

Briefing paper on the proposed new garden town - Otterpool Park

Introduction

Shepway District Council (SDC) and its landowner partner are bringing forward exciting proposals for transformational housing and employment growth at Otterpool Park, located next to Junction 11 of the M20 and Westenhanger Station. This new garden community will deliver up to 12,000 new homes, employment and community facilities in a rich landscape setting. The Council has a significant land-holding in the project and therefore can commit to delivery of a high quality place over the long term (the next 30 years). The project has active support politically from both district and county members, and from other local stakeholders such as East Kent College.

The council has been working closely with Department for Communities and Local Government on our proposals, and we are awaiting a decision on our bid to its Locally Led Garden Cities, Towns and Villages programme. The Expression of Interest to the programme provides further information and can be found on the SDC website: <http://www.shepway.gov.uk/news/otterpool-park/EOI>

Designing for health and wellbeing

Creating a new town presents a great opportunity to consider how health and social care can be planned and provided for to meet current and future needs of our community. The council would also like to exploit the potential for encouraging healthier lifestyles that tackle issues of, for example, obesity and mental health.

SDC would like to discuss with partners how we can work together to deliver these wider social objectives for Otterpool Park, and think innovatively about practical steps to take that help do this. The purpose of this paper is to:

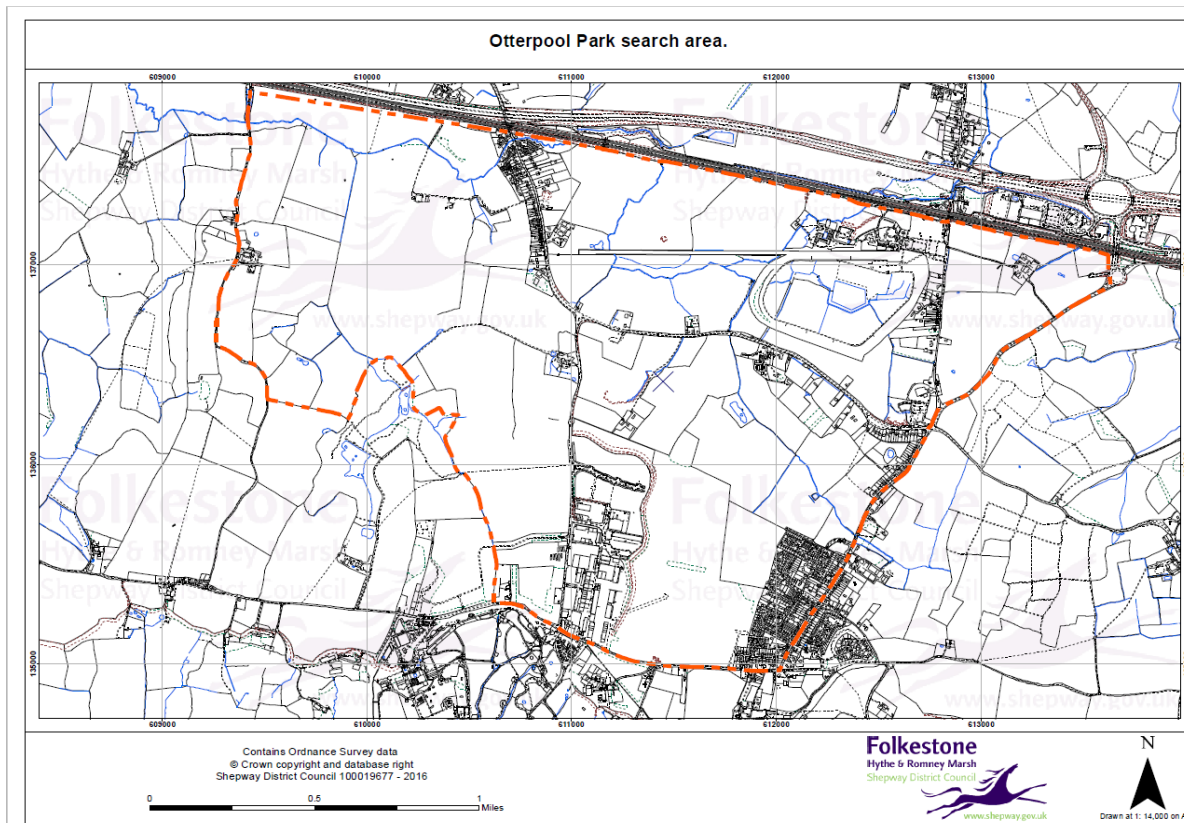
- seek the Board's views on the important issues that should be included in developing a vision and objectives for health and wellbeing at Otterpool Park; and
- discuss who needs to be involved and agree initial actions.

Planning context

Shepway District Council has two discrete roles at Otterpool Park – landowner and Local Planning Authority (LPA). Work on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment by the LPA has demonstrated a rise in housing need in Shepway, in part due to its aging population. The LPA has therefore begun work on a new Local Plan for the district which is likely to conclude that a new settlement is the best way of meeting its long term housing and jobs needs. This is due to the constraints that inhibit new development elsewhere in the district and the strain on services in existing towns and villages.

Shepway District Council landowner role

The council and its partner (the owner of Folkestone Racecourse) have commissioned a team to prepare a masterplan and planning application for the site, led by consultants Arcadis. The Area of Search within which the development will sit is shown below.



The masterplan will be based on the set of Guiding Principles included in the Expression of Interest submitted to government, which includes social, environmental and economic objectives. Arcadis began the technical work in August 2016, with a planning application expected to be submitted in 2018.

Issues for discussion

- understanding the opportunities for Otterpool Park to address or improve health services in East Kent, and current examples of good practice in Kent and beyond.
- Considering how Otterpool Park can be designed to improve the wellbeing of those living and working there.
- Agreement on a way forward, including who needs to be involved and who leads. How would the Board like to be involved in future?