 The Site

The site is extensive, equating to approximately 201 hectares. With the exception of two smaller parcels of land to the south, the majority of the site is located to the west of Sheppey Way, close to the small village of Bobbing. The larger parcel of land comprises of a number of agricultural fields together with a small pocket of woodland. Several residential and business properties fall within the site boundary, as does the Bobbing Cricket Club ground.



The northern boundary of the site is relatively straight and follows the alignment of Stickfast Lane separated from the site by a low partially vegetated, sporadic hedgerow. Where the hedgerow is absent the boundary is open with only rank grass to demarcate it. Beyond the northern boundary lies the Garden of England Crematorium, a solar farm and the recently expanded settlement of Iwade.

The eastern boundary to the site is irregular, passing around a number of properties but broadly runs parallel to the Sheppey Way and jumps across the road to include two small parcels of land wedged between the Sheppey Way and the dualled A249. The south east boundary lies opposite a cluster of roadside services, which includes the 'Bobbing Apple' restaurant, Premier Inn, Mcdonalds restaurant and CO-OP petrol station.

The southern boundary is contained by the London to Dover/Ramsgate railway. The railway is partially in a cutting as it dissects the site with the embankments well vegetated, covered in trees and shrub. One level crossing is contained within the site boundary with a second just outside, to the west. Two parcels of land lie south of this railway and are contained between the line and the settlement of Keycol which lies to the north of the A2.

The western boundary corresponds to the field boundaries which run along Parsonage Lane. A short section of this boundary passes along the north-western edge of Rook Wood. A tall hedgerow defines the site boundary as it passes along this length of Parsonage Lane.

In terms of the local road network, the A249 dual carriageway which lies to the east of the site provides direct access to both the M2/A2 and M20 in the south, the Isle of Sheppey to the north and links through to Sittingbourne via the B2006.

Sheppey Way (the former A249) provides the main thoroughfare running through the historic core of Bobbing while a matrix of smaller lanes Parsonage Lane, Stickfast Lane, Rook Lane and Cold Harbour Lane cross the site in a grid-like fashion.

Except for the south-west corner of the site, around Rook Lodge, the component fields are currently under arable production. These fields located west of the historic core of Bobbing are on occasion subject to flytipping, and other anti-social behaviour due to a lack of natural surveillance. This is recognised as a local issue of concern.

Internally, the fields are largely open with little boundary vegetation. An exception being the three hedgerows that help define two of the fields in the centre of the site, contained by Parsonage Lane to the north, Cold Harbour Lane to the west and a farm track to the south (which connects between Sheppey Way and Cold Harbour Lane). These hedgerows are an important feature in the landscape and help provide a degree of enclosure and visual containment however their condition and quality vary.

Rook Wood is a rectangular block of wood in the south-western corner of the site. The wood is mainly native deciduous trees and contains a small lake contained within. Another small copse is situated in the north-west corner of the site surrounding a further small lake. Elsewhere on the site, tree and shrub vegetation is largely absent.

A watercourse is shown on the Ordnance Survey Map running along part of the site's western boundary.

Public Footpath ZR106 connects Stickfast Lane in the north to Parsonage Lane within the site. PRow ZR107 connects through the

site from Parsonage Road to the north to Cold Harbour Lane in the south. A third PRow ZR105 passes along part of the site's western boundary from Parsonage Lane in the north to the site's south-west corner. Parsonage Lane and Cold Harbour Lane both pass through the site. All of these connect to a large network of footpaths surrounding the site offering access to the villages of Keycol, Newington and the wider countryside.

Topographically, the site slopes gently down from south-east to north-west. The south-east corner is at approximately 39 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD) with the site having a low of approximately 30 metres AOD.

The site is not covered by and nor does it contain any statutory or non-statutory landscape protection designation. A number of heritage assets comprising grade II listed buildings and the grade I listed church are found along Sheppey Way within the village of Bobbing.

A high voltage electricity transmission line with pylons dissects the site from northeast to south-west. The transmission line is a major visual detractor.





Existing Key Features:

1. Bobbing Village
2. Grade I listed St Bartholomew Church
3. A249 Services
4. Bobbing Cricket Club
5. Rook Wood
6. Garden of England Crematorium
7. Bobbing Place
8. Bobbing Court
9. Bobbing Primary School

Fig 1 - Potential Development Area

# 1.0 The Study Area

## 1.2 Land Ownership

Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd currently has options agreed for the majority of the site and he is in advanced discussions with the owners of a remaining parcel of land. The agreement will be finalised shortly and Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd will assume control of all the land falling within the red line boundary.

Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd is a local developer with an excellent record of delivering major development in Swale and throughout Kent.

Jarvis Homes would also be a development partner and have a very good track record of delivering major developments in the county. Jarvis Homes have been involved in numerous major developments in Kent, including large-scale urban extensions to Ashford at Chilmington Green and Kingsnorth.

As shown, there is also potential to extend the site south eastwards with additional frontage to the A249. It is intended that through further discussion, the landowners would come together in preparation of a joint masterplan for the site.

**Legend**

-  Site Boundary
-  Land Registry Information



Fig 2- Land Ownership

### 1.3 Wider Context

To the north of the site, the landscape is predominantly agricultural with fields of varying size. The agricultural mix includes areas of commercial orchard, arable and some limited pasture. The fields are generally more defined by vegetated boundaries with some substantial hedgerows.

High voltage transmission lines pass through the landscape and are visual detractors.

To the south, the landscape pattern is a mixture of areas of settlement and agriculture. Settlement is almost continuous along the line of the A2 which passes east-west at approximately 0.5 km from the site boundary at its closest point.

To the west, a solar farm adjoins the site boundary near Rook Wood and another solar farm is located near the site's north-west corner.

Hawes and Wardwell Woods form a large block of woodland west of High Oak Hill, a ridge of high ground at approximately 55 metres AOD and approximately 0.75 km from the site boundary at its closest point.

Iwade to the north pushes development west of the A249 whereas the historic settlement of Milton Regis is otherwise very much contained by the road network.

Newington and Keycol form smaller settlements south west and south of the site respectively.



Fig x - Surrounding solar farms



Fig 3- Wider Context

# 1.0 The Study Area

## 1.4 Planning Policy Context

Bobbing Village would fall outside of the defined settlement confines of Sittingbourne, to the west of the historic core of Bobbing and adjacent to an area of land shown on the current Local Plan proposals map as being within an Important Local Countryside Gap (ILCG).

Only two small parcels of land are shown to be located within the defined countryside gap and are sited behind east of Sheppey Way. The proposals seeks to use these smaller areas for modest development, contained within the existing alignment of ribbon development along Sheppey Way. The remainder would comprise open space thus upholding the role of the countryside gap.

A 'Rural Lane' also runs through the site. The lane would be retained and the proposal would seek to conserve and enhance its landscape, biodiversity and historic value.

An area of woodland is located within the site's boundaries, however this is not designated as a Local Designated Site of Biodiversity. That said, we would still thoroughly survey this area of the site to make sure any ecological interest was enhanced and or any loss mitigated.

A large allocation to the north of Sittingbourne promotes the provision of a Secondary School with pending applications east of Velum Drive seeking permission for new primary and special needs educational facilities. These neighbouring developments have been accounted for in determining potential uses for this site.

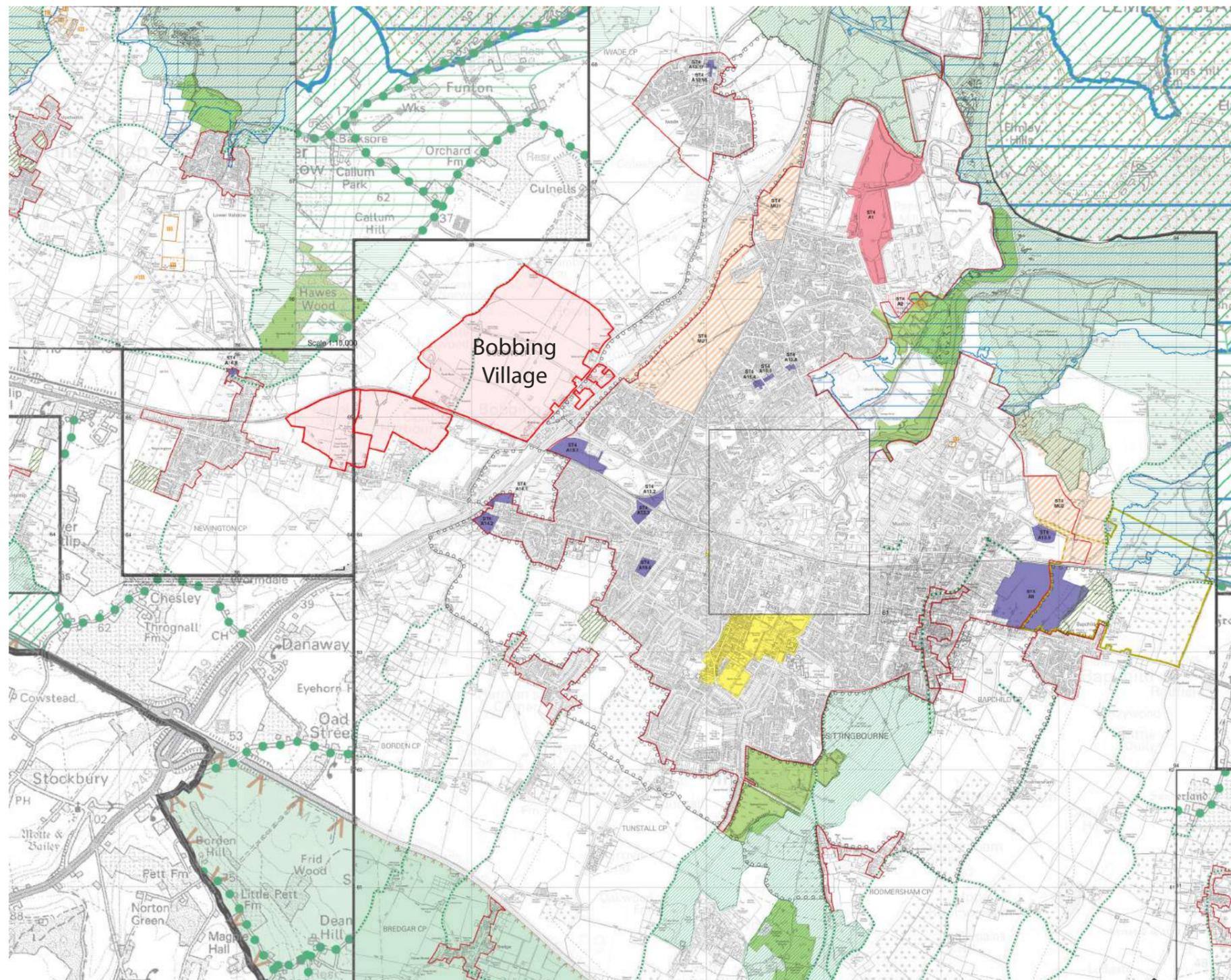


Fig 4 - Proposals Map

# 2.0 Bobbing Village

The village of Bobbing is a linear settlement sited along Sheppey Way west of the A249 dual carriageway. The latter separates the main settlement of Bobbing from the urban area of Sittingbourne which extends several kilometres to the east.

