



HEATHLANDS

G A R D E N C O M M U N I T Y

VISION DOCUMENT | MAY 2019



MAIDSTONE
Borough Council

HEATHLANDS

GARDEN COMMUNITY



**BARTON
WILLMORE**

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INTRODUCTION

Background

A 21st Century Garden Community is a holistically planned new settlement that enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality homes including affordable housing, and easy access to work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.

This Vision Document has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council ('MBC'). It comprises a response to the Council's 'Call for Sites' consultation, which is inviting submissions for New Garden Communities as a way of sustainably contributing towards the Borough's requirement to deliver new homes over the period to 2037.

This document sets out MBC's Vision for "Heathlands Garden Community", a new truly sustainable settlement located between Lenham and Charing delivering 4,000 to 5,000 new homes, as well as the employment land, leisure, retail, education, community and recreation space required to serve this new sustainable community.

It explains that in promoting this opportunity MBC will seek to act as an overarching 'Master Developer' for Heathlands Garden Community, with the advantage that entails of meaning it will take lead responsibility for establishing and progressing the development, delivery strategy and masterplan (MBC's role as Master Developer would be entirely independent of its role as a Local Planning Authority).

It presents the emerging Vision for Heathlands Garden Community to be a landscape-led new settlement that embodies the key qualities of new Garden Communities and high-quality place-making, as set out in MBC's 'New Garden Communities Prospectus'.

Heathlands Garden Community will be a blueprint for creating a true 21st Century Garden Community, with a true sense of place and a legacy that generations to come will be proud of.

MBC is at an early stage of progressing Heathlands Garden Community, which will be an iterative and emerging process. MBC looks forward to evolving its Vision for Heathlands over the coming months/years, working closely with a wide range of key stakeholders, including statutory undertakers, the local community and MBC's elected representatives.

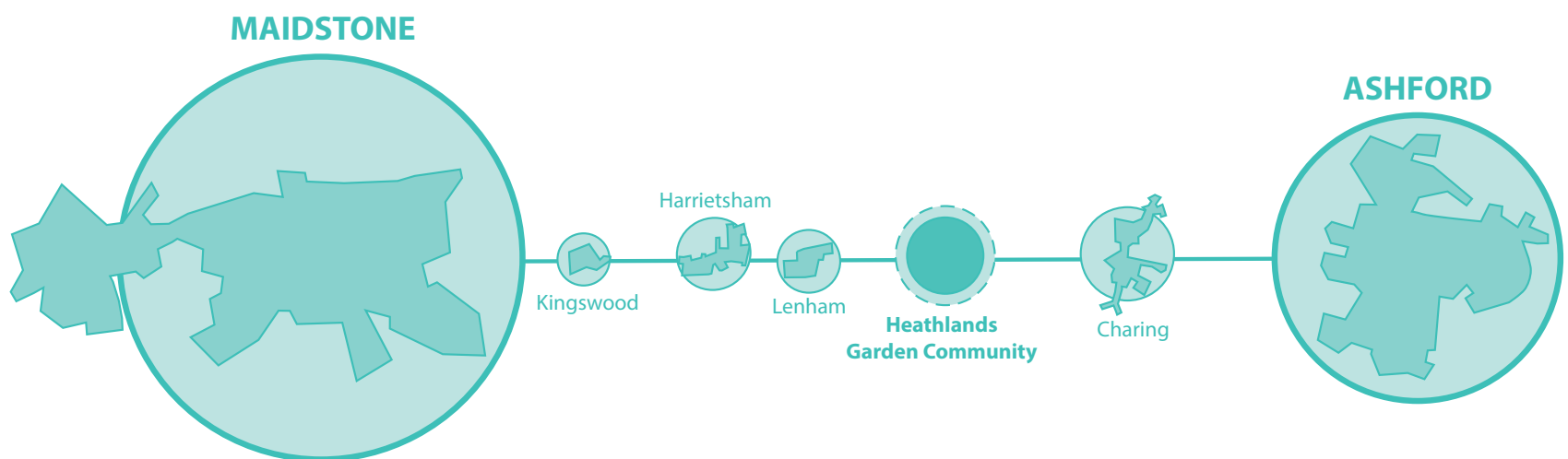


Figure 1. A new Garden Community between Maidstone and Ashford

The Vision

The vision is for Heathlands Garden Community to become an attractive new community that combines the best of town and country living. A place with a strong identity where residents are proud to call home.

The new community will be self-sufficient with all its day to day needs a short walk or cycle ride away, using attractive and convenient routes.

At the heart of the community lies the district centre, somewhere with a vibrancy and unique character. A place to work, shop and catch up with friends. Somewhere that can hold events, such as a weekly market, with an adaptable high street that will evolve as the community expands develops.

The homes, streets, open spaces and parks will be of the highest quality, drawing inspiration from the existing landscape. The architecture will vary across the village and could include contemporary as well as traditional styles, along with opportunities for self-build homes.

It will have a particular 'green' character, drawn from the garden city movement, with lots of attractive open spaces, trees and a new country park. The proposal will protect the existing assets, such as the Great Stour, listed buildings and street patterns, adding development in a sympathetic manner.

Key Benefits



1. Delivering new homes to meet current and future needs of Maidstone.



2. Providing a new community in a location that benefits from excellent transport infrastructure already in place, including a major motorway (M20) and railway lines.



3. It has the potential to deliver a new station along Southeastern High Speed (HS1) providing fast links into central London.



4. The scale of development creates the ability to provide extensive levels of infrastructure, improving its sustainable credentials when compared to smaller settlements or urban extensions.



5. It can be developed in phases to enhance delivery rates with the potential for "room to grow".



6. Connected to the surrounding countryside with a sensitively designed landscape-led masterplan.



Why Here?

Maidstone Borough lies in the heart of Kent, in the "Garden of England," bordering the Boroughs of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Ashford, Swale and Medway.

Maidstone Town Centre forms the main urban area, and provides a large proportion of the social, cultural and economic opportunities available in the Borough.

Other important large 'Rural Service Centre' settlements include Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Lenham and Harrietsham with large villages including Boughton Monchelsea, Coxheath and Sutton Valence to name a few.

The image opposite provides an overview of the landscape and environmental designations prevalent across the Borough.

The following factors support the identification of Heathlands Garden Community as a location for a new sustainable settlement:

- It is relatively unconstrained in heritage, ecological and flood risk terms;
- Topographically the land in this area is relatively flat (before it starts to rise towards the Linton Greensand Ridge to the south) which helps with the deliverability of development;
- The area is sustainably located in terms of its proximity to strategic road and rail infrastructure, with opportunities utilise and enhance the existing road network;
- Land to the south of the M20 corridor is located away from the AONB, and if visible from the AONB itself would be set in the context of the existing significant transport intrusions that cut through and already detract from the landscape; and,

- Landownership parcels are large, which aids in limiting the overall number of landowners, facilitating ease of delivery.

Heathlands is proposed to comprise a new standalone settlement. A unique advantage is that its location has the potential as part of a wider strategy for growth in this broad area. This could include facilitating the potential delivery of sub-regionally important infrastructure, such as a possible new access from the M20, a potential new HS1 railway station and/or contributions to wider rail network improvements.

In summary, Heathlands Garden Community represents a particularly sustainable and preferable location for a new sustainable settlement, with the potential to accommodate further growth.



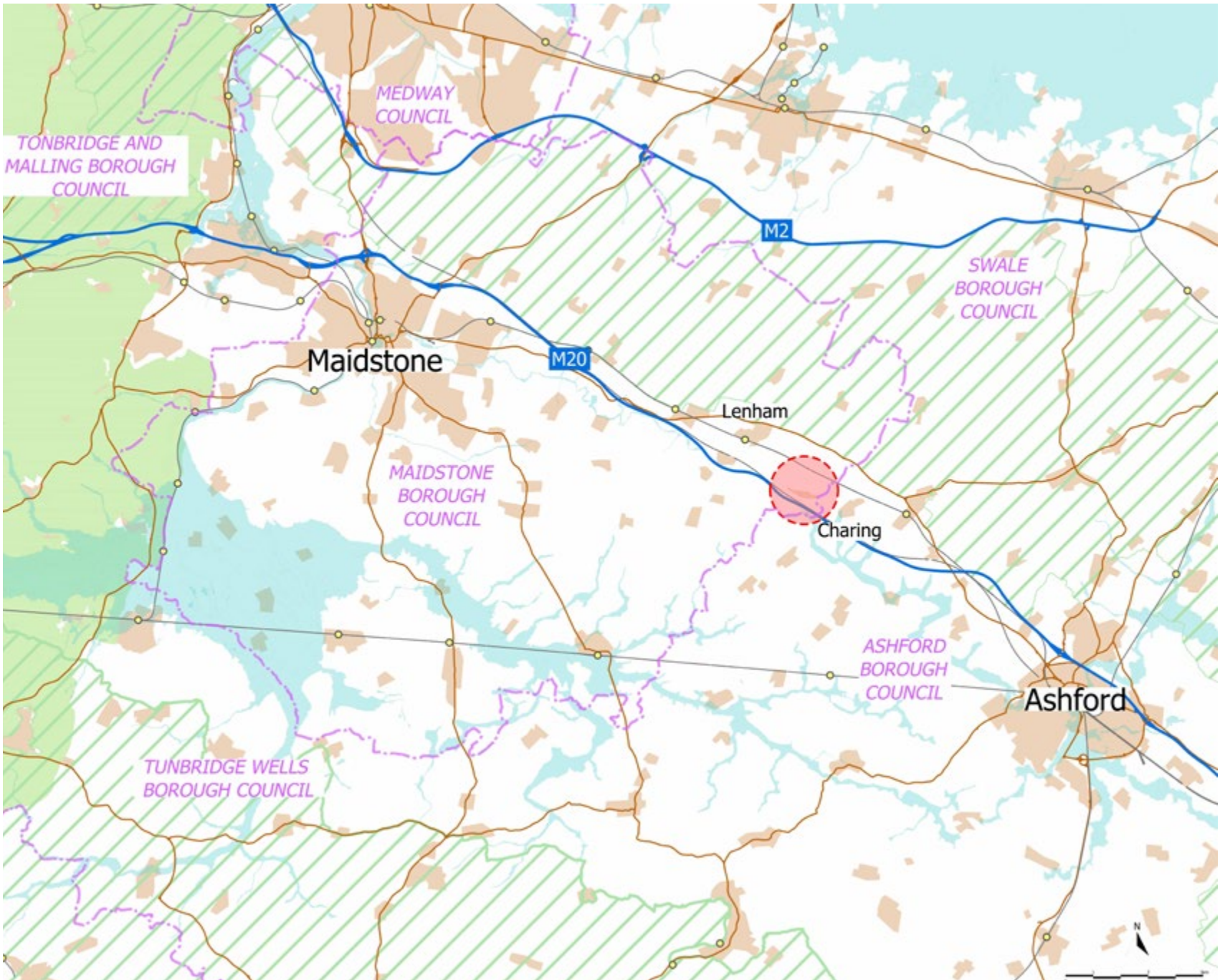
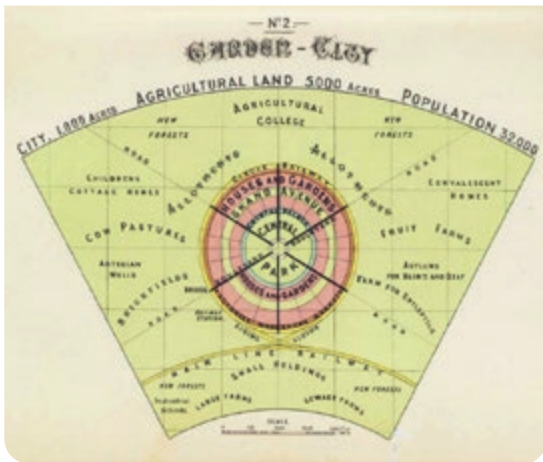


Figure 3. Plan with Key Constraints within Maidstone and Ashford

21st Century Garden Villages

The term 'Garden Village' is derived from the Garden City movement pioneered by Sir Ebenezer Howard in the late 19th Century. His idea was to create somewhere that maximised the benefits of town and country living (i.e. access to green space, fresh air, good job prospects, etc) whilst minimising the negatives (i.e. foul air, expensive rent, low wages). The most famous examples include Letchworth and Welwyn although there have been many others, in the UK and abroad.



19th Century Garden Villages

the art of building a garden city

garden city standards for
the 21st century



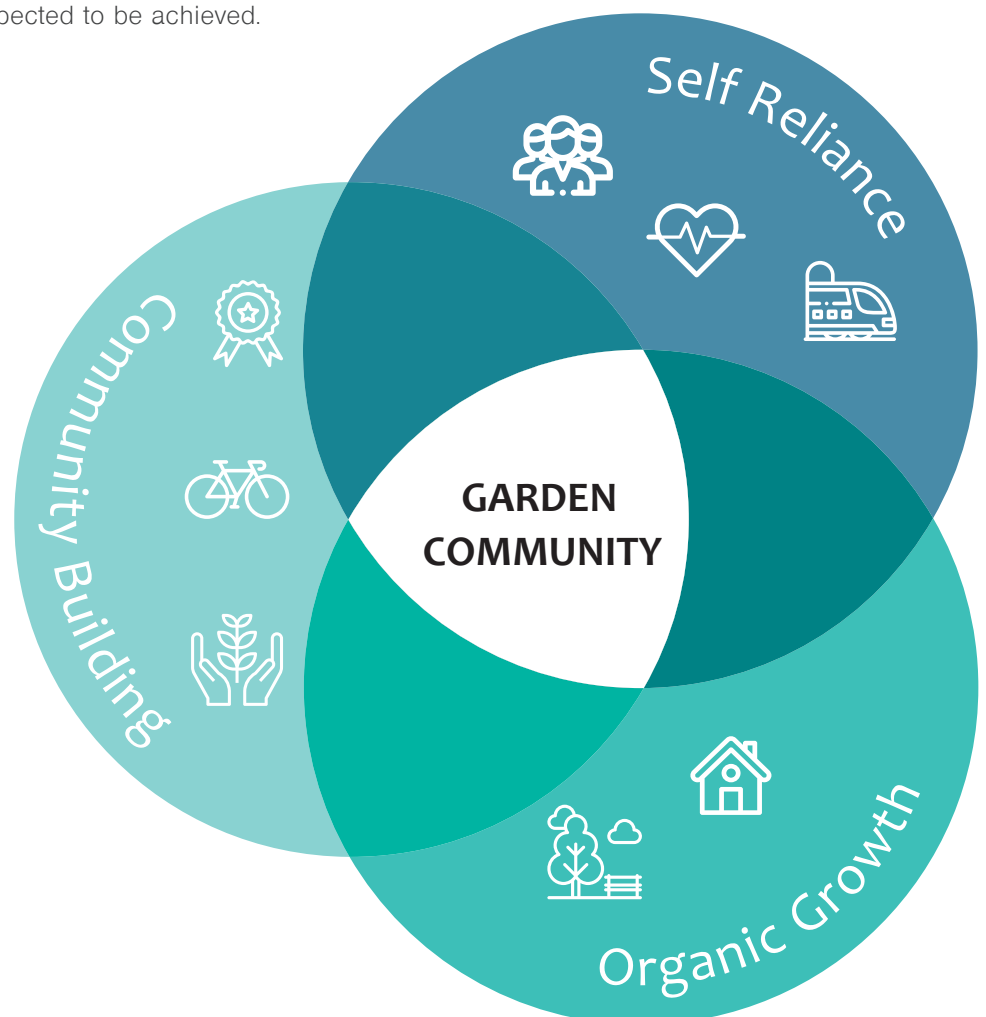
21st Century approach to Garden Settlements

Interest in garden cities has increased more recently as a way of helping the UK deal with the housing crisis. There is also a renewed interest in the creation of new settlements in general. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: *'The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities'* (para 72).