Bobbing Village has a number of listed properties and village facilities including:

- Grade I listed St Bartholomew Church;
- Grade II listed Bobbing Place;
- Grade II listed Bobbing Court;
- Grade II listed Laurelin House and Luxton House;
- Grade II Church Farm Cottage;
- Bobbing Primary School;
- Bobbing Village Hall; and
- The Garden of England Crematorium and Memorial Gardens.

The proposal presents an opportunity to build upon the already established identity of Bobbing. The illustrative masterplan sets out to celebrate and improve the setting of the existing heritage assets through the introduction of a village green, new community facilities, high quality landscaping and access improvements.

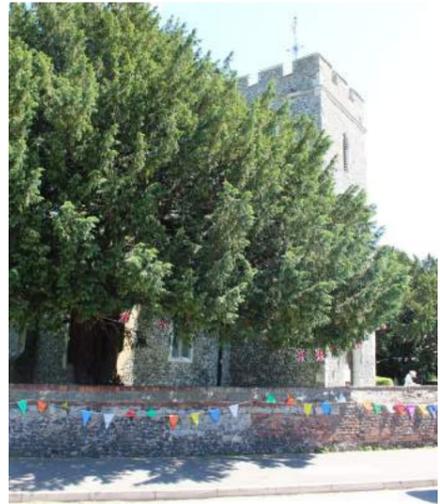


Fig 5 : Bobbing as Existing

# 3.0 An evolving Masterplan

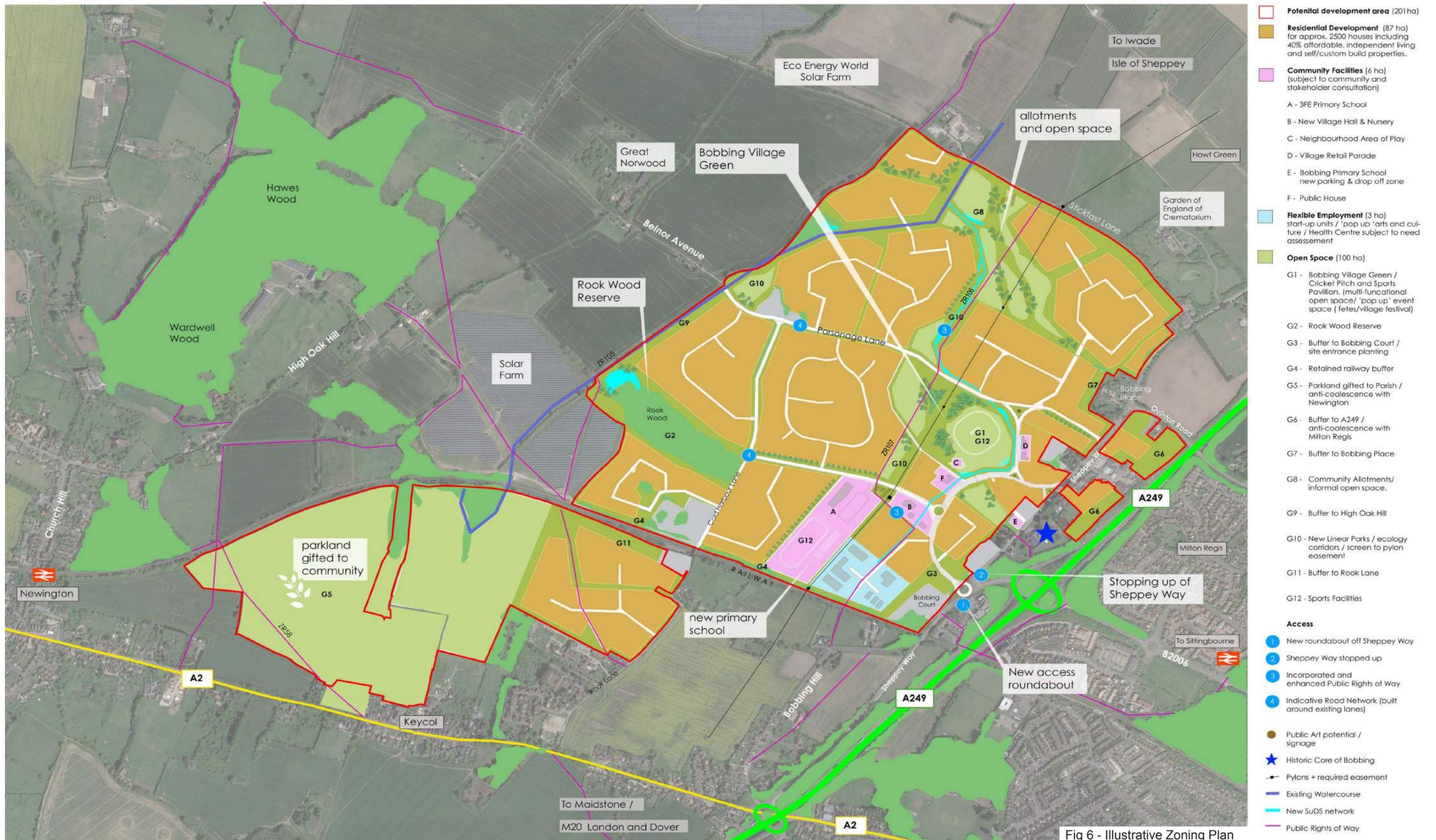


Fig 6 - Illustrative Zoning Plan

**Residential Development**  
(87 ha)

- Approx. 2500 new homes.
- Self-build and custom build.
- Retirement Living.
- Up to 40% affordable.

**Open Space**  
(100 ha)

- Bobbing Village Green.
- Enhanced cricket pitch & pavillion.
- Linear parks.
- Community Gardens.
- Allotments.
- Rook Wood Reserve.
- New waterbodies.
- Indigenous planting.
- Public Art.
- Parkland.

**Community Facilities**  
(6 ha)

- New Primary School.
- Health Centre.
- Village Retail Parade.
- Public House.
- Village Hall and Nursery.
- School Parking.
- Sports Pitches.

**Flexible Commercial**  
(3 ha)

- Varied employment opportunities.
- 'Pop up' arts and culture space.

**Highways**

- New roundabout junction
- Stopping up/ realignment of the Sheppey Way to remove congestion at peak times.
- Parking and turning facility for Bobbing Primary School.
- Fast track bus service between new development, Sittingbourne and Rainham.
- Upgraded footpaths and level crossing points.
- New landscaped footpaths and cycle paths.

Further facilities may be introduced following future consultation with the local community, Parish Council and Swale Borough Council.

# 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

## 4.1 About the Scheme

### Q1. What is your proposal offering?

**1.1 Please provide a general description and details of the scheme and briefly explain the proposed type and number of homes, jobs, social infrastructure and other facilities being proposed. This includes commercial, retail, leisure and other land uses such as open space.**

Our client's proposal is for the delivery of a bespoke garden community located to the west of Bobbing, comprising approximately 2,500 new homes, a primary/secondary school (size to be confirmed), employment/commercial space, retail uses, community/leisure facilities and publicly accessible open space.

The detail of proposed land uses will be considered as the scheme progresses, and as the Council identifies their specific needs; however we are committed to demonstrating within any response that garden city principles would be adhered to.

A concept masterplan has been drawn up to indicate the proposed location of employment, retail and community uses and how they might relate with the existing road network and the residential development proposed. Given the embryonic nature of this proposal, these matters remain fluid and subject to further negotiations with relevant stakeholders.

We believe that a development of this scale will require the provision of a new primary school and have made contact with KCC Education to better understand the planned education provision for Bobbing and the demand for educational infrastructure that could arise from a further 2,500 new homes. We hope to actively influence their future commissioning plans through this dialogue.

The proposed garden community would also be supported by a range of retail facilities/services and social infrastructure. We have reviewed the neighbouring settlements of Sittingbourne, Milton Regis, Newington, Keycol and Iwade to inform what essential services and facilities the garden community should contain. Given the level of separation from these settlement, and in particular the lack of inter-connectivity brought about by the existing highway network, we believe that the settlement should include a local retail

parade which can accommodate a mix of retail and commercial uses such as shops; village hall; restaurants/ café/ takeaway etc and potentially a public house.

We are committed to providing leisure and community uses within this proposal to bring about a genuine sense of place, and public ownership/stewardship, however there is a strong desire on behalf of the promoters to work closely with the relevant stakeholders to ensure that this is meaningful, deliverable, and will be maintained in the long term. Local involvement, both at a Parish and Borough level will be key, and we will therefore seek direct input from those who can best influence, and thereafter manage any such provision.

**1.2 Please provide a proposed development trajectory, showing the start date of the development, and the per annum rates of delivery, broken down in 5 year periods and across the whole project lifespan, setting out any risks to delivering to the time line you have provided.**

*'The expectation of housing delivery by 2021/2022 might be suggested as optimistic and therefore the Council is keen to appreciate the realism of this objective. With J5 improvements not likely to be delivered until 2022 at the earliest and current transport limitations on the A249 already causing delays to existing committed sites, these, together with the planning lead in times involved, lead us to ask for a better understanding as to how you believe this timescale can be achieved and what support you may need to achieve them. Finally, can we also canvass your views as to the likely relationship of this site in terms of the wider housing market, not only in terms of the markets ability to deliver in this location, but also in relation to its capacity due to other sites that might be needed at other locations and, specifically, if a major new community were also to be pursued elsewhere in Swale e.g. Faversham or Sittingbourne areas?'*

The developers promoting this scheme have a good track record of delivering residential development in Swale and Kent. They confirm that they would be looking to commence at the earliest possible opportunity.

As with a number of other sites of this scale, we would anticipate that there would be multiple sales outlets across the site, and the

masterplan will be designed and phased to ensure that individual parcels can be brought forward independent of one another. Whilst other areas of Swale are more constrained by the highway network, we believe that there is the opportunity for some growth here without the necessity for all major infrastructure to be in place. Clearly this will be influenced by the pace of other developments coming forward, but close liaison with the Borough Council will ensure that appropriate 'trigger points' can be imposed.

It is acknowledged that the need for the completion of the Junction 5 improvements may present a constraint on how much development could be occupied at an early date. However these improvements are due to be completed by 2022 and there is no reason why development could not begin in 2021/22 for completion at the same time as these improvements.

Once development commences, it is considered that 50-100 new dwellings will be delivered during the first full year of construction. It is predicted that 100-150 dwellings would be achieved in the second year with an estimated delivery of 200 dwellings per annum until completion (1,000 homes every 5 years). With this in mind, the development would be completed by 2032.

The biggest risk to delivering as per the timeline above is delays to the junction 5 improvement, which could have implications for the start date. However, it should be noted that in contrast to other proposals, the upfront infrastructure requirements for a garden village in this location are not expected to be as great – for example, there is no need for a new motorway junction to be created – which means that a garden village here can be delivered at an earlier date.

The site's relationship with the wider housing market is difficult to forecast at this stage. However, the proposed housing and tenure mix proposed would pay full regard to the Council's Objectively Assessed Need for housing and therefore it is considered that any potential large scale strategic sites, both in isolation and in combination with others, should meet predicted market signals. We fully anticipate working with the LPA to ensure that all tenures requirements are met, as per the requirements of the 2018 NPPF.

# 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

**1.3 Please set out the social, financial and economic benefits of your proposal and demonstrate how you will ensure you will be able to fund all the infrastructure needed to serve your development and that the proposal is viable.**

*‘Garden Community principles generally promote 1 new job for each new household so as to both make the new community sustainable and limit the need for new residents to commute elsewhere for work. We note your inclusion of references to commercial/employment development and would like to understand the employment relationships here that you would wish to promote. Depending upon the scale and type of employment you would promote, given its scale, location and accessibility by road to neighbouring Councils, your proposal could raise issues relating to the sub regional demand and supply of jobs and labour. There is a risk that the new jobs, located close to the A2/A249/M2 could lead to unsustainable commuting by road between Swale and our neighbours. We would like you to consider whether you believe this to be a risk and, if so, how it would be mitigated. Examples might be by supporting measures that would not rely on increased car commuting’.*

In accordance with garden community principles, we consider that the proposal would deliver the expected 1 jobs per household. Having reviewed the Swale Employment Capacity and Employment Land Review documents, it is clear that the key employment/growth sectors are as follows :

- General advanced manufacturing and engineering;
- Distribution;
- Agriculture/forestry/woodland;
- Financial/business services;
- Environmental technologies;
- Healthcare/biotechnology;
- ICT, media, telecommunications;
- Construction; and
- Retail/leisure/cultural activities, tourism, hotels, catering and boat repair.

With the above in mind, it is considered that branching out into higher value manufacturing and environmental sectors would build on the area’s current strengths and diversify the local economy to attract a talented (and potentially younger) work force.

Given that current government policy is moving towards the adoption of renewable energies and the general growth in environmental sectors, we think that commercial employment focussed on these areas represents a logical progression from the current employment sectors.

Based on the potential uses presented by the illustrative masterplan, estimated employment generation can be estimated as follows:

Building type	Use Class	No. of Jobs
2 FE Primary School	D1	35
Replacement Village Hall	D1	N/A
Public House	A3/A4	34
B1 x 4 (948 x 4)	B1	222
B1 x 2 (711 x 2)	B1	83
B1 x 2 (180 x 2)	B1	21
Health Centre	D1	15
Village Retail	A1	98
Nursery	D1	18
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>526</b>

Fig 7-  
Employment  
Generation

**Q2. Do you foresee that your proposal would include any ‘abnormal’ costs that could result in you being unable to meet the Council’s full garden settlement and infrastructure expectations for the proposals?**

The scale of upfront funding required for new infrastructure, long before it generates income, makes financing new Garden Cities challenging for developers. Costs and viability issues are key considerations from the outset as new garden towns require the full range of physical and community infrastructure to be provided on a phased basis to meet the needs of the community as it grows. Whilst much of this infrastructure can be funded from the uplift in land values from agricultural to residential development, the very high cost of strategic infrastructure inevitably places pressures on cash flow.

The success of any garden city will depend largely on its ability to connect to wider regional, national and international economic geographies. Unlocking the site for the building of new homes will

therefore require a number of phased transport infrastructure upgrades such as; upgrades to road junctions, subsidisation of new public transport links (i.e. bus routes), train lines and new relief roads. The need for new or improved highway infrastructure may be unclear because of the initial lack of understanding over the need for the works being triggered by the development. Similar issues arise in relation to requirements for new or reinforced utility infrastructure. The costs and lead times relating to strategic infrastructure items can significantly affect the viability of a garden city scheme.

The appraisal undertaken which informs this document has incorporated a number of infrastructure costs (i.e. roads, footpaths, utilities, etc.) based on the existing schedule of accommodation and experience of similar schemes across the County, we do however reserve the right to update this upon receipt of an updated plan and cost plan. Ultimately, the provision of new infrastructure will be financed through the provision of new residential development. We otherwise do not foresee any additional abnormal costs given that the majority of the land serves as agricultural land.

*‘We note the commitments to, in effect, meeting the infrastructure needs arising from the development without impacts on the public purse and the commitment toward 40-45% affordable housing levels. We would like to appreciate how this can be achieved and would request that you consider submission of high level viability information using an industry recognised appraisal tool that additionally indicates cash flows with assumptions and methodology undertaken in accordance with emerging national planning practice’.*

We have produced an appraisal of the economic viability of the development, utilising a cash-flow model. We have used Argus Developer, which is a commercially available development appraisal package in widespread use throughout the industry to appraisal development proposals.

The inputs and results of the appraisal are commercially sensitive and can be provided to Swale Borough Council on a confidential basis should they request it.

Please note that the figures provided at this stage are based on the schedule of accommodation provided to us and we reserve the right to update these figures upon receipt of an updated scheme.

These figures are headline figures only:

Gross Development Value (GDV) of circa £181,000,000

Build Costs of circa £74,500,000

Other Costs circa £38,975,146

Profit target of 15% IRR

**Q3. Would you expect the Council, or other stakeholders, to have a direct role in delivering the proposal? It would help us to understand how the Council can work positively to deliver the proposal and whether you would be prepared to work in partnership with the Council and others.**

The site promoters would be responsible for the delivery of the proposed development, however as this would be a key strategic site in the borough to deliver long-term development, we would welcome and encourage the Council's feedback and involvement as well as input from other interested stakeholders throughout the process.

We believe that for any development that embraces 'garden city' principles to be successful, local knowledge and stewardship is key to successful delivery. Whilst there will be no financial reliance upon the Parish or Borough Council, the input from these (and other stakeholders) will form an integral part of developing, and evolving this plan.

We would seek to work alongside the Borough Council with the ambition to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which would set the deliverable, yet appropriate parameters, and design codes for a development within this location.

We would therefore be willing to enter into an appropriate Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Borough to ensure that your officers are able to attend workshops, consultation events, and to guide and shape the proposals as they move towards adoption.

**Q4. What delivery vehicle/ governance/ partnership arrangements do you envisage using?**

*'The delivery vehicle: You will of course be aware of the wide range of potential delivery vehicles that may be appropriate for new garden communities (see <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guide-2-finance-and-delivery>). These can in turn all influence such matters as governance, speed of delivery, land value capture and stewardship. The Council would therefore be keen to hear about the model(s) of delivery most appropriate for this location and whether you believe there to be any role for the Council in this regard i.e. land assembly. Please note that we will be monitoring emerging Government ambitions for 'Locally Accountable Development Corporations' and the likelihood of a 'round two' Government Prospectus process for supporting the next generation of new settlements. This is expected in the autumn and the Council will be considering whether it will be participating'.*

In terms of the delivery vehicle, we have paid full regard to the TCPA guidance and the 3 key principles for success (explained below),

1. There is always an opportunity for land value capture:
2. The delivery body will de-risk the process for investors and stakeholders:
3. Successful places require a long-term stewardship model: As with the majority of garden cities, the local delivery vehicle is expected to be based on the 'Master Developer Role', where the developer manages the overall development process. The responsibilities would include but not be limited to:
  - Ensuring that the necessary finance is available for all the advance roads, utilities, schools and other infrastructure;
  - Ensuring that the necessary planning consents are available in a timely manner;
  - Procuring the design and construction of advance infrastructure; and
  - Disposing of individual sites for housing, employment, retailing, leisure, etc.

At this time we consider that Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd would assume the role of master developer for the proposal, given that he controls the land in question.

Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd would be supported by a team of Planning, Transport, Urban Design, Environment and Infrastructure specialists employed DHA who would oversee the proposal through the planning process. A team of engineers and contractors would subsequently be employed to oversee construction.

Crabtree and Crabtree Ltd has experience in managing a number of mixed use schemes in Kent and therefore the project team is well suited to delivery a garden community of the proposed scale. Furthermore, DHA have themselves acted for the Council on a number of applications and appeals and have a good relationship with both officers and members, which we believe will bring about fruitful negotiations throughout the life of this proposal - through to completion.

**Q5. What specific advice do you require and what technical research will you undertake should the bid be successful?**

Clearly a development of this size and complexity would need to be supported by a number of technical reports and studies providing a robust evidence base. In addition, there will be a requirement to engage with local stakeholders to fully understand the history and character of Bobbing itself, and the wider area.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be required, which we have experience in producing for similar schemes. It is considered that additional research and supporting studies/reports will be needed with respect to the following:

- Viability
- Highways & Transportation
- Ecology & Biodiversity
- Landscape & Visual Impact
- Flooding & drainage
- Open space requirements
- Housing Need
- Employment needs
- Community needs
- Educational needs
- Noise and Energy

We fully understand the necessity to engage with public bodies such as Highways England to fully understand what level of development can take place before mitigation needs to be in place. We believe that the most successful negotiations with such bodies also involves LPAs, which can bring about genuine collaborative working, and thereafter results. We would therefore like to ensure that the LPA is involved in any such discussions, and would be relying on the Council's evidence base to link in with any such mitigation. As such, we would welcome any advice and input from the Council regarding the supporting technical research that would be needed.

# 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

## 4.2 About environment constraints & opportunities

### Q6 What opportunities can you offer for significant net gains or improvements to environmental, landscape, biodiversity, heritage, sustainability?

The high-level masterplan promotes the inclusion of up to 100 hectares of open space (which amounts to approximately 50% of the total site area). We believe that the development of the site would have the potential to positively enhance the character of the site and the wider area. This is on the basis that it would:

- Allow for the retention and improved management of the site's existing hedgerow, woodland and lake resource for wildlife and amenity uses,
- Introduce and create new Green Infrastructure, specifically multi-use open space in the corridor formed by the existing public rights of way across the site,
- See the implementation of new hedgerows and woodland to provide structure, targeted enclosure and screening and to link with existing retained hedgerows and woodlands; particularly in the more open eastern part of the site,
- Create a green buffer to any new development and to the edge of the existing settlement of Bobbing,
- Include local and vernacular materials in any proposed development to establish and reinforce a sense of place.
- Provide new watercourses which has the potential to both quantitatively and qualitatively enhance the existing biodiversity within the site.

### Q7 Please explain any environmental constraints on the land being proposed or in close proximity, and how you intend to mitigate or manage these effectively? This should include landscape, ecological, or heritage designations and assets, flood risk, agricultural land, air, noise, mineral safeguarding areas, gas pipelines, pylons, etc.

#### Environmental Constraints

There are no environmental considerations applicable to the site that would present an overriding constraint to the development of the site. It is considered that all environmental constraints and consequential effects of the development can be avoided or mitigated.