Government policy refers to Garden Cities as well as Garden Towns and Garden Villages. In August 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published 'Garden Communities', a prospectus inviting bids for garden communities at two scales: Garden Towns (more than 10,000 homes) and Garden Villages (1,500-10,000 homes). The document did not impose a particular standard but did set out certain qualities that were expected to be achieved.

In February 2019, Maidstone Borough Council published its 'New Garden Communities Prospectus' inviting submissions for new settlements in the Borough. This document makes reference to the National guidance above along with those produced by the Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA) entitled 'Garden City Principles'.

The key guidance principles for a successful masterplan includes spatial, design, management and financial aspects. Drawing from the MBC/TCPA publications, the principles set out on the next page are intended to drive forward the thinking and design behind Heathlands Garden Community.



The Guiding Principles



1. A Distinctive Place

Heathlands Garden Community will be much more than an attractive, convenient place to live. It will become a community in its own right; somewhere the residents will be proud to call home, in a similar way that no doubt people who live in Lenham, Harrietsham or Charing feel about their village. Somewhere with everything that would normally expect to find in a large, successful village, from the small independent cafe to larger food stores.



2. A High Quality Place With Lots Of Trees And Open Space

Heathlands will be holistically planned with a clear identity and character, rooted in the place and its history. It will retain and be inspired by the existing place whilst establishing its own character through the design and appearance of its centres, its architecture and its streets and spaces. It will be of the highest quality, with an abundance of green spaces and trees.



3. Walkable, Vibrant And Interesting Neighbourhoods

Walking and cycling will be given priority. Local centres and schools will be located within reasonable travel distances of residents. There will be cycle spines to key destinations, such as the district centre and station.



4. Somewhere With Homes For Everyone

Heathlands will have a mix of accommodation types, sizes and tenures, including affordable homes and self-build or factory built houses.



5. A Healthy And Sociable Place To Live

Heathlands will be designed to encourage healthier lifestyles and social interaction, within a safe environment. There will be easy access to green spaces and recreation areas. Children and adults will be encouraged to walk or cycle by making it easier, safer and more economically sound. Community groups will be set up and supported, helping to establish the all-important social connections.



6. A Real Choice Of Transportation Modes

Residents will have a choice of transportation modes. New bus links will be created, potentially including rapid bus transit, connecting Heathlands Garden Community with Charing and Lenham. Heathlands will accommodate the car but not at the expense of place making and the emphasis will be on walking, cycling and public transport.



7. A Place Driven By The Community

People makes places and Heathlands will be no exception. The masterplan and design can only begin to emerge after consultation has taken place with the key stakeholders, including the local authorities, residents, employers and parish councils. This input will continue throughout the project's lifetime and during the build stage.



8. Somewhere With Resilience And Flexibility

Heathlands Garden Community will be an exemplar for sustainable living, designed to be resilient in the growing concerns about the impact of climate change. It will limit its own impact by adopting sustainable principles from the outset, whilst being flexible enough to change over the next two decades.

Examples of sustainable energy masterplanning could include solar farms to create energy for the whole development, including schools and street lighting, maximizing insulation levels, re-thinking waste, and reusing water resources.

There will be lots of trees and priority given to walking, cycling and public transport. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will be provided throughout, integrated and designed alongside its surroundings, with the aim of delivering ecological, social and aesthetic benefits as well as dealing with water.

Although trying to predict the future is challenging, it does not mean it should be left out. Heathlands will embed current day knowledge, such as having charging points in every house and local centres/schools, but will aim to be flexible to allow for future changes and innovations. MBC will also seek to learn from other recent experience elsewhere and how it can improve how towns and cities work.

THE SITE CONTEXT

Site Description

The proposed site of the new Garden Community is between the villages of Lenham and Charing, and includes the hamlets of Lenham Heath and Lenham Forstal. The search area covers a wide area rather than relating to the area for development. The intention is not to develop any existing homes, gardens and businesses, unless willing to be included.

The majority of the area of search lies within Maidstone Borough Council, with the Borough Boundary to Ashford Borough Council immediately to the east.

The site lies between the East Maidstone railway line and the Great Stour river. It is dissected by the M20 motorway and railway lines carrying high-speed services operated by Southeastern railway (also known as High Speed 1, or HS1) and Eurostar, connecting London with France and Belgium.

The M20 motorway runs between Folkestone and London, passing alongside Maidstone

and Ashford. There are numerous roads cutting across the site providing local access and connections between different villages and hamlets.

The site is predominantly used for agriculture. Other uses include housing, numerous farms, commercial businesses, woodland, two quarries, and various types of infrastructure (motorway, railway lines, a sewage treatment works, and roads).

Built development is fragmented although there are clusters of houses and farm buildings along certain key roads. This includes a number of listed buildings.

There are several public rights of way running across the site (shown in Landscape section). They include part of Stour Valley Walk, which connects up various farms, churches and settlements in the area.

The Great Stour river runs through and alongside parts of the site, although it is more of a brook at this stage. It runs from the

northwest corner down under the two railways and roads, where it then wraps around the southern edge of the site, before continuing eastwards and towards Ashford.

The area contains pockets of woodland, some designated as Ancient Woodland, and various tree belts. The Kent Downs AONB lies approximately 1,500m away from the site, beyond the A20 to the northeast.

There is a quarry along Lenham Forstal Road, which is in operation, and an historic quarry further east, near Burleigh Farm.

Lenham lies to the northwest and is a large historic village with an attractive square containing a range of services and facilities. The much smaller hamlet of Charing Heath lies to the southeast, whilst to the east of that is the village of Charing, which also has a good range of amenities. Lenham and Charing both have stations along the Maidstone East Railway line.



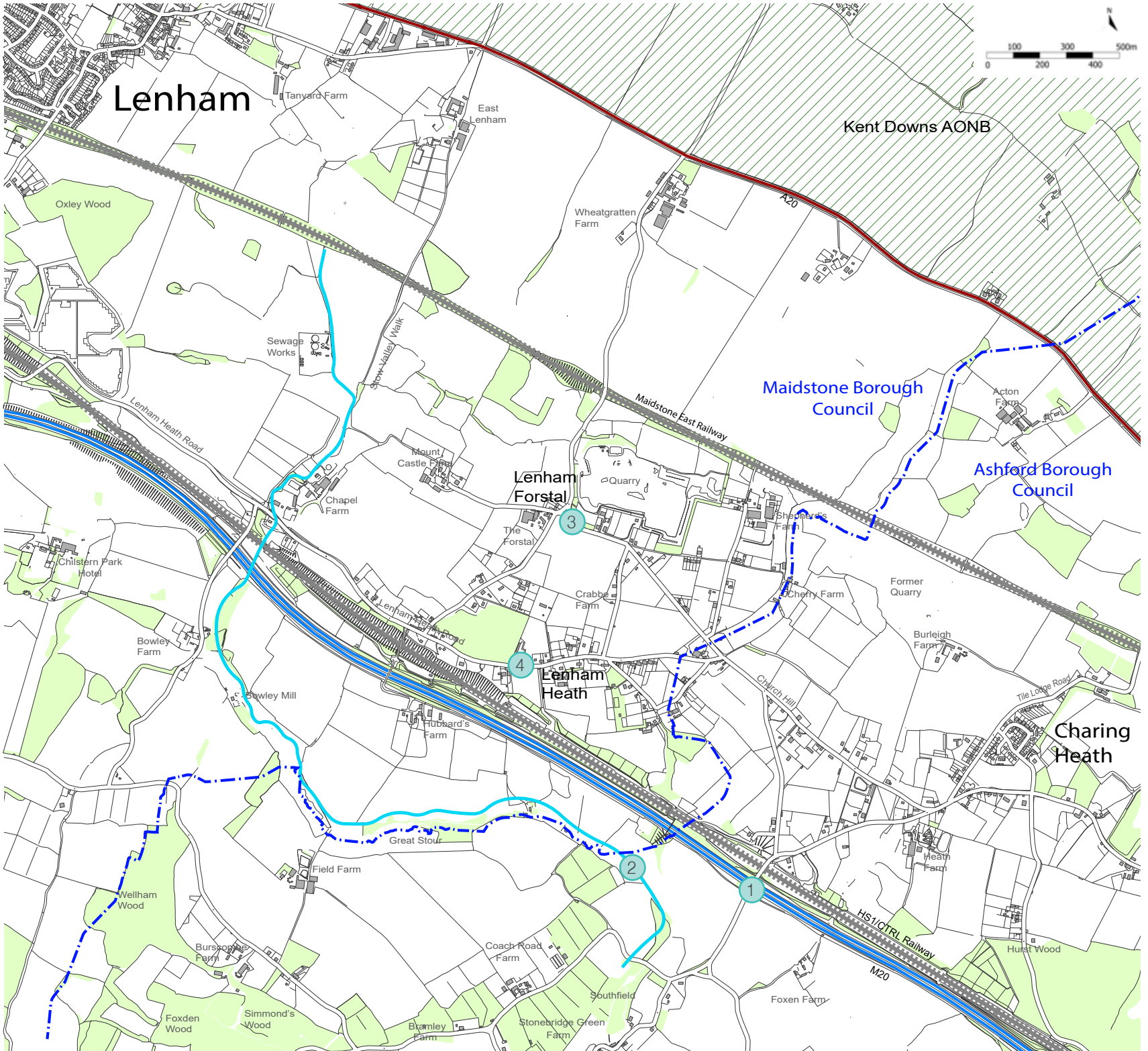


Figure 4. Site Plan

Landscape Context
























The Site is located between the villages of Lenham and Charing and comprises a mosaic of pasture and arable land set within a vegetated framework of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows. The agricultural land is interspersed with areas of settlement, including the hamlets of Lenham Health, Lenham Forstal and Charing Heath, as well as several dispersed farmsteads. Substantial transport corridors - Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), the M20 Motorway, the Maidstone East Line, and the A20 (Ashford Road) - extend through the Site in a north-west to south-east-west orientation, following the bottom of a broad valley.

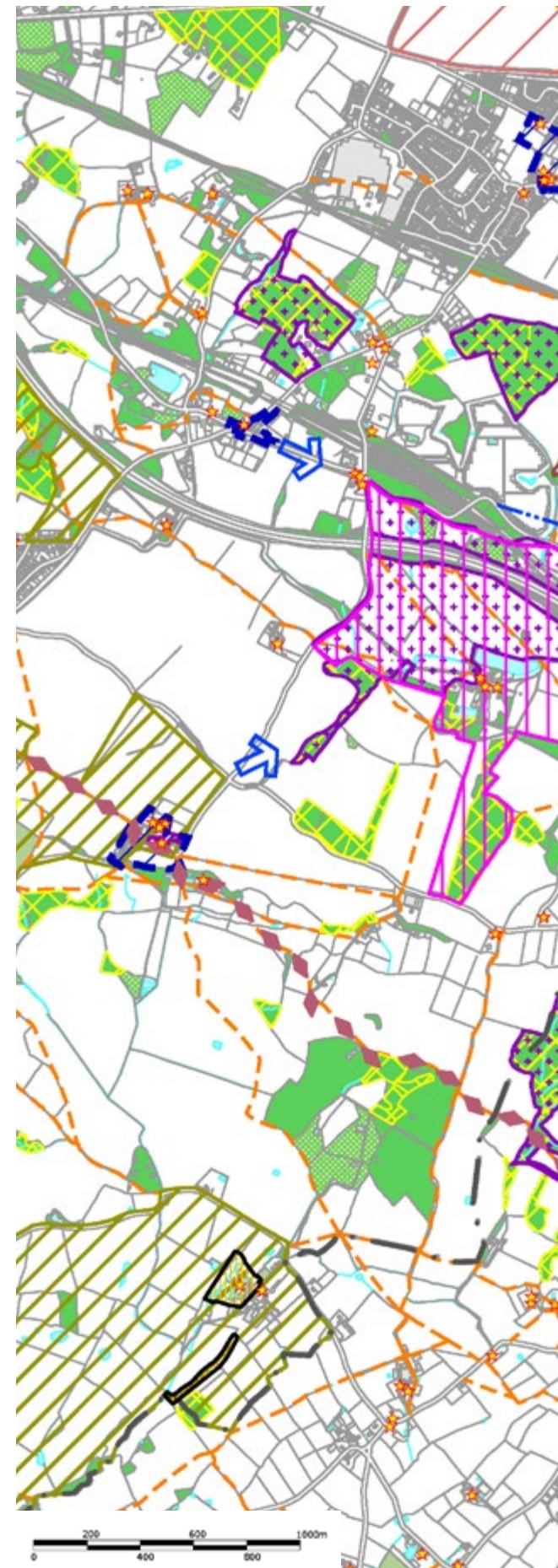
The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers areas to the north of the A20, with the Site falling within its setting (as defined within the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019). The wider area also contains several heritage designations, including Chilston Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden (RPG) located to the south of Lenham; conservation areas at Lenham, Sandway, Egerton and Charing; and a number of Listed Buildings scattered across the area, including the Grade II* Roynton Manor adjacent to Chapel Farm, and several Grade II listed rural/agricultural structures.

The wider area features an extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), the most notable of which are the 'North Downs Way' National Trail, which runs along the south-facing scarp of the Kent Downs to the north, following the route of the historic 'Pilgrims Way'; the 'The Stour Valley Walk', which partly follows the course of the Great Stour (river) through the Site; and the 'Greensand Way', which traverses the higher ground of the Greensand ridge to the south.