#### European and Nationally Designated Sites

The site lies approximately 2.2km south of the Swale Estuary SPA, SSI and Ramsar site and 2km from the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site.

Residential development can result in deleterious effects on sensitive sites through increased recreational pressure (principally dog walking) with consequential disturbance related effects on protected bird species and habitat change through nitrogen deposition resulting from traffic emission where roads bisect or lie in proximity to sensitive habitats.

The size of the site presents an opportunity to provide alternative natural green space to create an authentic countryside experience for dog walking and recreation that would help mitigate the frequency and number of residents visiting the protected sites. This will be managed and secured in perpetuity through a s106 agreement. Moreover, visitors travelling by car will typically be drawn to Milton Creek Park or Elmley National Nature Reserve by virtue of easy access and parking. Visitor routes and paths are actively managed in these localities to avoid the more sensitive areas of the protected site.

In addition residential development of the site will be required to make appropriate financial contributions to the North Kent Marshes Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy which provides a co-ordinated response to dog walking, wardening and public engagement to help manage the impact.

The provision of suitable green spaces and financial contributions to SAMMS are common practice for residential development in proximity to European sites and are readily accepted as appropriate mitigation by Natural England.

The site lies adjacent to the A249 which bisects the European sites providing access to the Isle of Sheppey. Nitrogen deposition from road traffic is generally only significant within 200m of the source. The habitats either side of the A249 where it routes through the designated sites comprise predominantly saltmarsh. This habitat is closely linked to coastal and fluvial sources of water and are generally nitrogen rich and will receive far more nitrogen through inundation from marine and freshwater than through deposition from atmosphere, rendering atmospheric inputs much less relevant than for other situations. In addition, the value of grazing marsh to SPA birds is dictated less by its detailed botanical composition (which is the aspect most likely to be affected by changes in atmospheric nitrogen deposition) than by its regular seasonal inundation and its overall habitat structure. The proposed development in combination with other local development is not therefore likely to result in adverse effects on the integrity of the designated sites.

#### Heritage Designations and Assets

As previously noted, Bobbing comprises a number of listed properties including the Grade I listed church. With the exception of Bobbing Court, these are sited in a concentrated cluster along Sheppey Way, within the established village boundary of Bobbing.

Early proposals indicate the opening up of Sheppey Way through the introduction of a central village green, creating a new vista through the scheme to the church with the intention of retaining the current level of openness. The intention here is to celebrate these existing heritage assets and incorporate them into an improved community hub. The provision of a parkland south of the railway and north of Keycol will protect this existing area of open space from development. Views afforded of Newington Church from this area of higher ground will remain for the continued enjoyment of existing residents.

## Landscape Character

Within the Swale Urban-Extension-Landscape-Capacity-Study-June-2010 the area to the west of Sheppey Way is mentioned in page 53 where it states:

“West of Sheppey Way, where the landscape has a more rural feel, some housing could potentially be accommodated as an extension of linear housing along Bobbing Hill. However, a significant block of employment land would be out of keeping. Housing would be most appropriate if it was designed at the same scale and density as existing nearby housing.”

In the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal adopted as SPD 2011, the site is located within the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area. The conclusion of the document is that the landscape of the character area including the site is in a ‘poor’ condition. The document explains the condition of the landscape outlining the loss of internal features such as internal field boundaries and the presence of fly-tipping across the area.

The guidelines for the Iwade Arable Farmlands landscape character area is to ‘restore and create... the rural environment whilst creating a landscape structure that will improve the area’s strength of character’.

Development of the site would represent an encroachment into open countryside. Such development would also result in an inevitable change to the existing site character by introducing further built form and infrastructure to replace the current agricultural uses in those parts of the site subject to development. The pattern of the landscape of the site would be altered but the effect of any development on the site would have a limited adverse effect on the character of the wider landscape.

The primary effect that development of the site would have on the character of the surrounding landscape would be through the effects on views as a visual component of landscape character.

The scale and size of the site is such that it would be possible to devise an appropriate and sensitively designed development platform, incorporating a detailed landscape strategy, to minimise

the harm to the countryside of any particular development. The retention and integration where possible of the key landscape elements and features of the site i.e. hedgerows, enclosed highways (lanes), and woodland will help to limit potential adverse effects of a potential development on the landscape character of the site and of the wider area.

## Visual Impact

A broad visual assessment of the site has been undertaken and a series of representative views identified. A more detailed visual assessment will be prepared alongside a fixed parameter plan/layout for any proposals on the site.

Residential visual receptors i.e. people occupying existing residential properties, which might experience a change to their visual amenity as a consequence of development on the site are relatively limited. The greatest potential for intervisibility between development on the site, would be from those existing residential properties surrounded by the site or closest to the site boundary.

To the north, there are few residential properties within the landscape that are in or close proximity to the site. For those properties in the hamlet of Little Norwood, the layering effect of existing vegetation in the landscape between the properties and the site boundary would greatly restrict views of any potential development on the southern part of the site. From Cambray Cottages, the layering effect of intervening vegetation and the low lying topography would act to restrict views of potential development within the site to the south.

To the east, those properties within Bobbing to the west of Sheppey Way are typically on slightly raised ground and have the potential for expansive views across. Views into the site, and of any potential development from properties in Bobbing, to the east of Sheppey Way, are typically restricted by a combination of existing built form and vegetation in the intervening landscape between the observer and the site boundary.

To the south, the Medway to Sittingbourne railway forms a well vegetated transport corridor. Though in cutting, the railway’s embankments are densely covered in trees and shrubs. This vegetation acts to screen and filter many views into the site when

looking from the south and would act to screen and filter views of any potential development on the site. Similarly, roadside vegetation along Cold Harbour Lane screens views towards the site from many locations. Further south, the rising topography greatly restricts views from lots of residential properties in Keycol and Key Street of and into the site.

To the west of the site, settlement is sparse and residential properties are few. Typically, the existing residential properties are set within their own well vegetated plots. The combination of curtilage vegetation and vegetation within the intervening landscape between the observer and the site boundary restrict views of the site.

Where the site is observable, it is only in part so that any potential development of the site would be seen as discrete elements rather than in its entirety.

The primary visual receptors of any potential development on the site would be users of the public right of way network and public highway network crossing the site. Parsonage Lane as it passes through the site is open with little or no roadside vegetation and development on the site, without suitable mitigation measures such as new tree and hedgerow planting, would be conspicuous. However, when looking south and east, residential properties are already evident on the skyline within Bobbing so that residential development on the site would not introduce any new elements into the landscape.

PRoWs ZR107 and ZR106 are only partially enclosed by vegetation and certain sections are open. In the more open sections, though a number of visual detractors are prominent in the form of overhead transmission lines and/or workshop/commercial premises, potential development on the site would be conspicuous without suitable mitigation measures such as new tree and hedgerow planting. Along other stretches of highway and public rights of way, the routes tend to follow hedgerows which provide both physical and visual enclosure to the landscape. Where gaps in the hedgerows occur then the views afforded are typically expansive ones.

In summary, although the site is an extensive one the areas from within the surrounding landscape in which there are views of and into the site are limited.



The extension of Iwade, west of the A249, visible from the site's northern boundary.

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Views of any potential development of the site would also be limited. To the north, the level topography in combination with existing vegetation in the form of field boundaries act to restrict views from much of the wider landscape. To the east of Bobbing, existing built form and infrastructure together with the vegetation associated with the A249 would restrict views of any potential development on the site. To the south, the London to Dover/Ramsgate railway provides a well vegetated screen to views of any potential development of the site from the south. To the west, the rising ground becomes increasingly well vegetated and forms a strong visual enclosure to possible observers of any development on the site from further west.

Any development of the site would not lead to a visual (or physical) coalescence with any neighbouring villages or towns.

### Landscape and Visual Impact Summary

The site at land west of the Sheppey Way is an extensive one. It is primarily rural in nature being composed of mainly large arable agricultural fields together with small areas of woodland and some pastoral land. The landscape of the site is not unique or particularly distinctive. Large scale arable fields are ubiquitous in the wider landscape and woodland becomes more widespread to the west of the site. The site contains several visual detractors in the form of high voltage overhead electricity transmission cables and the landscape of the site is degraded by wide spread fly tipping and dumping of litter. A couple of modern barn-like workshop/commercial units are present on the site that reduces the rural feel of the site and the western settlement edge of Bobbing has an urbanising influence on the eastern part of the site. The site is not covered by nor does it contain any statutory or non-statutory landscape protection designations.

There is a variable amount of intervisibility with the site and the wider landscape. To the north, the level topography in combination with existing vegetation in the form of field boundaries act to restrict views from much of the wider landscape. To the east, there are more expansive views across the site from certain properties and parts of Bobbing. Further east, existing built form and infrastructure together with the vegetation associated with the A228 would restrict views of any potential development on the site. To the south, the London to Dover/Ramsgate railway provides a well vegetated screen to views of any potential

development of the site from the south. To the west, the rising ground becomes increasingly well vegetated and forms a strong visual enclosure to possible observers of any development on the site from further west. Any development of the site would not lead to a visual (or physical) coalescence with any neighbouring villages or towns.

The eastern part of the site, east of Cold Harbour Lane and Parsonage Lane is generally absent of vegetation. The exception are several hedgerows of differing quality and condition. These hedgerows are a feature of the site and their retention help reduce the effect of any potential development on the visual amenity of users of the public right of ways that pass through the site. Other landscape elements and features that characterise the site and influence the wider area around include the topography, woodlands and ponds.

The relatively level topography of the site would not conflict with development on the site. Large scale cut and fill is not anticipated. Though there would be localised and irreversible changes to levels, the general downward south-east to north-west slope of the site would, it is considered, prevail with development of the site.

Rook Wood and the other smaller areas of woodland on the site, are important features in providing enclosure and contributing to the visual amenity of the wider area. Their retention and integration into any potential development on the site would be desirable, as would the retention of the associated small lakes.

There would be an inevitable change to the character of the site, with potential development in place. Those areas developed for built form, infrastructure and amenity space would lead to the removal of the existing agricultural land use.

Development on the site would also represent an inevitable encroachment into the countryside and a westward extension of both Bobbing and the greater urban area of Sittingbourne. The linear form of Bobbing stretching along Sheppey Way would be altered to a more nucleated form. There would be no physical coalescence between Bobbing and any villages or larger settlements to the north, south or west.

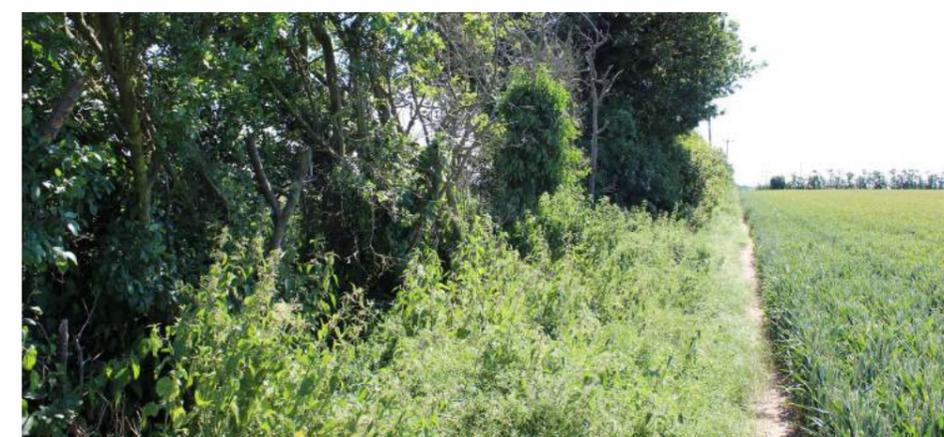
The existing physical and visual relationship with Bobbing and Sittingbourne, to the east, would remain substantially unchanged with this sensitive development of the site.

Initial concept design and baseline work associated with the promotion of the land for development will need to be respectful of and be sympathetic to the site's and surrounding landscape current uses. Consideration will need to be given to building heights, spatial densities and retention of existing landscape elements and features, as well as use.

Use of local vernacular within residential development will act to enable a higher quality development to be created.

The site is, however, of such a sufficient scale to enable mitigation measures to be introduced as an integral component of any potential development. Careful siting of any potential development would enable many of the key characteristic landscape elements and features of the site i.e. woodlands, hedgerows and ponds to be retained within newly created areas of publicly accessible Green Infrastructure. The retention where possible of such landscape features would, together with new tree and shrub planting, help mitigate the visual effects of any potential new development and provide the opportunity to reinforce the existing landscape resource on the site. Such measures would be entirely consistent with the aspirations for the landscape character area containing the site which seeks to restore and enhance the current landscape.

A strengthened landscape resource would act to provide a setting for any potential development and for the existing residential development including several listed buildings and conservation areas already present. Overall, it is considered that a landscape-led and appropriately designed and sustainable development could be accommodated on the site.



## Noise

The noise environment of the site as existing is dominated by road traffic noise from the nearby A249 and intermittent passing trains (slowing down on approach to Sittingbourne) from the railway line that runs through the site.

Development of sites in proximity to road noise and railway lines is a common occurrence and is not typically a barrier to residential development subject to appropriate mitigation.

- The use of standard acoustic fencing and/or bunds and standard glazing and acoustic treatment to properties where required.
- The careful orientation and layout of a site can also aid in creating a suitable noise environment.

It is considered that subject to standard mitigation measures the noise environment on the site will obtain relevant noise criteria set out in planning guidance including the World Health Organisation.

## Pylons

Pylons dissect the site running north to south and will require an easement to retain access. In developing the masterplan further, careful consideration will need to be given to break up the alignment of the easement to ensure it does not dominate the space.

Full reference will be made to national design guidance provided by National Grid to ensure safety guidelines are adhered to in terms of siting certain uses next to the pylons and in terms of successfully integrating and screening the pylons within the development.

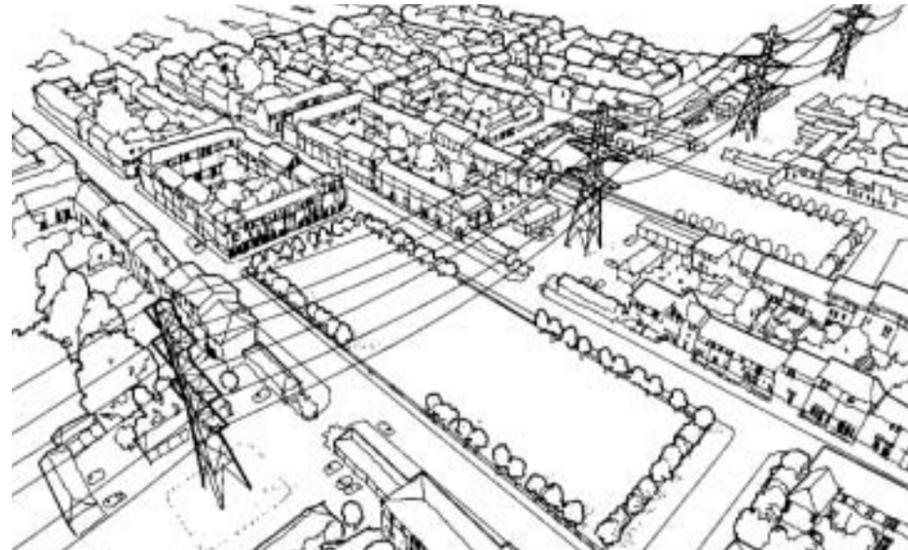


Fig 8 above - Extract taken from Page 41 National Grid design guidance 'A sense of Place'. Below - pylons running north-south through the site.





THIS CHURCH IS OPEN

Parking here could endanger a child's life

Parking here could endanger a child's life

# 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

## 4.3 About delivering the design principles

### Q8. How will your proposal positively embrace local issues, standards and design principles identified in this prospectus and incorporate the wider 'garden settlement' design principles?

In developing the masterplan, full regard will be given to the local design policies set out in the Bearing Fruits Local Plan, design requirements of neighbouring allocations to ensure a consistent approach, and the overarching design objectives set out in both the Council's prospectus and national guidance in the form the TCPA Garden City Design Principles and National Planning Policy Framework.

### TCPA Garden City Design Principles

#### 1. Ease of Movement and Connectivity

Whilst this site would be located 'off-set' from the main highway network, it is proposed that there will be a number of community facilities within which will serve existing and future residents. As such it is imperative that the site is well connected to the existing pedestrian and vehicle network, and that the masterplan provides a framework that ensures future development is legible, allowing for an ease of movement throughout.

This would be achieved through a suitable road hierarchy, the design and position of key buildings and high quality open space allowing clear vistas across the development.

#### 2. Walkable Neighbourhoods

A series of landscaped routes (routes that do not currently exist) will be introduced creating a permeable layout. Existing Public Rights of Way are to be retained and incorporated and have influenced the siting of certain uses, for example, the new primary school. All new community facilities are to be located centrally to promote walking where possible. Existing level crossings will be improved in consultation with Network Rail.

#### 3. Diversity of housing and employment opportunities

In accordance with paragraph 61 of the NPPF (2018) this development will seek to deliver a suitable and diverse mix of housing which will respond to the Council's housing need. As this proposal develops, we will look to direct development to appropriate parts of the site to meet specific tenure requirements, both locally and within the borough. In response to government initiatives, housing will include self build-custom properties, properties for independent living and up to 40% affordable.

#### 4. Designing for art and culture

The role of art and culture in creating a vibrant community is integral to the success of creating a sense of place, and we are fully committed to promoting a long-term artistic and cultural strategy to ensure delivery on this key aspect.

The historic features of Bobbing, and the wider historical (industrial and agricultural) context of the borough provide a foundation that could influence the form of public art used here. The illustrative masterplan provides flexibility through open space to ensure that high quality installations can be provided throughout, namely around the village green to assist in linking the old with the new; we fully intend to create a development that is both sensitive to the established local character of Bobbing and Swale whilst creating a new distinctive neighbourhood.

#### 5. Healthy and active communities

The proposed green infrastructure network is intended to provide a stimulating and therapeutic environment as one moves through the scheme. The proposed linear park will create a green and blue vista through the scheme where new planting, cycle paths, pedestrian routes and water will come together. The provision of a new school will bring about state-of-the-art sports facilities suitable for dual-use/community-use after hours and potentially at weekends. The suggested relocation of the existing cricket pitch to a more centralised, overlooked area will create the heart of the scheme, and would replicate the Kentish tradition of village greens forming a social role in village life.

#### 6. Multi-functional green infrastructure

In accordance with the landscape-led approach, 50% of the proposed site area is to be allocated to publicly accessible open space. A number of open space typologies are promoted here and are linked, creating a permeable and varied network of spaces to suit all needs. At present the masterplan currently promotes the following:

- Bobbing Village Green (cricket pitch, festivals, fetes and markets)
- Linear Park (water courses, new planting, pedestrian routes and cycle paths)
- Sports Pitches (provided as part of a new education facility promoting dual community use)
- Rook Wood Reserve (limited access to promote ecology)
- Community Allotments and natural green space
- Neighbourhood Areas of Play
- Informal Open Spaces
- Enhanced Ecological Corridors alongside key pedestrian routes
- Boulevard tree planting on primary vehicle routes

#### 7. Human Scale

As stated by TCPA guidance, 'it is a common misconception that the garden city approach means low density living...there is no specified density in the model, and a range of densities would be expected'.

With a residential area of 87 hectare at an average density of 35 dph the scheme would provide approximately 3,100 houses. Once refined and expanded upon to reflect the range of density bands expected (20 - 50 dph) whilst allowing for necessary infrastructure, it is anticipated that the residential offer would result in some 2,500 houses though this will continue to be refined through further assessment.

In accordance with guidance, it is envisaged, in response to the local context, that the majority of housing would comprise 2/3 storey properties though there is an opportunity for higher densities and apartments around the community hub. Materials and detailing would reflect the unique materials and architectural vernacular of the locality.

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## 8. Designing for climate resilience

Garden Cities are to be zero-carbon and energy positive. In accordance with these aspirations, buildings on site will maximise opportunities for energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies. Developers will incorporate sustainable construction technologies. New planting will comprise indigenous species to reflect local landscape character.

The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore assessed as having less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding.

### Key Design Principles set out in the New Garden Communities Prospectus April 2018

The embryonic masterplan has been assessed against the key design principles set out in the prospectus. These state that development will need to:

- *Be located in an appropriate, sustainable location and deliver between 2,500 to 10,000 dwellings for the long-term;*
- *Provide major mixed-use sustainable development to meet the needs of a self supporting community, which can grow into valued places. Catering for a diversity of commercial and housing provision, including a diverse mix of types and tenures, self-build and affordable at 40%;*
- *Meet high standards of design including Building for Life 12, BREEAM, the BRE's Home Quality Mark, the Government's optional technical standards for housing (on water, accessibility and wheelchair housing and internal space) and Building with Nature certified core standards;*
- *Be delivered through a partnership approach and managed through a long-term community controlled stewardship structure to provide a self-sustaining lasting legacy;*
- *Proactively engage the existing and new community, in positively planning for the future;*
- *Ensure that any land value capture is sufficient to provide significant benefits for existing and future residents over*

*and above what is required, and fund its full and extensive infrastructure requirements;*

- *Be masterplanned, designed and 'plan led' to the highest standards creating an outstanding community, which positively reflects and enhances the local context and character;*
- *Deliver a safe, secure, vibrant, inclusive, healthy and locally distinctive self-contained community, based on bringing the unique Swale countryside into its 'heart';*
- *Respond to heritage and environmental assets, achieving net gains in biodiversity and incorporating the very best landscape and urban design;*
- *Make a positive contribution to the existing transport situation, and provide a sustainable, integrated and robust active transport network incorporating the necessary infrastructure improvements and latest technology;*
- *Deliver and maintain extensive landscaping and multifunctional green infrastructure over a significant percentage of the land area through a comprehensive network of open spaces, habitats and green corridors. Providing walking/cycling provision so as to achieve excellent connectivity and access to the full range of facilities;*
- *Provide a sustainable place which integrates imaginative energy and waste solutions, recognises the need to maximise efficiency, embraces technological solutions, minimises pollution and delivers zero carbon development; and.*
- *Start delivering new homes as soon as possible, ideally by 2026, and reach an annual rate of at least 150-250 dwellings per year, per community, using innovative approaches to increase delivery throughout the rest of the new plan period and beyond.*

### Q8.1 Please include how your proposal responds directly to the local landscape context and reflects the individuality of the location?