The landscape surrounding the Site is well-wooded, featuring several areas of woodland, including Ancient Woodland, that are predominantly concentrated along the higher ground of the Kent Downs to the north and the Greensand Ridge to the south. The agricultural land on the valley floor is set within a wooded framework of woodland blocks, shaws and hedgerows, which combine to create the impression of a well-wooded valley. The area also contains several Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), identified on the Maidstone Local Plan Policies Map, as illustrated on the adjacent plan.

LEGEND

	LPA Boundaries
	Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts
	Existing Orchard
	Existing Scrub
	Existing Water Courses and Water Features
	Public Rights of Way
	National Trails (North Downs Way)
	Long Distance Walks (Stour Valley Walk and Greensand Way)
	Listed Buildings
	Conservation Area
	Registered Parks and Gardens
	Scheduled Monument
	Ancient Woodland
	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
	Kent Minerals Sites
	Location of Photographic Viewpoints
	Open Views
	Partial Views
	No Views
	Maidstone Local Plan Policies
	Local Wildlife Sites
	Landscapes of Local Value



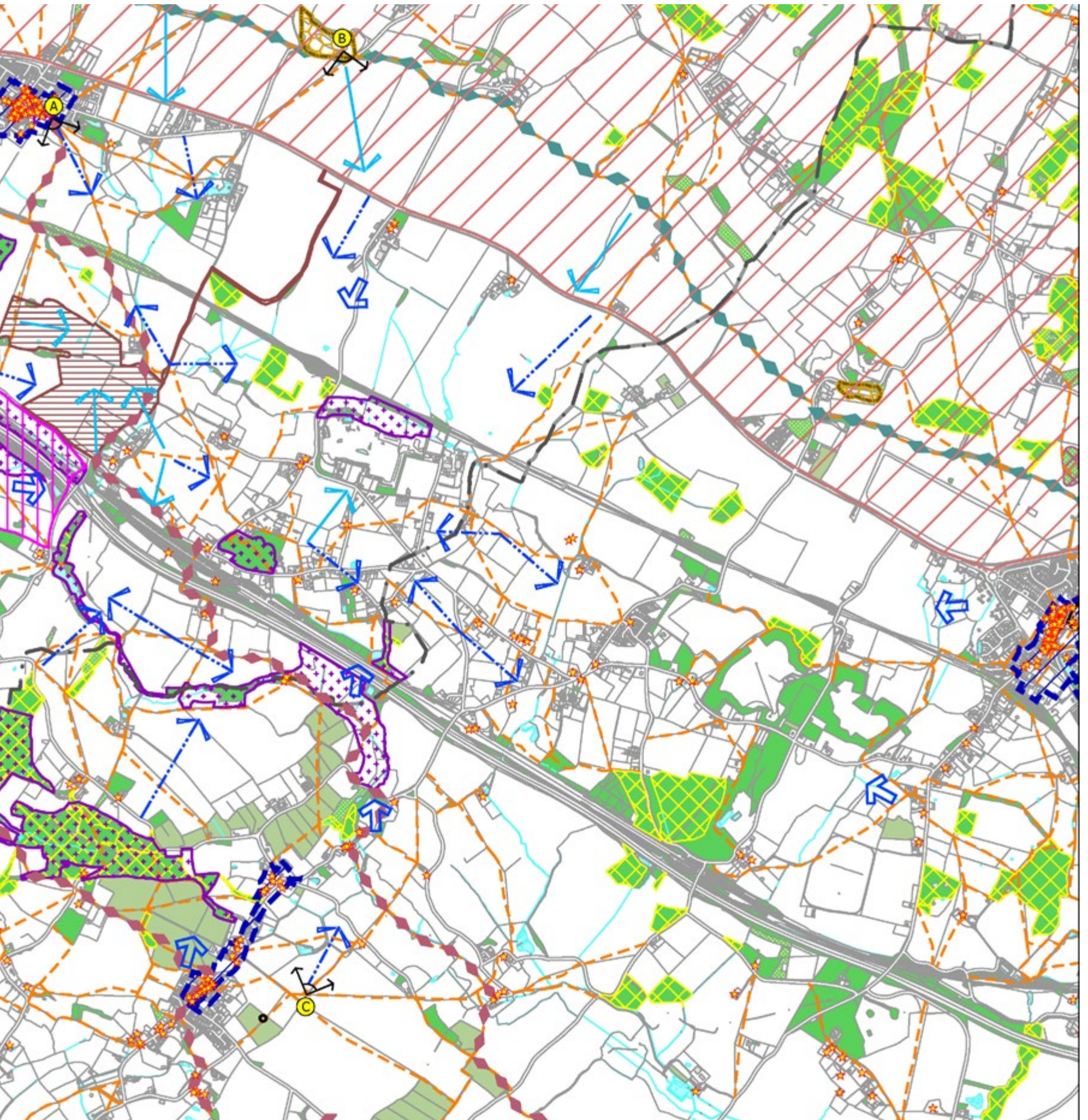


Figure 5. Landscape and Visual Context Plan

Visual Context

Intervening vegetation and natural and artificial landforms (in particular that associated with the M20, CTRL and the Maidstone East Line) tends to limit wide-ranging views across the lower-lying vale. This includes views from within Chilston Park to the south-west; views from the Stour Valley Walk to the south; views from the vicinity of Charing to the east; and views from the A20 to the north. In addition, views east and south-east from Lenham are generally filtered through intervening hedgerow and woodland vegetation, as demonstrated by Site Photograph A (see previous page for location).

Less restricted views are available south from elevated locations on the Kent Downs scarp to the north, including from parts of the 'North Downs Way'/'Pilgrim's Way', the memorial cross north of Lenham, and the viewing point at Great Pivington Farm, as demonstrated by Site Photograph B. From these locations extensive views are available across the lower lying valley floor, with the Greensand ridge forming a well-wooded backdrop to views. The predominantly agricultural valley floor is punctuated by regularly spaced settlements and is crossed by substantial transport corridors. Areas to the west, between Lenham and the Lenham Wastewater Treatment Works, comprise open arable fields and appear visually open; whereas areas to the east around Lenham Heath, Lenham Forstal and Charing Heath appear more well-wooded, with the vegetation on the vale visually coalescing. Existing farmsteads and residential properties are visible in areas to the east, albeit set within mature canopy trees which reduces their visual presence. Areas of higher ground are also visible within the vale, including that between Lenham Heath/Lenham Forstal and Chapel Farm; and that lying between Lenham Solar Farm and Chapel Farm.

Views north from the Greensand Ridge are generally restricted by intervening vegetation clothing the north-facing scarp. However, in views from the vicinity of Egerton, elevated views north and north-west are obtainable towards the Kent Downs scarp in the distance, as demonstrated by Site Photograph C. From this location, views towards the valley floor are heavily filtered through mature vegetation extending across the middle ground of the view. The rooftops of existing farmsteads and residential properties located around Lenham Heath, Lenham Forstal and Charing Heath are, however, partially visible, albeit set within mature canopy trees which reduces their visual presence.





Figure 6. View across lower lying areas from Lenham (PHOTOGRAPH A)



Figure 7. View from the North Downs Way/Pilgrim's Way and Kent Downs AONB (PHOTOGRAPH B)

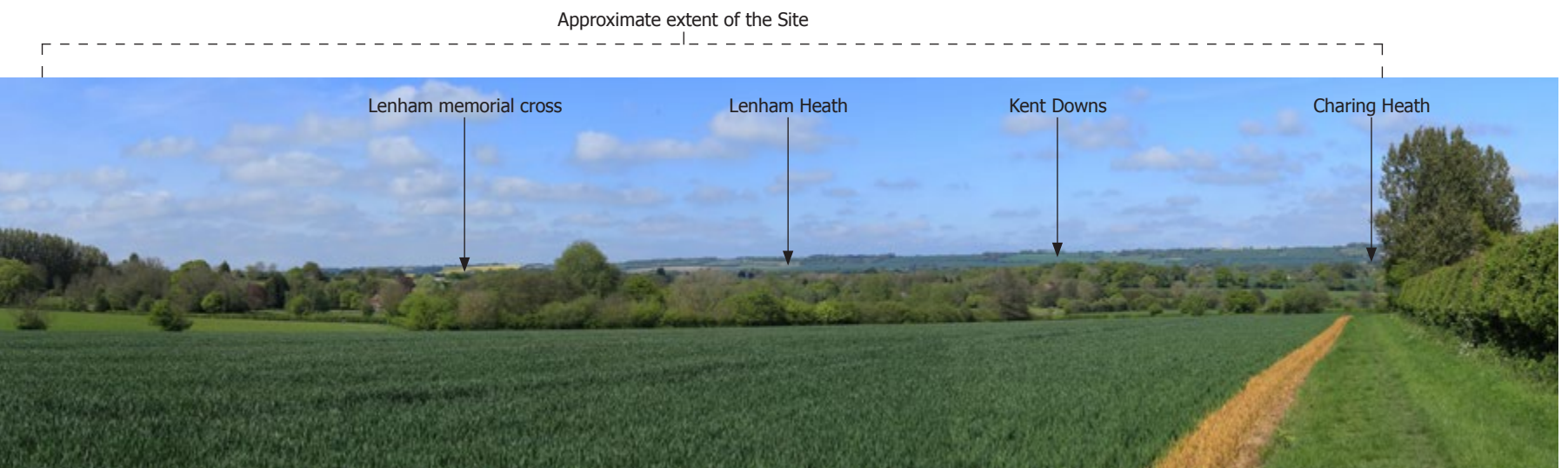


Figure 8. View from the Greensand Ridge (PHOTOGRAPH C)

Topography

The Site is located within a broad valley, comprising a clay vale lying between the Kent Downs scarp to the north, which rises to over 190m above ordnance datum (AOD); and the Greensand ridge to the south, which rises to over 140m AOD. The clay vale has a gently undulating to undulating landform, with elevations ranging from 70m AOD to 110m AOD. Notable areas of higher ground within the vale include the area lying between Lenham Solar Farm and Chapel Farm, and between Chapel Farm and Lenham Forstal/ Lenham Heath.

Numerous small streams and ponds, including mill ponds, occur throughout the vale. The Great Stour forms the main watercourse, flowing approximately north-west to south-east through the Site, being fed from a series of small ponds located to the east of Lenham.

The natural undulating topography has been altered in places, with the introduction of noticeable man-made/artificial topographical features. This includes quarrying/extraction activities (the ongoing works near Lenham Forstal and those near Charing Heath, as well as the disused pits at Lenham Heath) and the M20, CTRL and the Maidstone East Line, which are predominantly on embankment.

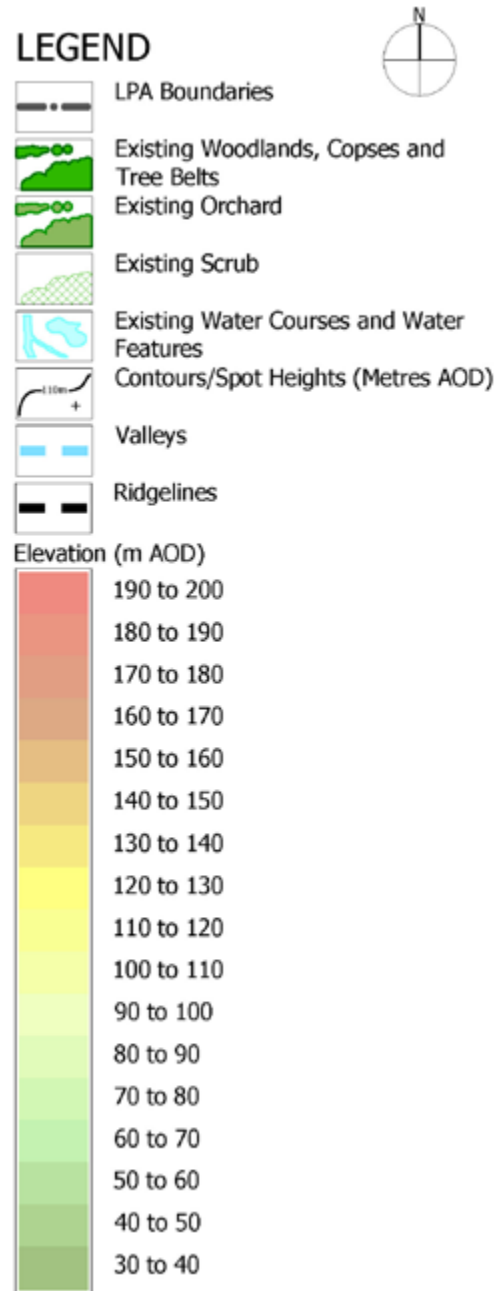
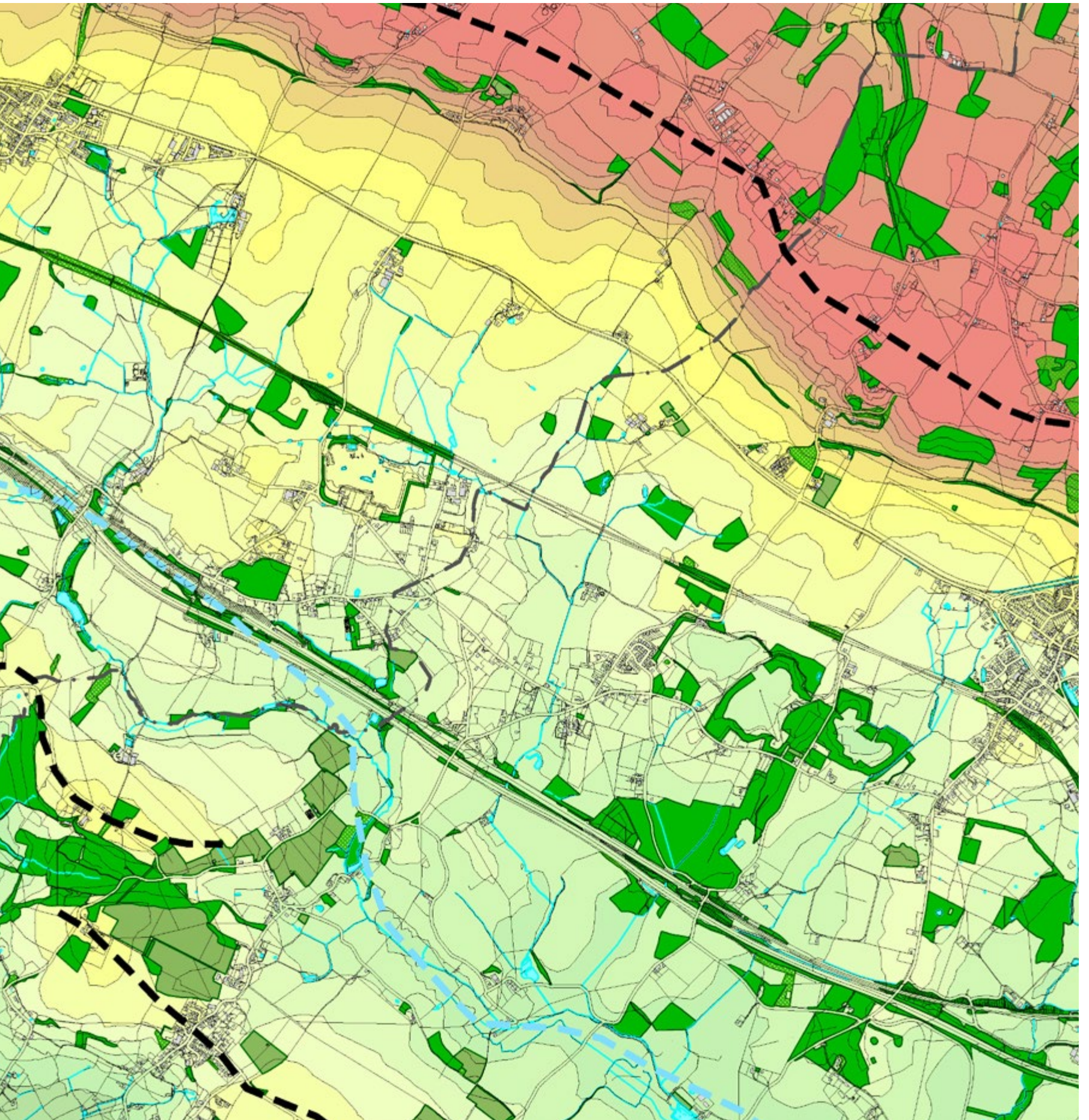