The Council has sought to allow significant growth over the past 20 years to the west of Sittingbourne, acknowledging the lack of landscape constraints within this part of the borough. That said, great care has been given to ensure that existing small settlements retain their individuality, and form without being subsumed into larger developments. The expansion of Milton Regis has been designed to ensure that the historic core was retained, and we foresee that any development here will respond similarly.

### Role of the Settlement Gap and Anti-coalescence

Current policy DM25 states that ILCG's are allocated to retain the individual character and setting of settlements, which includes separation between Sittingbourne and the satellite villages of Bapchild, Rodmersham Green, Tunstall Borden, Chestnut Street, Bobbing and Iwade. Policy DM25 states that unless allocated for development by the Local Plan, planning permission will not be granted for development that would undermine one or more of the purposes of these gaps.

The pre-ambule to the main policy text states that the purposes of ILCG's are to:

- Maintain the separate identity of settlements by preventing their merging;
- Safeguard the open and undeveloped;
- Safeguard the open and undeveloped character of the areas;
- Prevent encroachment and piecemeal erosion by built development or changes to the rural open character; and
- Influence decisions on the longer-term development of settlements through the preparation and review of Local Plans.

The proposed garden city does not propose new development within the existing gap between Sittingbourne and Bobbing, with development proposed solely to the west of Bobbing. As such, the proposal does not conflict with the strategic purposes of the ILCG. It should be noted that a large mixed use allocation (ST4 MU1) is located to the east of the proposed garden village as an extension to the Sittingbourne urban area. The ILCG would be retained and

enhanced, with open space required adjacent to the A249. This allocation does, however, reinforce the importance of improvements the planned improvements to junction 5.

What's more, from a strategic perspective the location of the garden city would not encroach on any landscapes of high value, which are located further to the west north of Newington.

The Council's Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study concluded that this area had 'high' capacity to accommodate change.

## 8.2 How you intend to meaningfully involve the local communities, and both existing and new residents from the beginning and throughout the life span of the project?

Meaningful community participation is necessary to enable people to engage in the management of their new community. As set out, we will engage fully with both the Parish and Borough Council throughout this process, and will undertake a series of workshops with all stakeholders at an early stage.

Traditionally, consultation events have been attended by specific demographics, but through our consultation we will seek to engage

with all - whether that be the young (school age), families, or the elderly.

The consultation strategy will be ongoing, and will ensure that the proposals evolve throughout the process, and provide stewardship for those who want to take an interest in shaping this project as it moves to fruition.

## 8.3 How you intend to incorporate community land ownership and long term stewardship of facilities and green infrastructure?

*'Delivering a successful new community requires a clear understanding of how assets generated by the development process will be managed in perpetuity. The Prospectus envisages new garden community proposals as demonstrating how such management will be undertaken on behalf of the community. This task goes beyond the management of green space to cover the broadest range of community assets, including the active and positive management of everything from arts provision to commercial estates and utility companies. Some models put local people at the heart of this process to generate increased local support, creativity, and entrepreneurialism. Therefore some outline details of the likely stewardship body would be important (see also <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/tcpa-pgs-guide-9-stewardship>)'.*

Integral to the Garden City model is the long-term stewardship of assets, i.e. ensuring that there are structures in place to guarantee the ongoing re-investment of value created through the development process, and to provide the financial means to maintain the wide range of community facilities that can be created through the development of a Garden City.

At this stage a model of stewardship for community assets and spaces has not been decided. However, we are aware of the models that have been deployed successfully elsewhere, such as Letchworth, which we will use as comparison to ensure the model adopted for Bobbing is suitable.



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## 4.4 Infrastructure

**Q9. How will you make a positive contribution to the life of existing and new residents through the provision, delivery and maintenance of social infrastructure?**

*'Please note additional provision is positively encouraged and we expect any development to provide, as a minimum, social infrastructure, such as schools, healthcare, and open space to meet the needs of the new community.'*

Whilst we fully understand the requirement to meet the need of future residents, we also fully understand that this proposal represents a real opportunity to enhance existing provision for current residents.

As illustrated by the illustrative masterplan, the proposals promote provision of the following:

**A new health centre** - flexible commercial space is presented by the masterplan, sited in close proximity to the A249 for promotion and ease of access. Within this area, there is flexibility to provide a new health centre should there be an identified need along with start up space for smaller business and pop up enterprises. We would actively engage with the CCG as to the need for additional health centre facilities in this location.

**A new primary school** - to serve the new community with Bobbing primary school retained (with improved parking and turning facilities) to serve its current catchment.

**A new community centre** - with community gardens - It is understood the existing Bobbing Village Hall has recently celebrated its 65th anniversary and therefore holds sentimental value for the local community. The masterplan highlights an opportunity to provide a new purpose built facility complete with nursery and community gardens in proximity to the new school. The relocation of the village hall and the subsequent freeing up of the existing plot would allow for much need parking/turning area for Bobbing Primary School and would create pedestrian links between the historic core of the village and the new development.

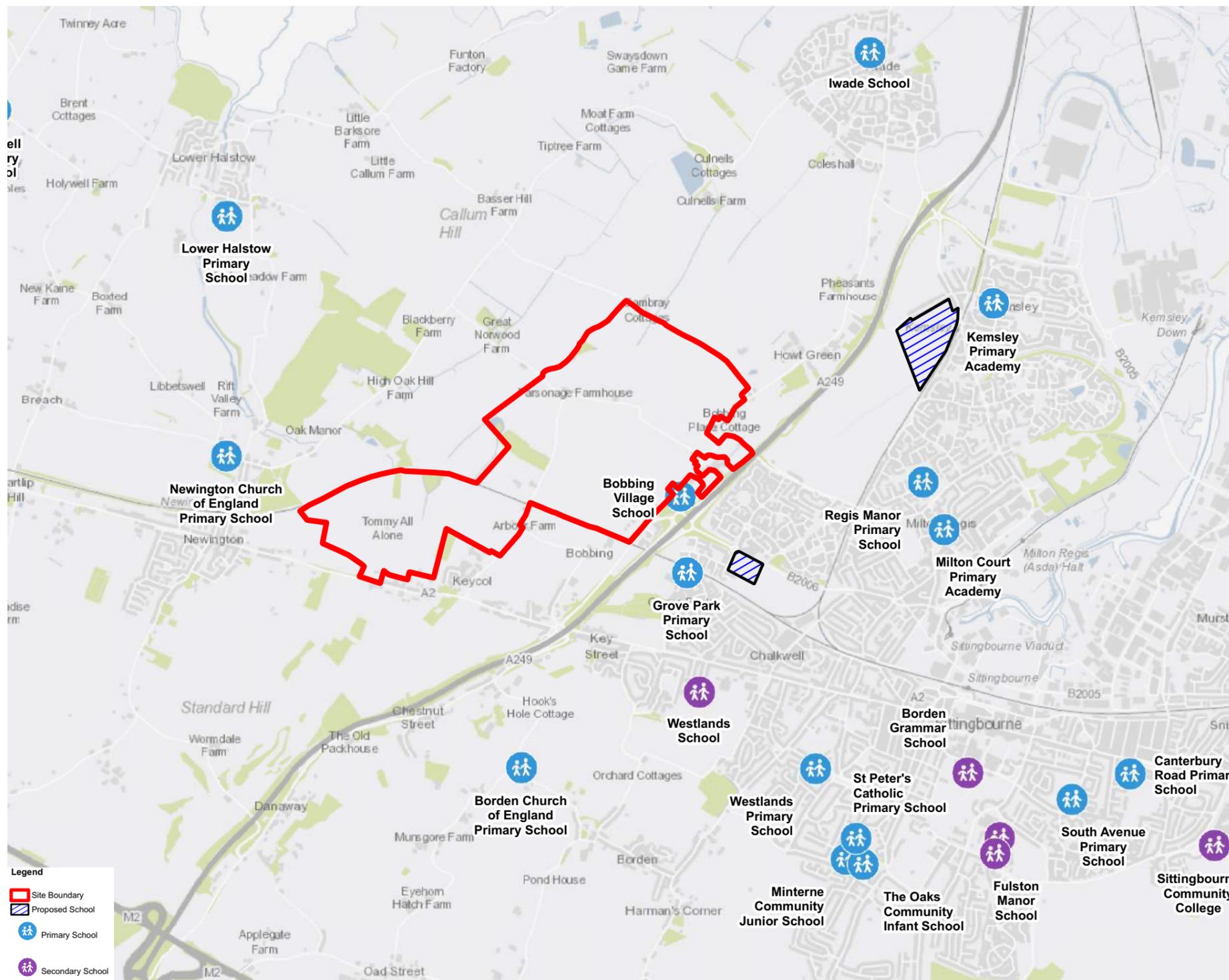


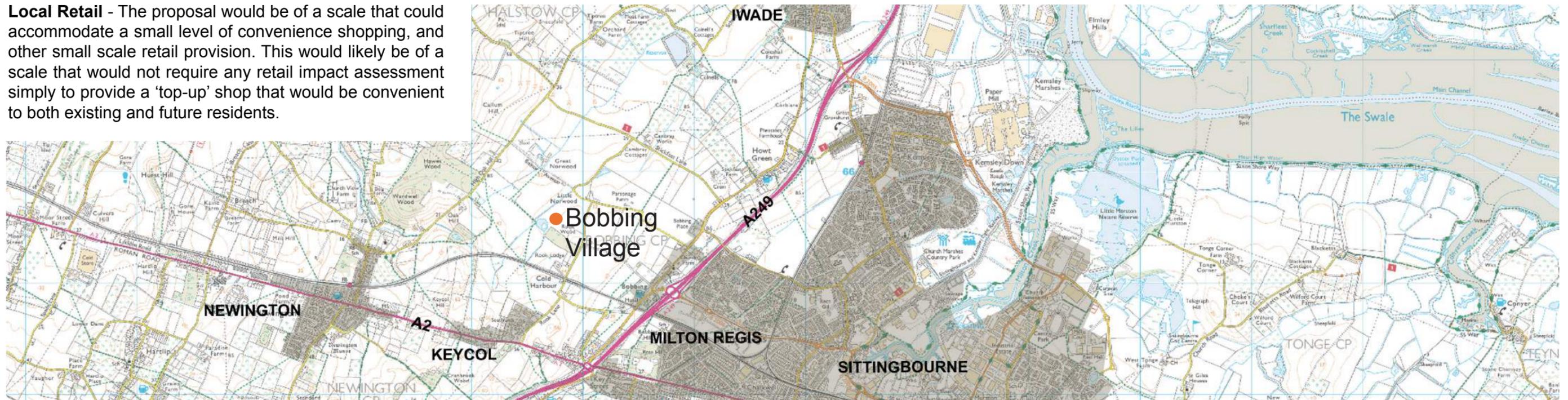
Fig 9 - Primary and Secondary schools in proximity



**Open Space** - Whilst the land is currently undeveloped, with a number of Public Rights of Way across it, this proposal would open up significant portions of the land for public use. These areas of open space would include equipped areas of play as well as semi natural open space for use by dog walkers etc. It is noted that there are no significant areas of public open space within the locality, and as such this would be a significant benefit.