Figure 9. Topography



Landscape and Visual Analysis

Emerging from the baseline analysis are a number of key landscape and visual opportunities and constraints to guide the design of development and mitigate by design any potential landscape and visual concerns arising. This includes the following:

Landscape Opportunities

- opportunity to integrate with the prevailing settlement pattern of dispersed villages along the valley floor by introducing nucleated/consolidated area(s) of settlement with a clear identity. This could be built around existing built forms in Lenham Forstal and Lenham Heath and potentially extending as far east as Charing Heath. These areas currently comprise dispersed built forms and lack a clearly identifiable settlement focus;
- opportunity to utilise the existing road network as a framework for development, in particular locating development around existing junctions/cross-roads in Lenham Heath and Lenham Forstal to form settlement foci;
- opportunity to integrate with the existing road network. Where proposed, any roads should (where practicable) run against and along the contours, with connecting roads to the north (i.e. to the A20) and south aligning approximately north-east to south-west, to reflect the pattern of the old 'drove' roads;
- There is an opportunity to integrate with the local prevailing development pattern in terms of building height, massing, layout, and built forms set within mature canopy trees;
- There is an opportunity to utilise locally distinctive landscape features to help development blend in with the surrounding landscape, including locally characteristic native species of vegetation and local vernacular building materials;
- There is an opportunity to enhance experiential qualities in the vicinity of the CTRL/M20 and Maidstone East Line transport corridors through the introduction structural vegetation;
- Opportunity to enhance the route of the 'Stour Valley Walk', by bringing its route between Chapel Farm and Burnt Mill/ Hubbard's Farm back along the river corridor (currently the route deviates from the river corridor at Chapel Farm, extending along Lenham Heath Road before crossing the CTRL and M20 west of Hubbard's Farm);
- Opportunity to enhance pedestrian connections to Chilston Park from nearby PRow, including the 'Stour Valley Walk' (there is currently no direct PRow connection between the park and the landscape to the east); and
- Retain and enhance key views towards the Kent Downs AONB, including towards the Lenham Cross, from areas of high ground and along the course of PRow and roads where their axis is appropriately aligned.

Landscape Constraints

- the Site lies within the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, as defined within the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019;
- Open views are obtainable south from the Kent Downs, including from parts of the 'North Downs Way'/'Pilgrims Way';
- Open arable land between Lenham and the Lenham Wastewater Treatment Works are visually open, with views available to and from the AONB to the north;
- There is a degree of inter-visibility between Lenham and the adjacent open arable landscape to the east and south-east, meaning this area makes a contribution to the rural setting of the village;
- Chilston Park (Registered Park and Garden) is located to the south-east, albeit this separated from areas to the north and north-east by the M20 and CTRL corridors, and from areas to the east by dense woodland and vegetation fringing the Great Stour;
- Areas of higher ground within the Site (e.g. between Lenham Forstal/Lenham Heath and Chapel Farm) have a more extensive visual envelope, being visible from areas of higher ground to the north (i.e. the North Downs scarp) and the south (i.e. the Greensand ridge);
- Certain areas of woodland within the Site are identified as Ancient Woodland;
- Development within the Site will inevitably be apparent in views from areas of higher ground to the north and south, and accordingly it is recommended that the development proposals incorporate additional structural vegetation and canopy tree planting to aid in screening and softening views, and to fit with the existing visual character (i.e. filtered views of built forms set within mature canopy trees); and the potential for perceived coalescence between Lenham and Charing – development should be nucleated/ consolidated as far as possible to prevent this.

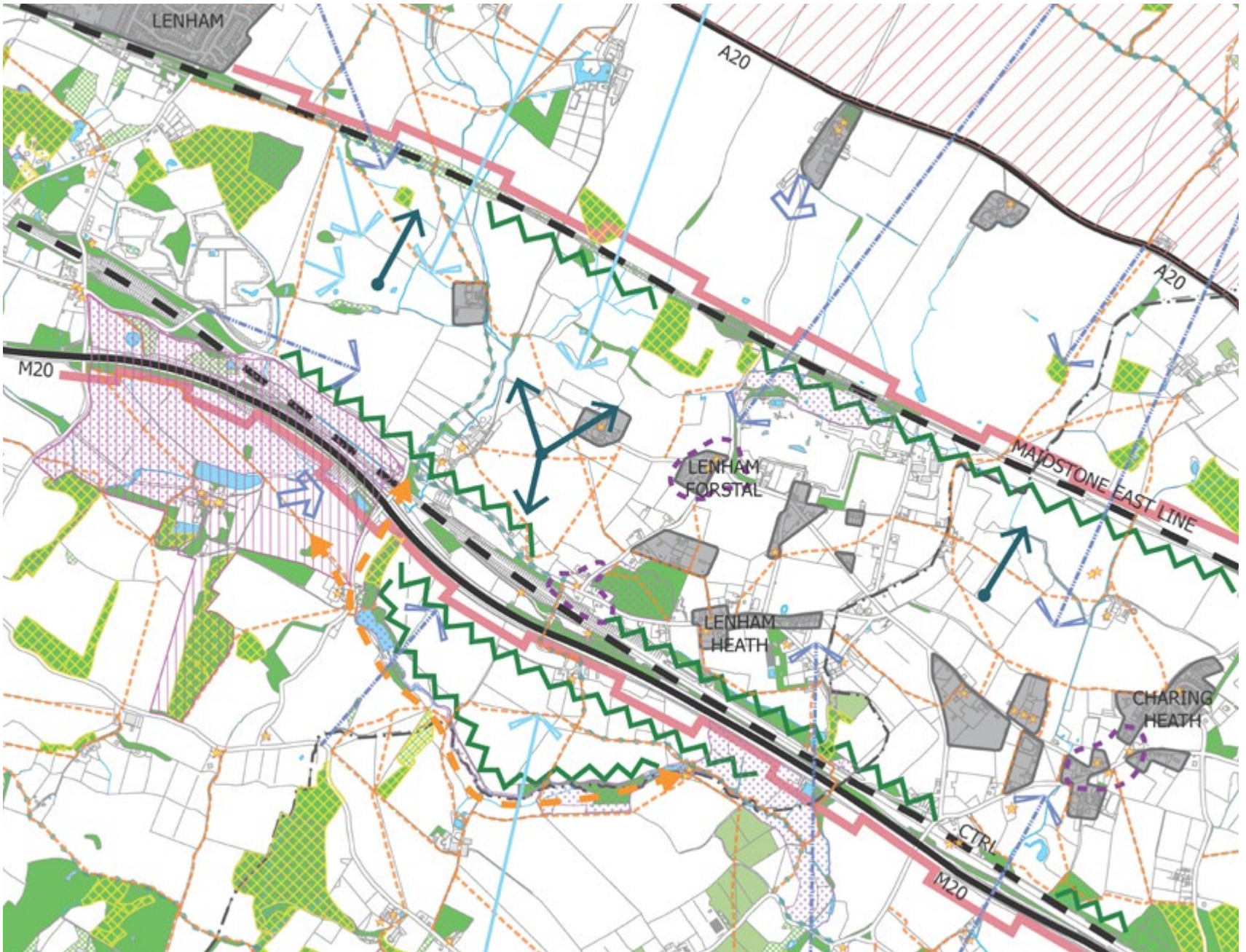


Figure 10. Landscape Opportunities and Constraints



Constraints

The plan below sets out the key constraints and features to consider within the site and immediate context.

A key constraint to development is the impact upon the views and character of the surrounding landscape, especially the Kent Downs AONB (including views from the North Downs Way/Pilgrims Way). The key landscape features within the site should also be protected and enhanced, where possible. These include existing woodlands (including Ancient Woodland), hedgerows, ponds and water courses. The numerous public rights of way need consideration whilst topography affects visual impacts, built form and the location of surface water drainage basins (SuDS).

The scheme needs to consider the potential odour from the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) and an approximate cordon sanitaire has been added (further investigation is required).

Any development needs to take account of the existing buildings, particularly the listed buildings and their setting. There are also various houses, farms and businesses that need to be taken into account. The existing quarry is a constraint in terms of its operating licence but this is only temporary. The same applies to the minerals allocation in the Minerals Local Plan.

Development needs to consider existing ecological designations, including those designated as Local Wildlife Sites. A detailed ecological appraisal has yet to be undertaken and may identify additional considerations.

Any development also needs to consider the wider area and relationship with Lenham, Charing Heath and Charing. This could be to do with character but also any strategic gaps, service provision and transport connections.

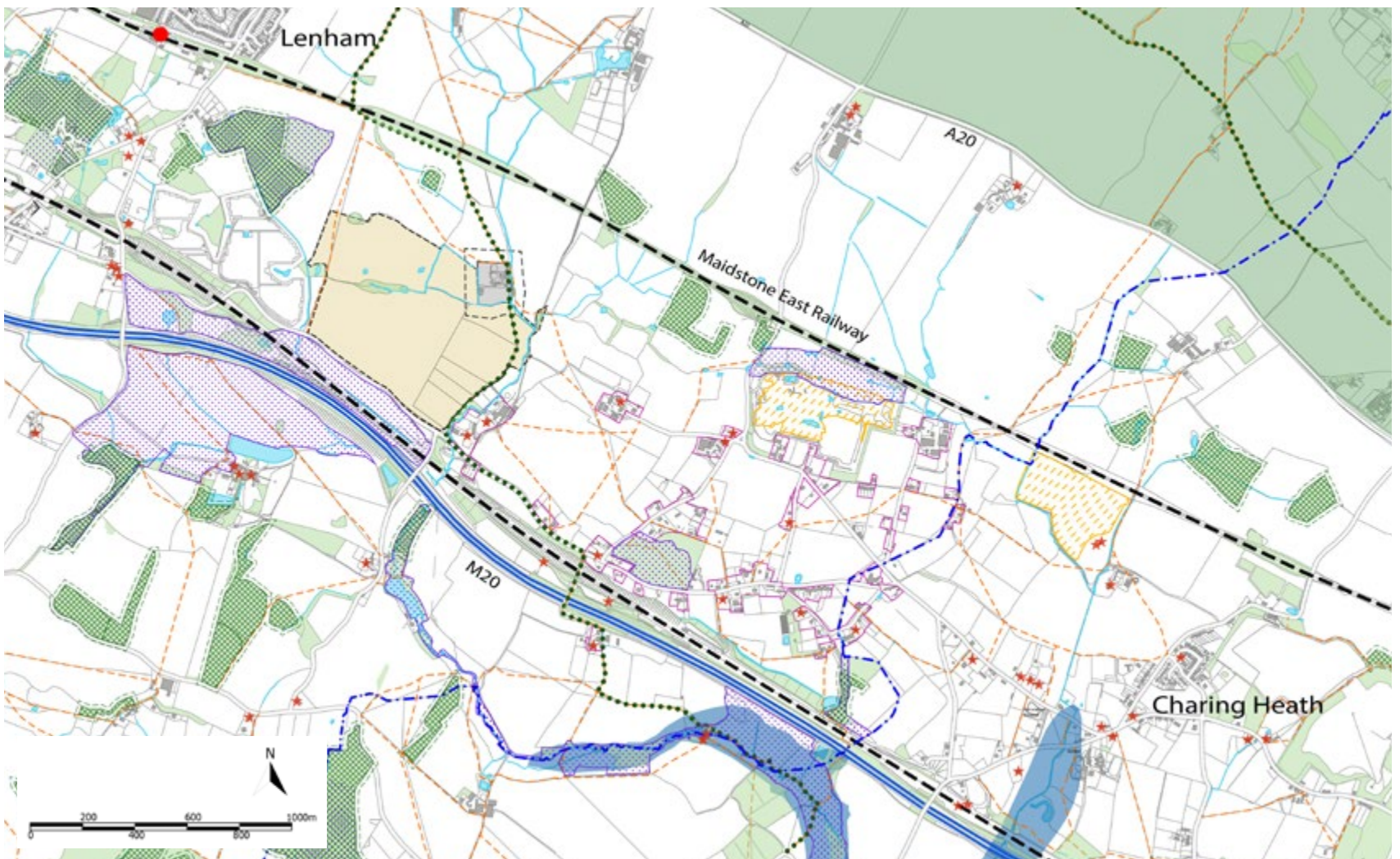
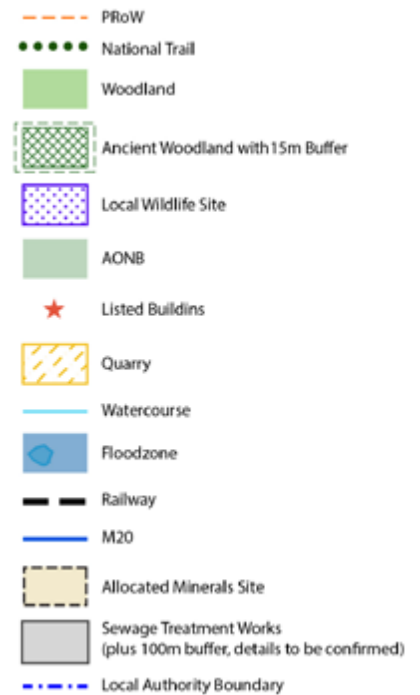


Figure 11. Constraints Plan

Opportunities

Heathlands will be a holistically planned new settlement designed to bring together the best of town and country.