Views of Newington Church from the area of open space to be gifted to the community as a protected park, providing permanent separation between Newington, Keycol and Bobbing Village.

**Local Retail** - The proposal would be of a scale that could accommodate a small level of convenience shopping, and other small scale retail provision. This would likely be of a scale that would not require any retail impact assessment simply to provide a 'top-up' shop that would be convenient to both existing and future residents.



**Newington**

- Village Hall
- Recreation Ground
- Post Office
- Co-operative food store
- Hand car wash
- Newington Railway Station & Bus Service
- Vehicle repairs centre
- Restaurants/cafes/newsagents
- Pharmacy
- Beauty salon
- Solicitors/accountancy
- Estate agents
- Allotments

**Keycol**

- Care home/ care facilities
- Bus services
- Business Centre

**Sittingbourne**

- Retail Park
- Supermarkets
- Train Station/ Bus Services
- Garden Centre
- High Street Shops
- Pubs/ Restaurants/ Cafes/ Newsagents
- Banks
- Post offices
- Library
- Leisure centres and gyms
- Theatre /Cinemas

- Doctors Surgery / Hospital
- Primary / Secondary / Adult Education Schools
- Professional Services e.g accountants etc.
- Light Industry.

**Iwade**

- Doctors / Health Centre / Pharmacy
- Bus Services
- Car Mechanic
- Hair Dressers
- Post Office
- Nursery
- Cafes / Pub
- School
- Allotments

Fig 10 - Neighbouring retail centres

## 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

**Q10. What positive transport and connectivity improvements are you proposing to address the infrastructure constraints that already exist? Please, as far as possible, set out all new transport and connectivity infrastructure you require and note that we expect you to go beyond 'net nil detriment'.**

*'Relationship to the strategic road network: Part of the Council's original early thinking in terms of the possibility of pursuing a new community was the perception that transport and air quality conditions in the A2 corridor and capacity issues on the A249 would present challenges to the current settlement strategy of the adopted Local Plan that might be difficult to address within the confines of the current road network. Your proposals would appear to be heavily dependent upon the ability of that network to handle the growth proposed and this assumption will need to be tested. Your views on the following would be welcomed:*

*a) Whether there is surplus capacity built into the improvements currently proposed for J5 of the M2 that can accommodate the level of growth proposed and, if not, what scope for improvements might there be.*

*b) Whether, taking into account other growth proposed, the improvements planned for the A249/A2 Key Street junction are sufficient to address the growth proposed and, if not, how the extra capacity could be made created in the available space.*

*c) How, taking into account other growth proposed, the existing Bobbing and Grovehurst A249 junctions would be affected and whether there is opportunity to improve them.*

*d) Your proposals for parallel road to the Sheppey Way and the Key Street junction are noted, but we would welcome some further detail as to how this would work in the context of the above questions and the land available to you.*

*Whilst these are matters for detail transport modelling to demonstrate, it would be helpful for any evidence that has been undertaken to be fed into the final submissions and for any details of the discussions that you may have had with the HA. We may also require a further discussion with you in due course about how best to model the transport impacts to the site in the light of the Council's own transport model'.*

The proposal site is located within close proximity to an existing number of facilities, including a primary school, public house, place of worship and local food store. However, the proposals will incorporate additional infrastructure which will minimise the need for residents to travel to access services. For example consideration will be given to the provision of school and health facilities as well as a small level of employment use.

In terms of public transport, it is considered that a new bus route could be developed to serve the site. This could potentially be provided in the form of a 'fast track' or 'little and often' style service similar to that currently operating in Ashford. This allows for high frequency services using smaller vehicles, allowing for a more reliable journey. This route would provide sustainable access to Sittingbourne, where a greater number of services and employment opportunities are located as well as a mainline railway station. Consideration will also be given to providing public transport opportunities to Rainham, where Thameslink services can be accessed. Consideration will continue to be given to the potential for a new railway station within proximity to the site.

With regard to pedestrians and cyclists, existing infrastructure will be upgraded where required and where possible. It is noted that a number of public rights of way (PRoWs) route within close proximity to the site. Of particular note, Public Footpath ZR107 provides an off-road link between Coldharbour Lane and Parsonage Lane, with Public Footpath ZR106 continuing this route to Stickfast Lane. These PRoWs will be maintained and enhanced through the proposals. Particular consideration will be given to the existing railway crossing points.

The focus of the proposals will be to encourage travel by sustainable and active modes, thereby reducing the reliance on the private car. However, it is acknowledged that inevitably some increase in vehicles will be experienced on the local network. Despite this, it is not considered that any significant changes will need to be made to the local highway network to accommodate the additional traffic associated with the proposals i.e. no new motorway junctions.

Engagement has been sought from both Kent County Council Highways and Transportation (KCC H&T) and Highways England (HE) in relation to possible improvements to the local highway network. However, at the time of writing, no detailed advice has been provided.



Above: A new roundabout is proposed for improved access to Bobbing Primary School  
Below: Sheppey Way during the school run



# 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

## Proposed Access Arrangements

The proposals include the realignment of the Sheppey Way where it currently routes through Bobbing village. As shown on the accompanying diagram, the Sheppey Way will be routed to the west, through the site, from its junction to the south, to a point approximately 75m southwest of Parsonage Lane.

A roundabout junction will be provided approximately 115m west of the A249 Bobbing junction, which will provide the primary access into the site. To the northeast, flows along the Sheppey Way will be prioritised, with a priority junction providing vehicular access towards Bobbing village centre, primarily serving the existing school. These proposals will allow the pedestrianisation of the southwestern end of the village. Parsonage Lane will also be realigned at its junction with the Sheppey Way to enable the above mentioned access arrangements to accord with the required standards. As part of this, the visibility at the junction will be enhanced. It is considered that through the above arrangements, vehicle speeds along Sheppey Way will be reduced, resulting in a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment.

## M2 Junction 5

It is noted that a proposed improvement scheme has been identified by HE, which replaces the existing roundabout junction with a new grade-separated interchange.

Whilst detailed capacity modelling of this scheme has yet to be completed, the key aims of the proposals include:

- To improve journey times;
- To make journeys safer; and
- To support economic growth – increasing capacity at the junction will support the future housing and employment growth in the area.

Given that one of the key aims of the scheme is to support future housing and employment growth in the area, it is considered that sufficient capacity will be provided to accommodate the proposals. The full impact of the proposals on this junction would be assessed through a Transport Assessment.



Fig 11 - Proposed access arrangements

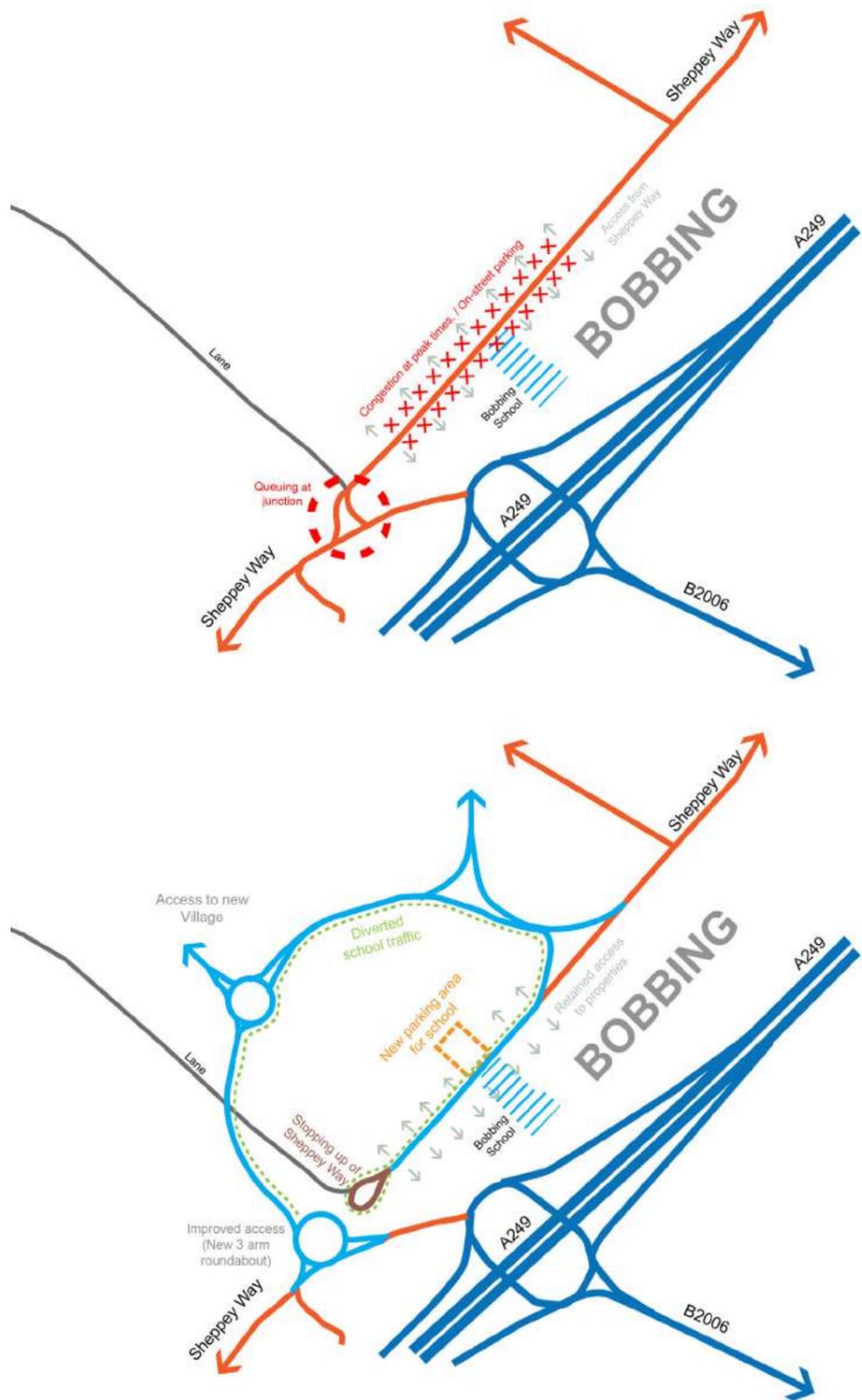


Fig 12 - Sheppey Way Existing and Proposed



Existing junction Sheppey Way to A249



Existing junction into village



Parsonage Lane as existing running west from Sheppey Way



Sheppey Way (on approach to Bobbing Primary School)



Public Right of Way ZR107 towards railway



Coldharbour Lane

### A249 / A2 Key Street Junction

Whilst improvements to this junction were outlined within the Bearing Fruits 2031: Implementation and Delivery Schedule December 2014, no specific scheme details were provided. Within a Technical Note submitted as part of the Local Plan EIP by C & A Consulting Engineers, it is noted that KCC have commissioned external consultants to assess the potential of a partial signalisation scheme at this junction. No further information has been provided by KCC H&T at this stage.