It will sit within its landscape and integrate with the natural environment. A comprehensive green infrastructure network of spaces and linkages will provide an attractive living environment for all residents with access to parks, squares and green spaces to encourage healthy and sociable lifestyles, provide resilience to climate change, create net biodiversity gains and provide the opportunity to grow food.

The resulting leafy and green character will be a comfortable, stimulating and therapeutic environment and will be an important reason why it will be a popular place to live and have enduring popularity.

Neighbourhoods will be designed at a variety of densities to fit their landscape, location and function and will be at a human-scale that realises the garden city principles.

A further opportunity relates to the ability of utilising existing transport infrastructure in the locality. There is a potential for a new junction off the M20 motorway, possible HS1 station and rapid bus transport.

The plan shows the potential for creating different types of character areas, such as a higher density Core, a village and a hamlet. There is also the potential for the Garden Community to accommodate future growth and any future masterplan could be designed with this in mind.

- A** Core Settlement Area
- B** Hamlet / Campus Scale Development
- C** Village Scale Development
- ①** Potential for new Junction on M20
- ②** Potential for New Station and District Centre
- ③** New Neighbourhood Focus Around Existing Roads and Development
- ④** Green and Blue Ecological Cellular Connecting Existing
- ⑤** New Country Park Extension to Chilston Park - Regional Destination
- ⑥** Green Corridor linking north south and forming eastern edge
- ⑦** Enhancement of Wetland Habitat and River / Brook Corridor
- |||||** Railway Line
- Primary Existing Roads
- Highway (M20)
- Existing Settlement
- ⊗** Activity Focus Opportunities
- - -** Borough Boundary
- ~** Enhanced Landscape Planting
- Ancient / Mature Woodland

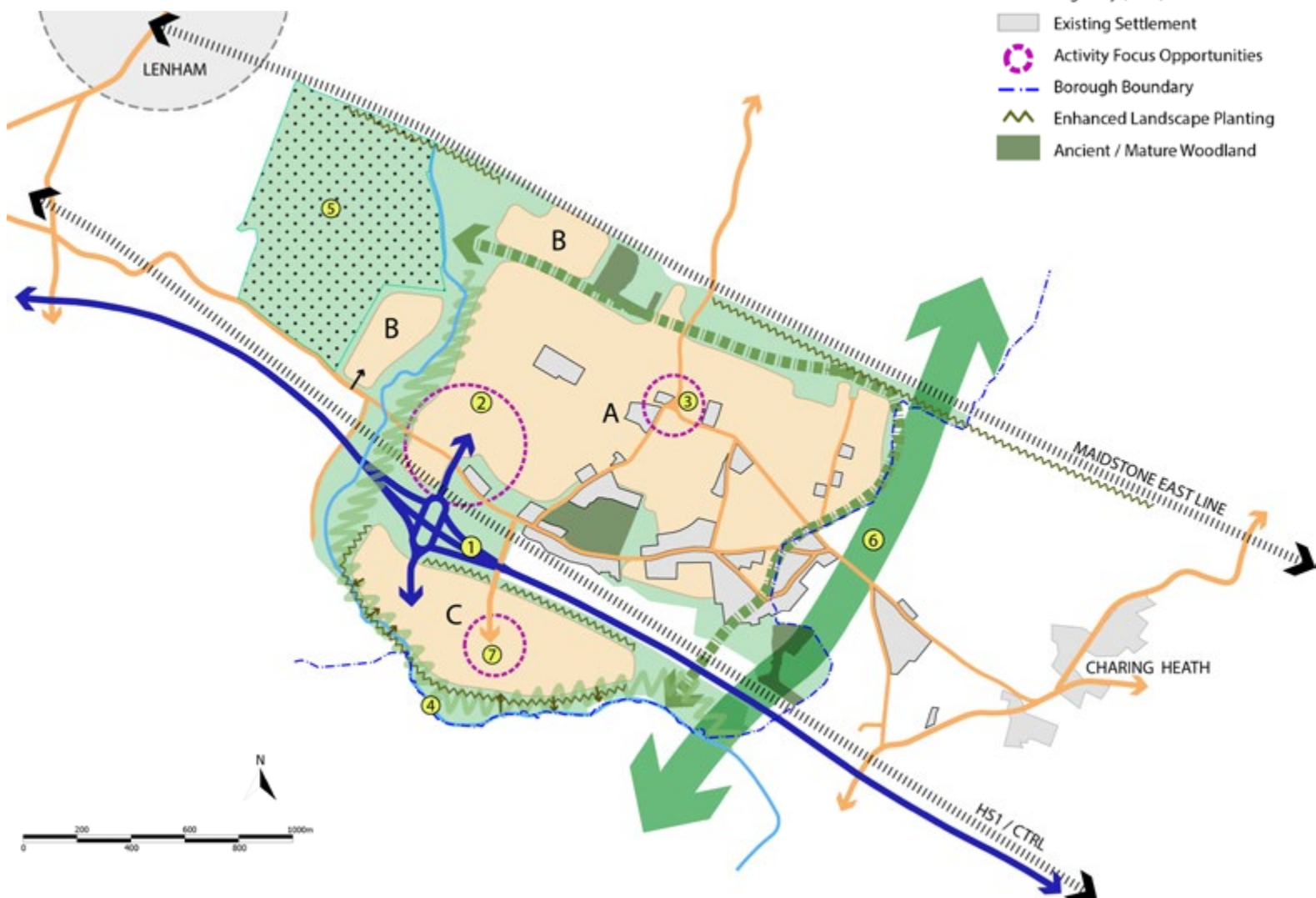


Figure 12. Opportunities Plan

THE PROPOSAL

Masterplan

The proposed Garden Community is set out in the Illustrative Masterplan opposite and within the diagrams and illustrations that follow. These provide an initial idea of how the development could look and function, as well as how it relates to the site and wider area. As explained earlier, the proposal is at an early stage and, if taken forward by the Council, it will inevitably change following consultation with stakeholders and further technical assessments.

Heathlands Garden Community has the potential to deliver up to 5,000 new homes with a mix of styles and types, built at a range of densities.

The emerging proposal for Heathlands Garden Community have the potential to:

- Deliver a landscape-led new settlement masterplan up to circa 4,800 new homes with a mix of styles and types built at a range of densities;
- Include a mixed-use District Centre of around 4 ha to include employment, retail, community and other commercial uses;
- Deliver 3 no. smaller Local Centres for the other neighbourhoods of 1 ha each and containing the services, facilities and amenities to meet the day to day needs of the resident;
- Include new education facilities through the provision of a new Secondary School (9ha) and 4 no. Primary Schools, each around 2 ha in size, located close to the local centres and main movement corridors;
- Adopt a generous landscape framework in order to help create an attractive place that reflects Garden City principles, whilst delivering wider environmental benefits;
- Deliver numerous green links between the new neighbourhoods, along water courses (including the Great Stour); and,
- Provide a strong landscape buffer around the settlement's edges to help screen and soften the impact upon wider views, creating a more gradual transition with the surrounding area.
- Provide an extensive Country Park to the west which will reinforce a buffer to the historic village of Lenham.

- 1 District Centre (mixed use and employment)
- 2 Local Centre
- 3 Primary School
- 4 Secondary School
- 5 Country Park
- 6 Sport Pitches and Recreation Grounds
- 7 Enhanced biodiversity and wetland landscape
- 8 Great Stour
- 9 Green Way
- 10 High Street
- 11 Village Green
- 12 Potential Rail Station along HS1
- 13 Potential junction off M20
- 14 Main Avenue
- 15 Existing bridges over M20/HS1
- 16 Potential expansion to existing solar farm
- 17 Potential depot for driver-less cars/ delivery vehicles

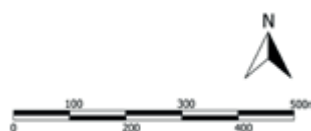


Figure 13. Illustrative Masterplan



A20

MAIDSTONE EAST RAILWAY

M20

HS1/CTRL

CHARING HEATH

6

4

8

14

9

11

3

14

9

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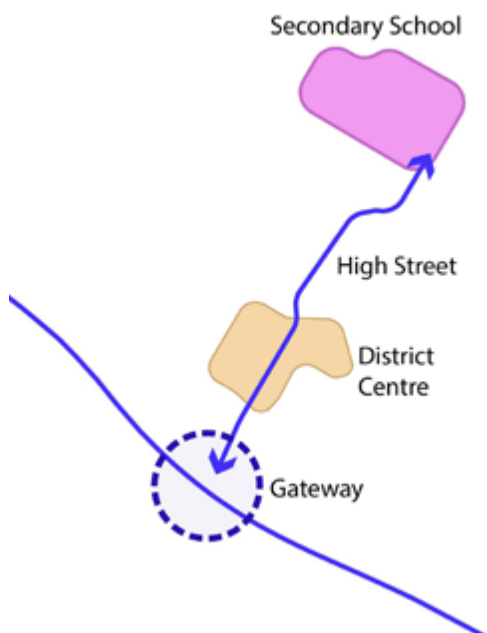
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Design Concept

The concept diagrams on this page set out four of the main strands that underpin the masterplan. These are combined on the following page.

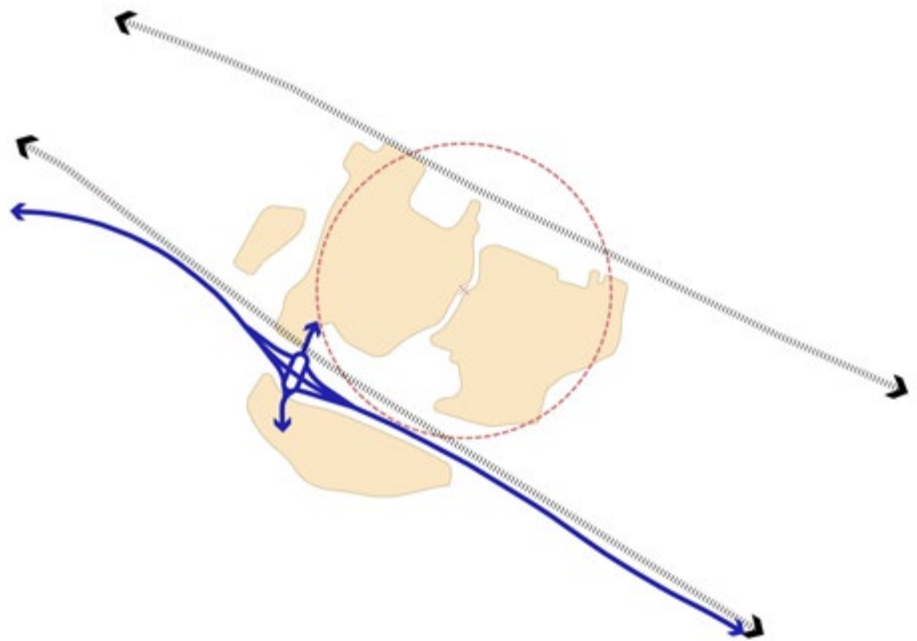
1 The High Street

The High Street will provide an arrival gateway, with a landmark station building, and act as a key street linking the station, district centre and secondary school.



2 Sustainable Scale

The Garden Community will be of a sustainable scale, with a variety of character areas and room to grow. The approach comprises a core of two main neighbourhoods, formed around local greens, a 'Village on the Brook', and a hamlet in the park.



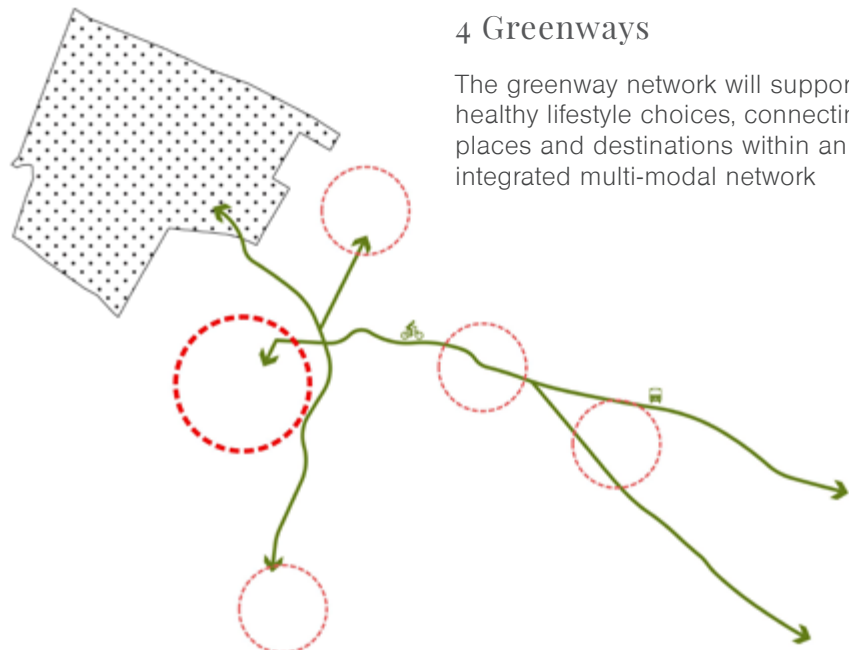
3 Local Neighbourhood

A series of new local centres will be created around a mix of uses, integrating local features, forming a vibrant heart for the community.



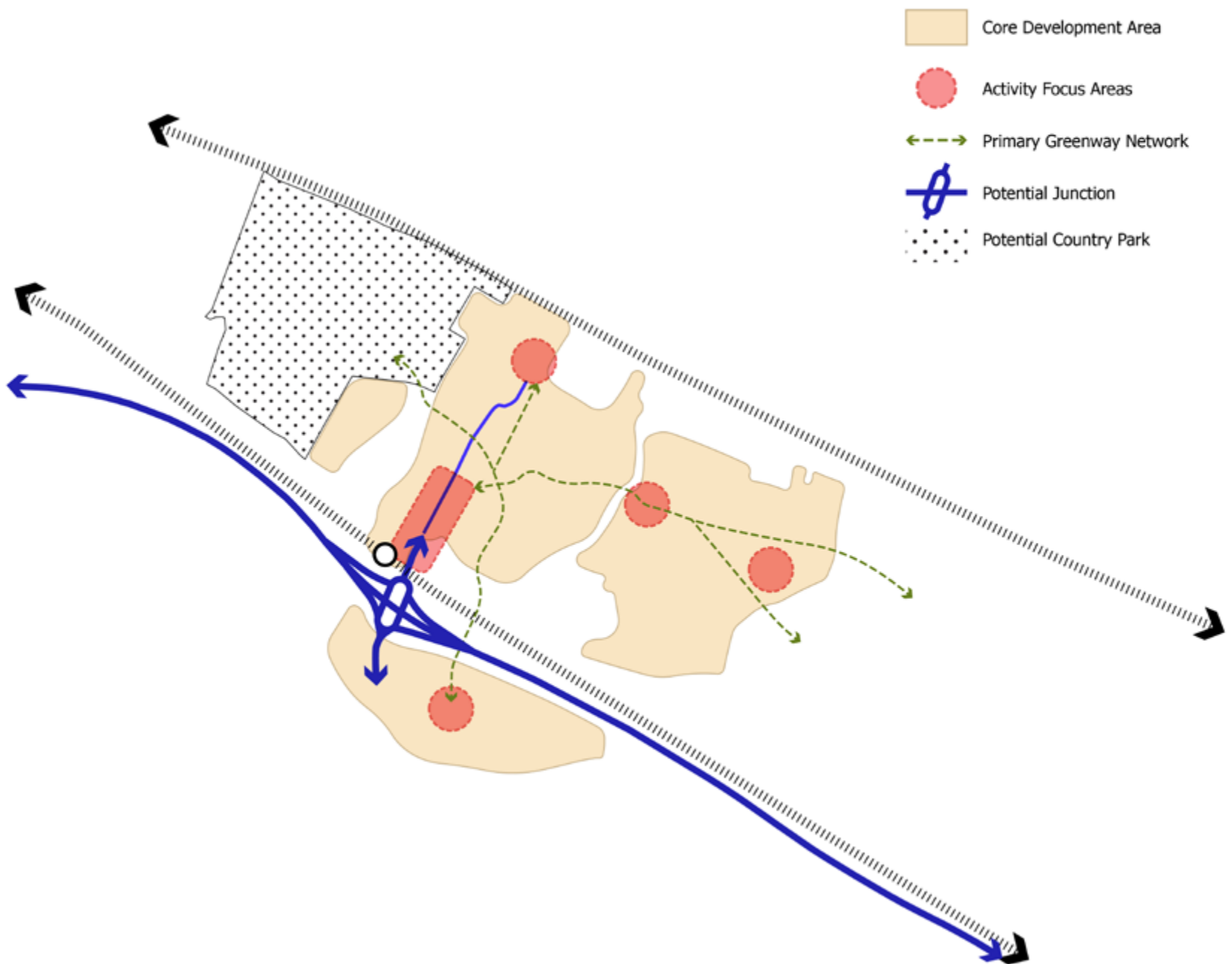
4 Greenways

The greenway network will support healthy lifestyle choices, connecting places and destinations within an integrated multi-modal network.



5. Composite Diagram

The plan below provides a summary of the four main strands and how the different elements work together.



A place rooted in its context

Whilst a new development, the approach recognises the importance of respecting and drawing inspiration from the existing place. The area contains two hamlets and various houses and farmsteads, all located within an attractive landscape, itself reflecting the area's history, changing socio-economic factors and landscape. The approach is to make the most of these historic assets throughout. This includes retaining the existing road network (some of which are derived from historic sheep droving activities running north/south), respecting the setting of the existing buildings (including listed) and making the best of key nodes.

The illustration opposite shows an indicative example of how this could work in practice. It is based upon a photograph of where The Forstal, Lenham Forstal and Forstal Road meet, with the existing buildings visible in the centre. By adding development at an appropriate scale, alongside more active uses in a local centre/school, the area could form an important focal point for the new community. It would benefit from being able to make use of the historic character from the existing buildings, vegetation, street pattern and open spaces.



Intersection of The Forstal, Lenham Forstal and Forstal Road





A Diverse Green & Blue Network

The proposal adopts a generous landscape framework in order to help create an attractive place, again reflecting Garden City principles, whilst delivering wider environmental benefits. Numerous green links are proposed: between the new neighbourhoods, along water courses (including the Great Stour) and around its eastern and western edges. Others links follow existing footpaths or lines of vegetation.

The proposal also proposes a strong landscape buffer around its edges to help screen and soften the impact upon wider views, creating a more gradual transition with the wider surrounding area.

An extensive Country Park is proposed on the western-edge in order to reinforce a “green buffer” to the historic village of Lenham and beyond.

-  Major Green Links
-  Secondary Green Links
-  Existing Woodland
-  Proposed Landscape Buffer
-  Proposed Country Park
-  Open Space, Existing Buildings, Etc
-  Nearby Villages
-  Existing Footpath Links with Surrounding Areas
-  Water Course (Great Stour)
-  Borough Boundary
-  Development Areas

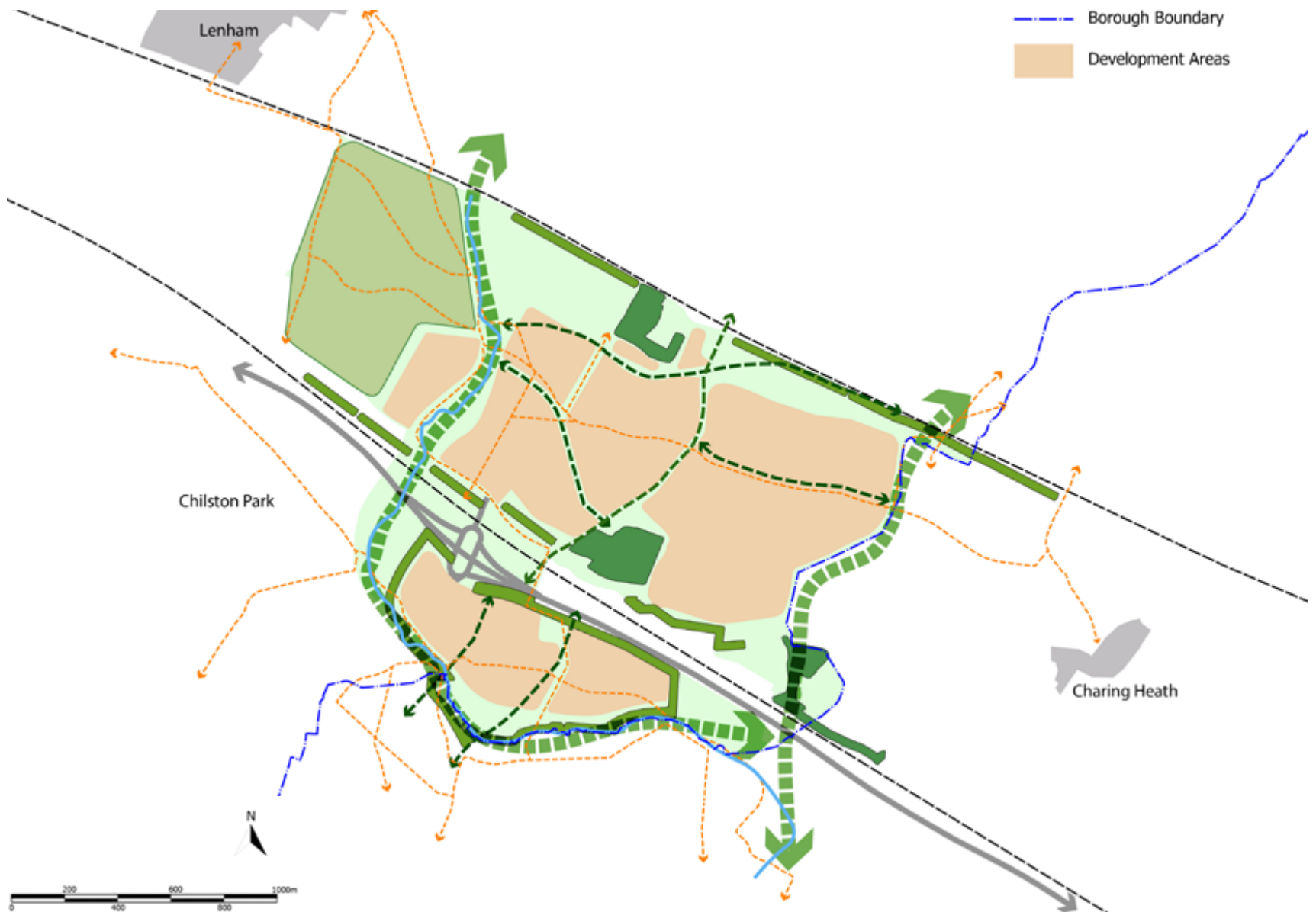


Figure 14. Green and blue infrastructure

Integrated and Walkable Neighbourhoods

The key Garden City principle is to create walkable neighbourhoods, something which goes back to Ebenezer Howard's original concept.

This scheme seeks to ensure that residents are able to walk to a local or district centre for their day-to-day, which means locating them within 400-500m of the residents, equivalent to around 5-6 minutes walk, with slightly further distances for the district centre. This is to try and reduce resident's reliance upon

the private car, whilst improving community engagement and encouraging more healthy lifestyles.

The design also proposes a district centre, again another Garden City Principle. This is located near the middle of the Garden Community, near the potential new rail station, and includes employment. This will improve place making by encouraging greater activity levels, whilst the employment areas benefit from easy access to the station.

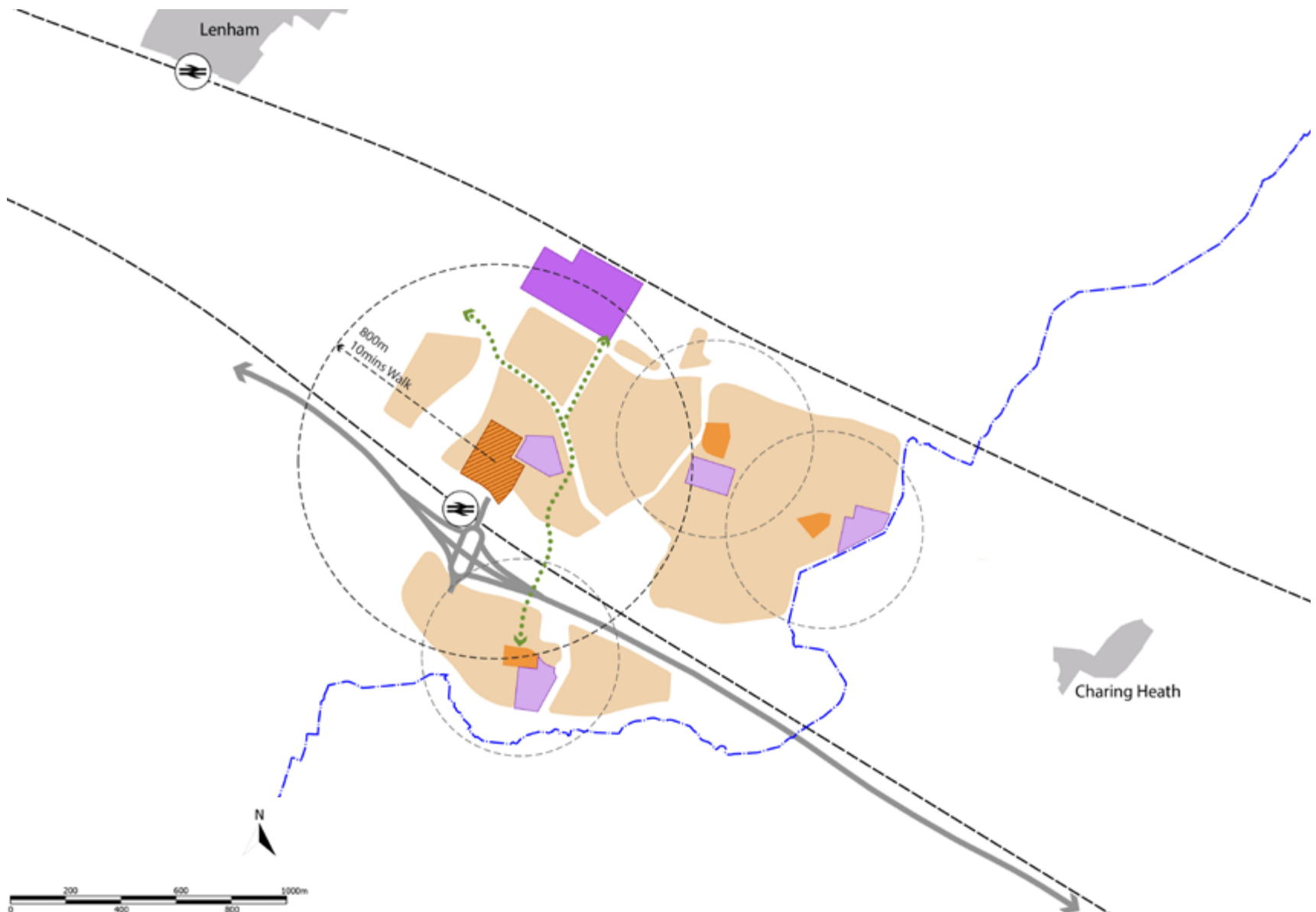


Figure 15. Walkable Neighbourhoods

A Place with a variety of homes and different characters

A Place for Everyone

Heathlands will not just create circa 5,000 new high quality homes but a place with a strong sense of identity that is socially inclusive. It will provide a wide range of homes for the whole community from starter homes, affordable homes, homes for later living to larger homes and self-build.

It will be responsive to diverse community needs with a variety of facilities, neighbourhoods and meeting places designed to be accessible and inclusive.

Heathlands will have the right mechanisms in place to ensure attractive and high quality development, but also to deliver at an accelerated pace to meet the urgent needs in the area using, amongst other initiatives, innovative modular construction and design.