However, given the location of the site, it is considered that the majority of drivers accessing the A249 or Sittingbourne will do so at the Bobbing junction as opposed to the Key Street junction. Therefore the impact of the proposals on this junction is not anticipated to be significant. This impact will however be assessed through a Transport Assessment.

### A249 Bobbing Junction

KCC H&T have confirmed that there are currently proposals to improve the A249 Bobbing junction, however, no further details have been provided. Given the proximity of this junction to the proposal site, the applicant would be willing to work with the Local Highway Authority to identify a scheme which would provide additional capacity in this location.

### A249 Grovehurst Junction

As with Bobbing, KCC H&T have confirmed that there are proposals to improve this junction, however, no further details have been provided.

Given the proximity of the site to this junction, it is not considered that there will be significant negative impacts as a result of the proposals. However, detailed consideration will be given to this junction through a Transport Assessment.

*'Public Transport: The need for rapid public transport access through the site and to and from Sittingbourne could well be a crucial part of achieving a sustainable relationship between this new communities and its established neighbour. In giving this your further thought, could you perhaps additionally consider: a) Rail capacity issues (station facilities and parking) at Sittingbourne. b) The potential for considerable numbers of morning and evening rail commute and park journeys for Ebbsfleet high speed services and Thameslink services at Rainham.'*

*The additional mitigation for air quality impacts that could be achieved by encouraging model shift. In this respect, the AQMAs in Swale and Medway, together with our responsibilities for ensuring no additional impacts on the North Downs SAC will be added impetus for encouraging model shift.*

*Network Rail has noted to us the problems of embankment slippage on this section of the network. This might presumably impact upon overall master planning. If you have had any discussions with them on rail matters, details would be helpful'.*

As referred to previously, the proposals will incorporate enhanced public transport facilities, likely to be in the form of new bus routes between the site and the local area. One of the primary routes would be between the site and Sittingbourne Railway Station, which would enable residents to travel further afield without a reliance on the private car. Buses would need to run at a high frequency during morning and evening peak periods, for example every 10-20 minutes. Consideration could also be given to the use of 'fast track' or the installation of bus lanes, to ensure that travelling by bus is a reliable and cost-effective alternative to the car.

Given that Thameslink operate services from Rainham, it is also considered that this would be a popular destination for residents. Consideration will therefore be given to extending bus routes in this direction. This is particularly important given the currently limited parking provision at this station.

The promotion of travel by sustainable modes will minimise the impact that the development proposals will have on any existing air quality issues.

### Air Quality

The site lies 500m west of the settlement boundary of Sittingbourne and the residential settlement beyond. It is considered that this therefore presents significant opportunity for public transport to and from Sittingbourne and the surrounding secondary schools which will present a large proportion of daily trips. The provision of primary schooling as part of the development will also help to reduce external vehicle trips. Moreover, whilst employment is proposed as part of the development its proximity to residential development makes the prospect of local employment more viable.

- A range of mitigation measures are feasible to mitigate the effect of the development on air quality as set out below.
- EV recharging infrastructure within the development (wall mounted or free standing in-garage or off-street points).
- Car club provision or support to local car club/eV car club.
- Designation of parking spaces for low emission vehicles.
- Differential parking charges depending on vehicle emissions
- Support local walking and cycling initiatives.
- On-street EV recharging.
- Contribution to low emission vehicle refuelling infrastructure.
- Low emission bus and shuttle bus service provision.



## 4.0 Swale Borough Council Information Request

*'Planning for water: The scale and location of the proposals are likely to be of considerable interest to both the water company, to the Environment Agency and to KCC as the responsible authority for SuDs. Some indication of a commitment to a water cycle strategy would be helpful, together with evidence of discussions with these parties in terms of capacity and master planning would be helpful. A specific point would be the capacity of the Sittingbourne WWTW, as growth at this level would not currently be allowed for in the investment planning of Southern Water.'*

### Flood Risk

The National Planning Policy Framework provides guidance on assessing flood risk and seeks to guide development away from areas at risk of flooding from all sources. Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a number of flood zones based on the probability of flooding and provides guidance on the most appropriate form of development within each zone.

Reference has been made to the Environment Agency flood risk maps which show the entire site to be located within Flood 1. This zone comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1% ) in any year.

### Existing Drainage Regime and Surface Water Runoff

The site generally falls from the South to the North. Any surface water falling on the site would naturally infiltrate into ground with any residual flows following the natural topography draining to existing watercourses.

There are a number of ponds and watercourses within the site which eventually outfall under Stickfast Lane to the North which in turn connects into a network of watercourse discharging to Ridham Marshes and into the tidal part of the River Medway.

### Geology

The online British Geological Survey maps indicate variable soil conditions under the site. The majority of the site the North of the railway is located over the London Clay Formation which comprises of clay and silt. The area to the South of the railway and an area to the East adjacent to Sheppey Way, is located over the Lambeth Formation which comprises of sand silt and clay. Based on the ground conditions, the use of infiltration based SuDS are unlikely to be suitable for the disposal of the surface water from the site.

### Proposed Surface water management

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) techniques will be used to deal with the surface water generated by the development. This will replicate the existing drainage regime by dealing with the surface water at source, as not to increase the risk of downstream flooding. The SuDS scheme has the following aims:

- To reduce the water demand arising from the development;
- To minimise the surface water runoff from the site;
- To mitigate the loss of water to ground waters through urban runoff;
- To incorporate infiltration systems where practicable; and
- To prevent contamination to water course and ground water.

It is proposed to provide new swales through the site forming new green corridors which will both treat and control surface water runoff. An additional attenuation pond is also likely to be required prior the outfall into the existing watercourse.

The proposed surface water system will be designed to accommodate all return periods up to and including the 1 in 100 year rainfall event with a 40% allowance for climate change. Outfall from the site will be limited the existing green field rate

Additional SuDS features such as porous paving will be provided where appropriate subject to onsite testing.

### Proposed Foul Water management

Foul water from the development will be collected in a system of gravity sewers discharging into the nearest existing foul sewer which has capacity to take the proposed flow. The proposed sewers will be designed and constructed in accordance with Sewers for Adoption 7th Edition and will be offered to Southern Water who will maintain them in perpetuity.

The Water Industry Act 1991 allowed companies to make an infrastructure charge as a contribution to the overall costs of developing and maintaining the sewerage networks. They are payable where new development is connected for the first time to a public sewer. The infrastructure charge will cover the cost of any reinforcement required to the existing network.

Any upgrades to treatment assets will be covered by Southern Water as part of their 5 year investment plan.

## 5.0 Summary

This site is located in a sustainable location, it is adjacent to the A249 and the railway line to London. There are no environmental or heritage designations which would preclude development. The site is located entirely within flood zone 1.

It is noted that the site has a very limited landscape value, other than being open countryside.

We therefore believe that whilst there would clearly be a significant change to the character and appearance of the locality, growth here would be less harmful than many other parts of the Borough. A new settlement here would not lead to any coalescence, with sufficient open space retained between neighbouring Newington. An urban extension to the west of Bobbing would also impact on a very limited number of residents, who would inevitably benefit from the supporting infrastructure proposed.

There would be genuine benefits brought about by this proposal.

Access to this new garden community would be facilitated by the construction of 2 new roundabouts along the main road running through Bobbing. This would create an additional highway/through road, running parallel to Sheppey Way and the A249 Key Street Junction. It is considered that this represents a potential planning benefit, as it could help alleviate vehicle traffic and vehicle speeds along Bobbing's primary through road, as cars would be encouraged to use this new road. Reduced vehicle speeds along the existing stretch of road through Bobbing would improve the setting and enjoyment of existing buildings as well as being advantageous in terms of highway safety.

We also consider that the location of the site offers potential for new public transport infrastructure to be provided. Fastlink bus services to Sittingbourne and Rainham town centres/railway stations would enhance existing public transport provision. Furthermore, the proposal would seek to connect with existing PRow and cycle routes, promoting sustainable movement of existing and future residents.

This proposal could (in part) be delivered in the short term. It would help meet the Council's immediate and strategic housing need. The scale of the proposal (approx. 2,500 to 3,000 new homes) would also require less complex phases of delivery. Not only this, the developers have a track record of delivering major development in Kent, on a phased basis (Chilmington Green).

The site is available, deliverable and developable within a quick time frame and represents a suitable, sustainable location for a new garden community.

## Why Bobbing?

Key benefits:

- There is a significant level of existing highway infrastructure that can be built upon, without the requirement for significant upgrades or new junctions being created. This proposal would also have direct links to the capacity improvements to Junction 5 of the M2.
- The site is well connected to both the strategic highway network and other employment clusters (Eurolink) which will provide significant employment opportunities for future residents.
- There is the potential for this development to bring about significant improvements to the existing public transport system within the town, in particular a new, regular bus service through well-populated areas of the existing settlement.
- The site is dissected by an existing railway line, which allows for opportunities to deliver a new halt/station enhancing the sustainable credentials of any future housing provision.
- We believe that there is significant and genuine opportunity to enhance natural habitats qualitatively through the development resulting in a net gain for biodiversity.
- The development would bring about the opportunity to enhance the character of Bobbing, through road re-alignment, new village retail and community facilities and the creation of publicly accessible open space.
- We believe that there is significant and genuine opportunity to enhance natural habitats qualitatively through the development resulting in a net gain for biodiversity.

## *Appendix 1 - Garden City Principles*

*The Garden City Principles are a distillation of the key elements that have made the Garden City model of development so successful, articulated for a 21st century context. Taken together, the principles form an indivisible and interlocking framework for the delivery of high-quality places.*

*A Garden City is a holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities. The Garden City Principles are an indivisible and interlocking framework for their delivery, and include:*

- 1. Land value capture for the benefit of the community.*
- 2. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.*
- 3. Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.*
- 4. Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.*
- 5. A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.*
- 6. Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.*
- 7. 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.*
- 8. Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.*
- 9. Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.*

*Image - Land north of Bobbing*