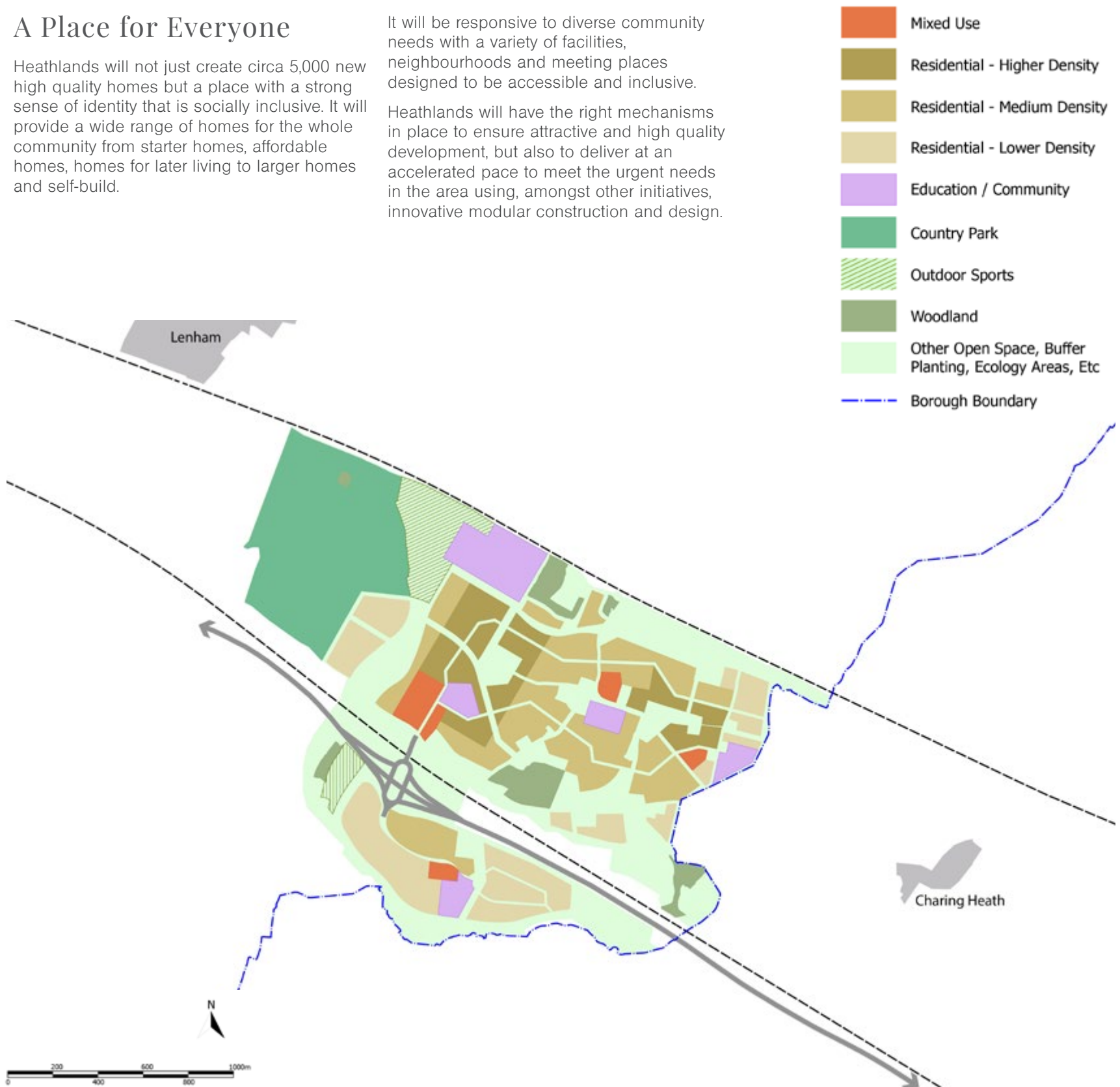


Figure 16. Land Use Plan



An Accessible and Connected Place

Access & Movement

There is the potential to serve the development from a new junction off the motorway with roundabout straddling the M20/HS1 railway line. This approach is subject to various considerations including its environmental impact, views from the Highways Agency and viability/technical aspects.

The potential junction will link with a new spine road serving the majority of development with a loop back into the district centre. This would reduce the amount of additional traffic using the existing roads, some of which could be upgraded or modified.

The design will focus on sustainable modes of transport for residents and visitors of the community, which prioritises walking, cycling and public transit systems, putting them at the heart of the development.

Connectivity through modern forms of rapid public transit networks will be established that will provide regular, reliable and efficient services to connect the settlement to nearby transport corridors and railway networks.

This will allow the opportunity for potential rapid public transport connections to nearby rail links at Lenham, Charing and Ashford, or to a potential new HS1 and/ or mainline station within Heathlands itself.

- M20 Motorway and potential junction
- Spine Road
- Existing Main Roads
- ... Cycle Route
- Secondary School
- Primary Schools
- Local & District Centres
- - - Borough Boundary
- Development Areas

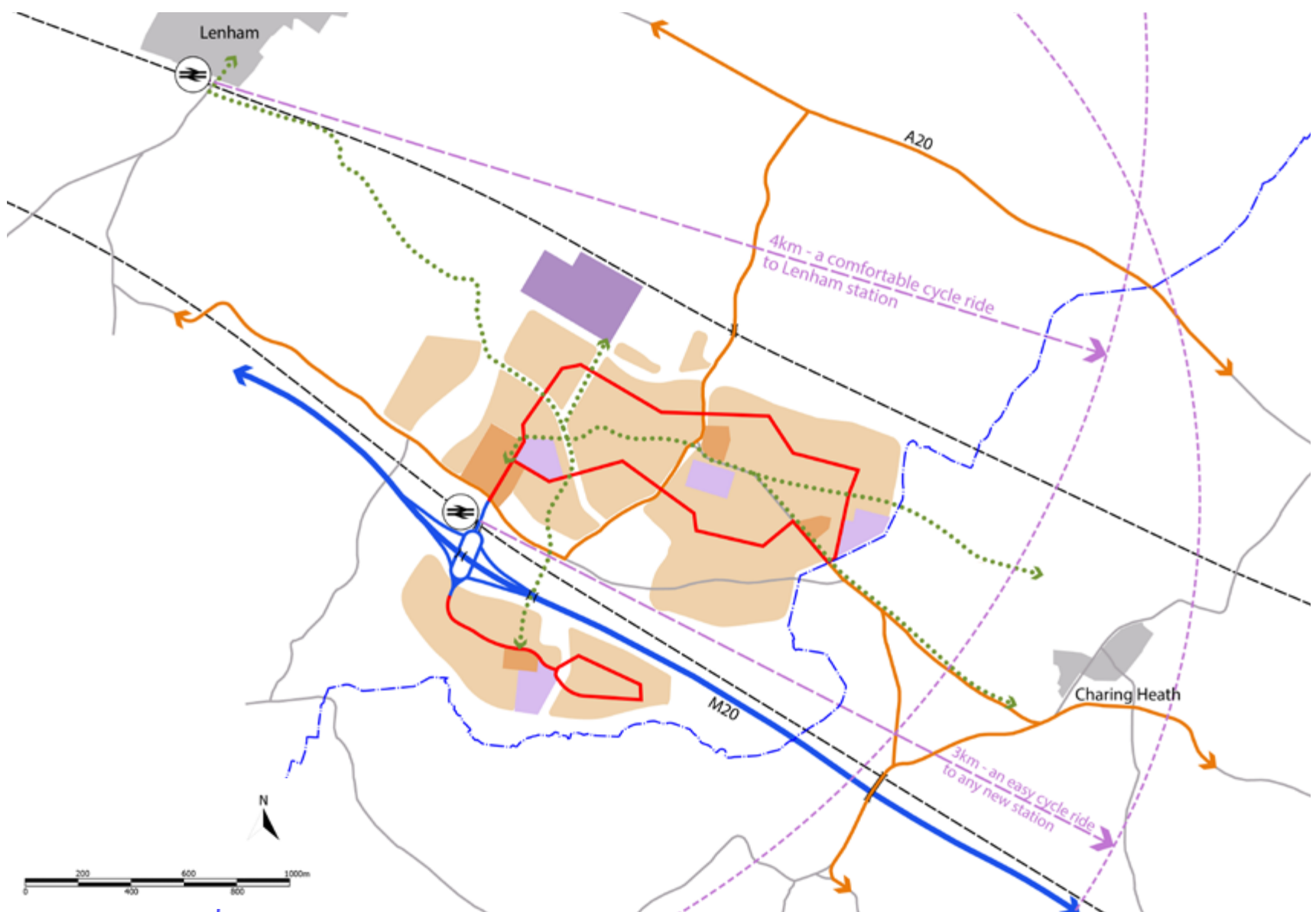


Figure 17. Main movement networks

Public Transport

The development could be served by re-directing and improving the existing new bus service between Ashford and Maidstone (see diagram below). This could run along the existing roads, such as Church Hill, Lenham Forstal Road, creating a public transport corridor throughout. An added benefit would be the provision of a service for Lenham Heath.

Cycling

There are safe and convenient cycling routes comprising an east/west spine, links toward the District Centre/Station, and a link into the southern area via the existing bridges over the M20/HS1, which presently serves Hubbard's Farm (see previous page). The cycle routes could be along new off-road routes, including along the main spine, created from existing tracks and roads, or by combining them with public footpaths, such as along the Stour Valley Walk.

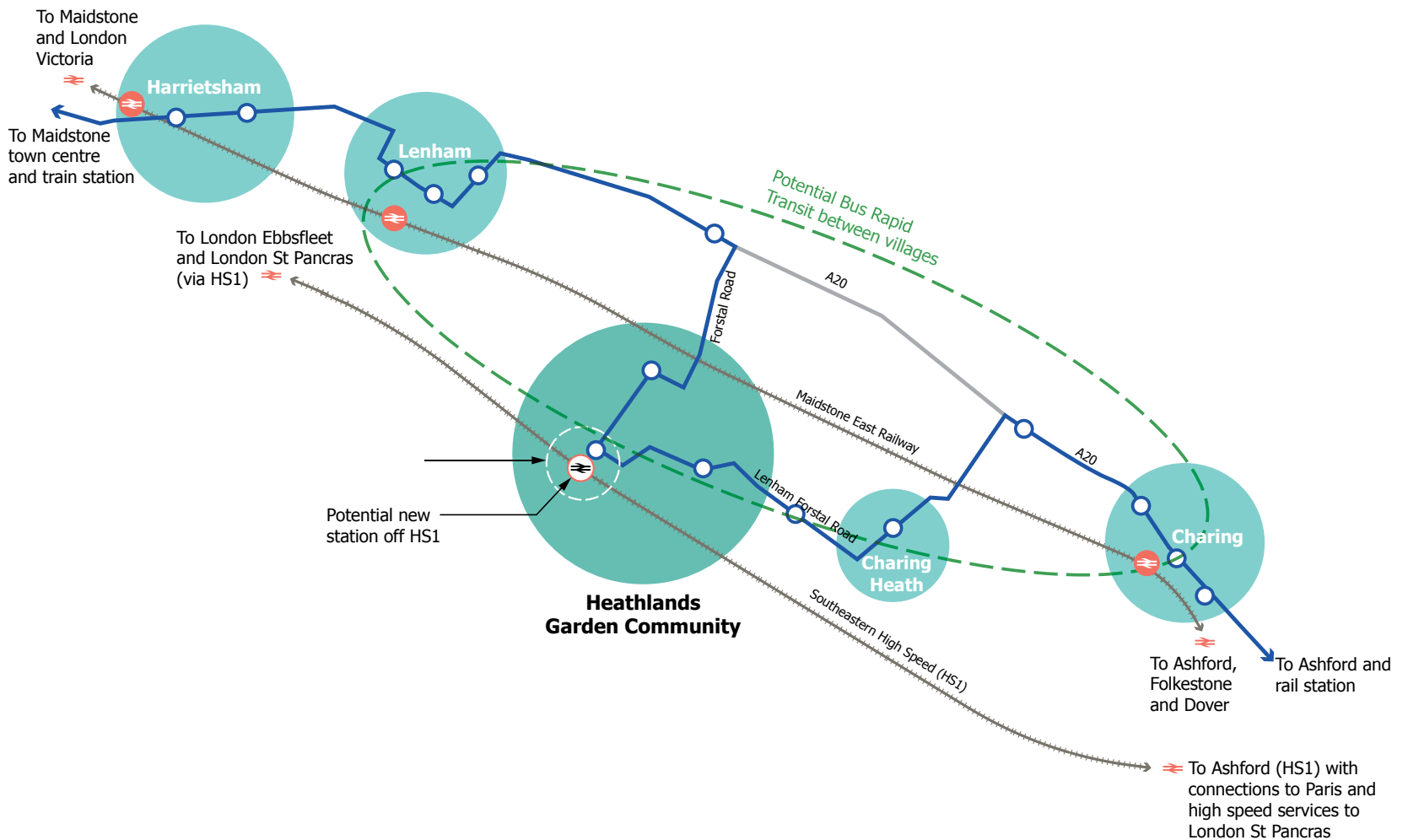


Figure 18. Public transport links

A new Settlement around “a High Street” with potential for new station

The District Centre will form the heart of Heathlands Garden Community. It will accommodate a full range of shops, services, housing and offices spread out along a tree-lined boulevard, with active uses on the ground floors.

The street will include civic spaces, such as a square, which can be used for markets and other events. The main bus links, station, vehicular connection and off-road cycle routes all pass through this street, increasing its vibrancy and drawing in residents and visitors.

The High Street will adopt the very best urban design principles in place making, creating somewhere with an identity and reducing the need for people to travel elsewhere, such as Maidstone or Ashford.





DELIVERABILITY & DELIVERY

Master Developer

Heathlands Garden Community is a highly deliverable proposition.

With MBC acting as overarching Master Developer it will be able to take control of capturing land value uplift to fund essential infrastructure.

In terms of potential delivery vehicles, MBC will consider options such as actively progressing land assembly as a landowner, including exploring a Partnership with Homes England to assist land assembly.

As advocated by Sir Oliver Letwin's recent 'Independent Review of Build Out Rates' (October 2018), MBC will also consider innovative delivery vehicles such as:

- Establishing a Local Development Company ('LDC') (to bring in private capital to pay for the land and invest in the infrastructure) before selling individual parcels to builders of different housing types; or
- Establishing a Local Authority Master Planner (LAMP) to develop a master plan and full design code for the site, and then enable a privately financed Infrastructure Delivery Company to purchase the land from the local authority, develop the infrastructure of the site, and promote the same variety of housing as in the LDC model.

Governance

As Master Developer MBC will have a long-term commitment to the delivery of Heathlands Garden Community. MBC will take lead responsibility in ensuring that its Vision for Heathlands is realised on the ground, creating and maintaining a new settlement with true sense of place and local identity.

The diagrams opposite illustrate indicative governance structures, which could guide the preparation of the comprehensive masterplan and infrastructure package to unlock the site. Involving key Government partners as well as landowner representation as appropriate.

Community Stewardship

With the early Garden Cities at Letchworth and Welwyn, there was much reliance on voluntary effort. This shared vision and willingness to take on responsibilities beyond conventional boundaries was essential to make those new communities work.

Governance of the new settlement can be shared through long-term stewardship models. These stewardship models are mostly in the form of Community Interest Companies (CICs), which are established to own and manage the community infrastructure.

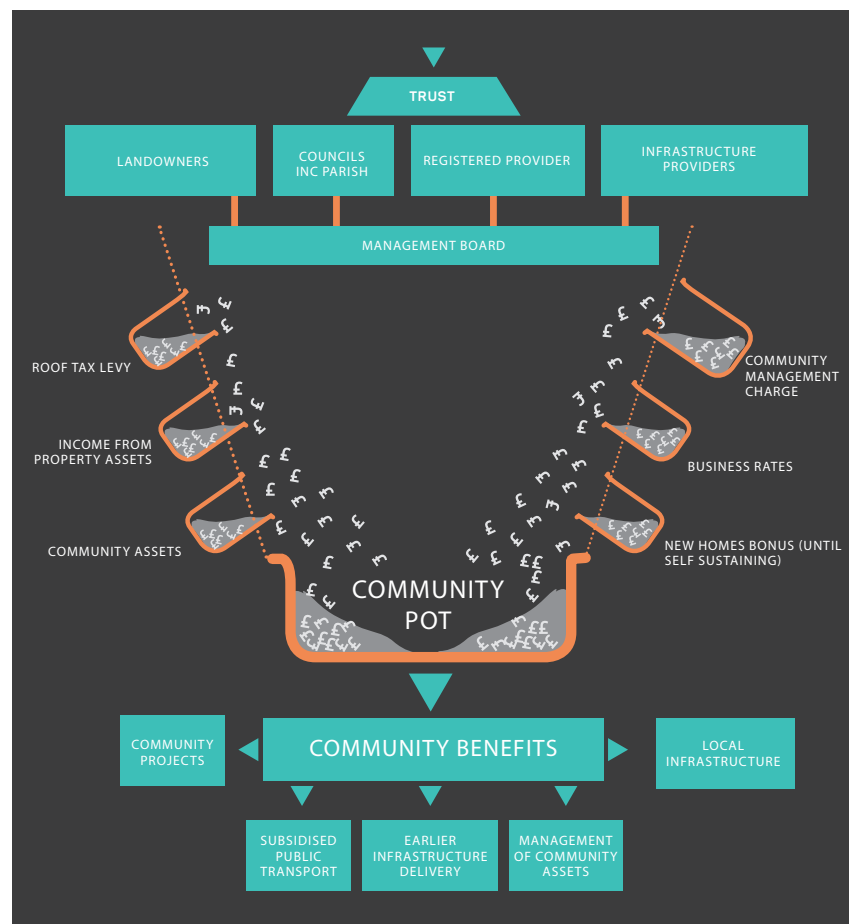
MBC, in its role as community leader, would assist in establishing CICs once the new

Garden Community is established. When a CIC is taken over by the community, the communal assets become owned and managed by the residents, for the residents.

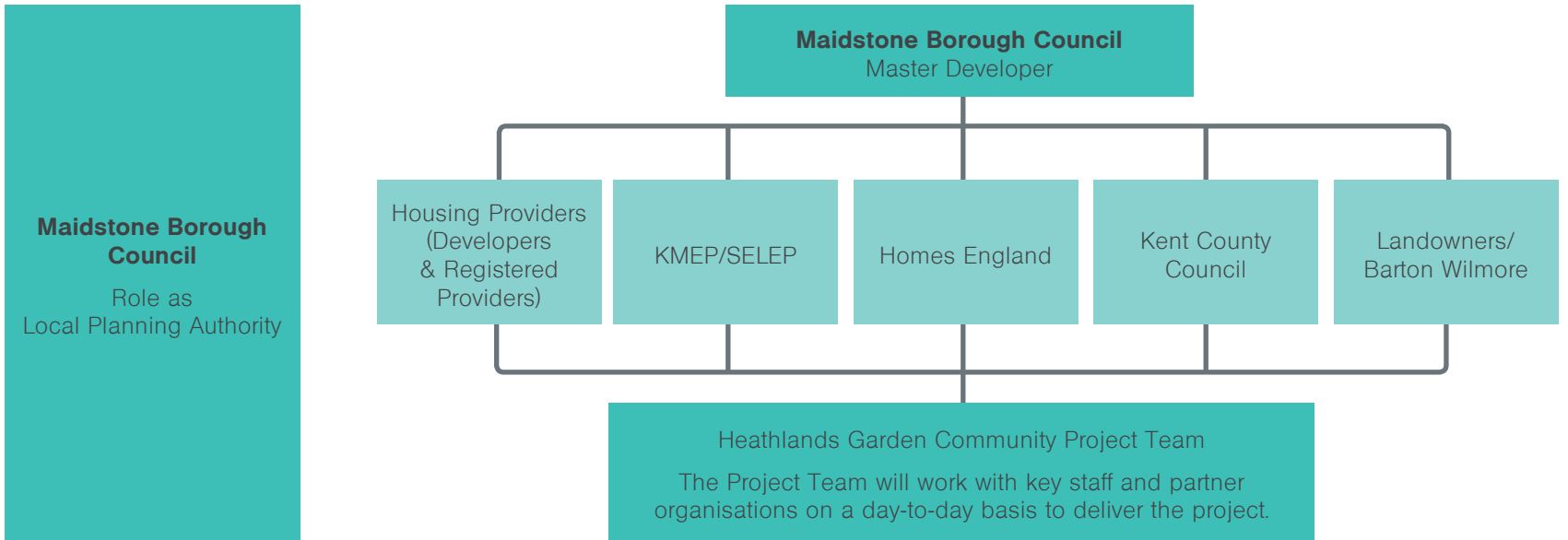
CICs therefore create real empowerment of residents and occupiers to have a say over their own environments, which truly generates a sense of ownership.

Landownership

Preliminary discussions have been held with principal landowners who are fully engaged in the process. Further discussions with all other landowners are ongoing.



Indicative Community Investment Growth Strategy



Organisation	Key Roles and Responsibilities:
MBC's role as Master Developer could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driving the project forward, by taking lead responsibility for establishing and progressing the development, delivery strategy and masterplan for Heathlands Garden Community; - Actively progressing land assembly as a landowner, securing Options over the land, and establishing and appropriate delivery vehicle; - Advocating for the new Garden Community, including with other public sector bodies and neighbouring authorities and, as lead Partner, secure funding from Government agencies; - Taking responsibility for resolving strategic planning and implementation issues, ensuring the project delivers within agreed parameters and that risks are managed; - Setting up of a range of interactive, on-going and collaborative opportunities for stakeholder engagement as well as measures including a dedicated website; - Establishing protocols for working with MBC Officers and Members, to respectively to distinguish between the two distinct roles that MBC will have in the delivery of Heathlands, being both promoter and Local Planning Authority; and, - Exercising its land Options over the longer term, enabling back to back sales of residential parcels (at circa 500 dwellings at a time) to the housebuilder / developer market to deliver, in accordance with the established masterplan and design codes.
MBC's role as Local Planning Authority includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of Heathlands Garden Community as a strategic site allocation within the Local Plan, master-planning and pre-application advice, and determination of planning applications in a timely manner.
Kent County Council's role could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Support, particularly through the Kent & Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework; - Local Highway Authority, advice and guidance on local transport matters as well as delivery partner for any works (as agreed); and, - Local Education Authority, advice and guidance on local school provision.
Kent & Medway Economic Partnership/South East Local Enterprise Partnership could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic economic policy support. - Links to potential private sector finance and commercial interests.
Homes England's role could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of expertise on the Site's planning and delivery; - Access to forward funding for infrastructure; - Potential to act as a lead delivery partner and landowner; and, - Ability to co-ordinate investment with other Government departments including the DfT.
Developer's (TBC) role would include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of Heathlands Garden Community, residential, commercial and infrastructure.
Registered Provider's (TBC) role would include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivery of affordable housing including shared ownership and social rent.

Delivery

MBC acting as Master Developer will establish and progress the development and its delivery strategy, and ultimately it will be the local plan-making and decision-taking process that will dictate the delivery timeline.

The masterplanning process will continue to evolve, designed to enable the phasing of development in a way that optimises delivery. This is very much at the early stages of ideas / formulation.

Provided below is an indicative Phasing Plan to outline how the early delivery of new homes could be achieved in advance of (or alongside where necessary) the delivery of the associated access infrastructure and amenity/ education facilities required to serve this new sustainable community.

Accelerating Delivery

To accelerate delivery a range of approaches will be deployed as part of the development strategy, which will be established and led by MBC acting as Master Developer. Throughout the plan-making, decision-taking and delivery stages, MBC will look to accelerate delivery by:

- Working closely with MBC Planning Officers to establish the bespoke planning policy framework and Vision for Heathlands Garden Community. MBC as Master Developer would be supported by a design team and specialist technical and environmental consultants. A Design Review Panel would assist in ensuring that the Vision for Heathlands Garden Community is realised on the ground;
- Establishing a development strategy that incorporates the use of efficient modern methods of construction, such as modular buildings;

- Progressing a master plan and policy framework that supports the provision of self-build and serviced parcels of land, in order to create a level playing field for all sizes of housebuilder to competitively purchase; and,
- Progressing a policy framework that requires the delivery of a diverse range and type of housing products - providing variety in the market will assist in promoting rapid market absorption and build-out rates.



Assumes a build rate of circa 75 increasing 400 dwellings per annum as the development progresses with multiple developers operating on site. Assumes an average of 35% affordable housing provision.

Phasing: Indicative only (i.e Phase 1 & 2 could swap)



PHASE 1 (3-5 years)

- First phasing of housing built
- Access via A20
- Parts of the District Centre open
- Primary school completed
- Work starts on Country Park
- Buffer planting added across whole development



PHASE 2 (5-10 years)

- Second parcel of housing built
- Additional local centre and primary school completed
- District Centre develops further
- Bus service is running via re-directed service
- Potential access off M20 and main spine route completed
- Work on potential station commences
- Social and community aspects develop



PHASE 3 (10-20 years)

- Final phases of houses built
- Secondary school opens
- Green links and ecological enhancements are completed
- Social and community activities mature
- Heathlands Garden Community becomes a more established 'place'

EVOLVING THE VISION

Technical Studies

Over the coming months technical environmental and design studies will be undertaken to inform the emerging masterplan and infrastructure requirements. These studies will include:

- Landscape: An initial high-level landscape appraisal has been undertaken to assess the potential visual impact of a development and the sensitivity of the landscape to change and inform the masterplan. More detailed landscape appraisals will be undertaken as the proposal progresses;
- Transport and Highways: High level highways input has informed the approach to delivering a sustainable transport strategy for the masterplan. Further technical work will be required to ascertain the capacity of the local road network and to identify any necessary mitigation measures including the feasibility of a potential new junction to the M20.
- Flood Risk and Drainage: To assess the risk from all forms of flooding and to drive the blue/ green infrastructure requirements. To include the design of foul, surface water and sustainable urban drainage solution (SUDS).
- Ecology: To assess the likely presence of protected species and demonstrate how the proposal will produce a net gain in biodiversity and provide mitigation and enhancement both during construction and post construction.
- Heritage and Archaeology: To assess and identify the heritage assets (both designated and undesignated) and / or their setting, describe their significance and the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.
- Air Quality: To quantify the impact of the proposal on air quality and identify whether any mitigation would be required.
- Utilities: To establish and identify the extent of improvements to utilities required.
- Minerals: To understand the potential for mineral resources to be present, and the benefits or otherwise of extracting them.
- Arboricultural and Hedge Surveys: To identify and evaluate tree constraints.
- Ground conditions and contamination: To confirm the Site's suitability for the proposal from land stability and contamination perspective.

Community Involvement

We believe that Heathlands Garden Community should be designed with the local and wider community. We propose to produce a site specific involvement strategy which will include collaborate design workshops. In these workshops, local people from across the Borough can genuinely shape the proposed development from the concept stage through to detailed design.

We believe that the creation of Heathlands presents the perfect opportunity to demonstrate a responsible and transparent approach to community involvement, by setting out a coherent and incremental strategy from the early consultation stages right through to the implementation stages and beyond; indeed, the very nature of the concept will make it necessary to do so.

This process allows for the identification of issues and problems at an early stage, as well as providing the ability to capitalise on and respond to local initiatives, harness the energy and resourcefulness of local stakeholders and incorporate their ideas and ambitions. This will involve the establishment of appropriate new local agencies, forums and mechanisms for pro-active communication, incorporation of feedback and decision-making.

In the more detailed planning, design and implementation phases, it will necessitate the creation of specific methodologies appropriate to each place, using practices and formats which are already well-established but also finding new ways to ensure that the ultimate development forms will meet the aspirations of

each existing and new community. Throughout all these processes, consideration will need to be given to innovative forms of ownership and management systems that could be applied to the Garden Community Concept.

In creating, designing and implementing the Garden Community, the focus should not only be upon creating a place where people will live, work, enjoy and interact. A successful place is one that encourages and allows a community to take a degree of control and take decisions over time which have a significant effect on the look of the place and the way it functions. In this way a dynamic self supporting community is created.

Once the Garden Community starts to be implemented, the management of the community infrastructure, such as allotments / self-grow areas, open space, communal areas and facilities etc, will require the establishment of a management company or Community Interest Company. This organisation would be wholly owned by the residents and owners within the Garden Community. Their role has the potential to be extended to act on general community matters, which may include involvement in design decisions relating to community infrastructure and input into the implementation of the Garden Community itself.

The new Garden Community will help meet the future housing and employment needs of those across the Borough for many years to come. Our community engagement strategy will therefore seek to involve residents and employers from across the Borough, in addition to the existing local residents.

"I am proud to say that I was involved in creating our village... It wasn't always easy, but the process was very rewarding."



The Way Forward

Maidstone Borough needs additional land for housing and economic development. Meeting the growth requirements of the Borough requires a strategic approach, including the delivery of a new sustainable Garden Community.

The vision for Heathlands Garden Community will continue to evolve with input from a suitably highly experienced development team.

The creation of the new Garden Community will be an iterative and engaging process. This work has commenced, but MBC will need to progress working closely with a wide range of key stakeholders in the coming months/ years.

This will include engaging with stakeholders including Kent County Council (Highways and Education), Highways England, Network Rail, Homes England and other statutory undertakers.

MBC has set out the below timetable to produce its Local Plan, and as this advances the Garden Community principles will be progressed in more detail in order to inform each stage of the ongoing plan-making process.

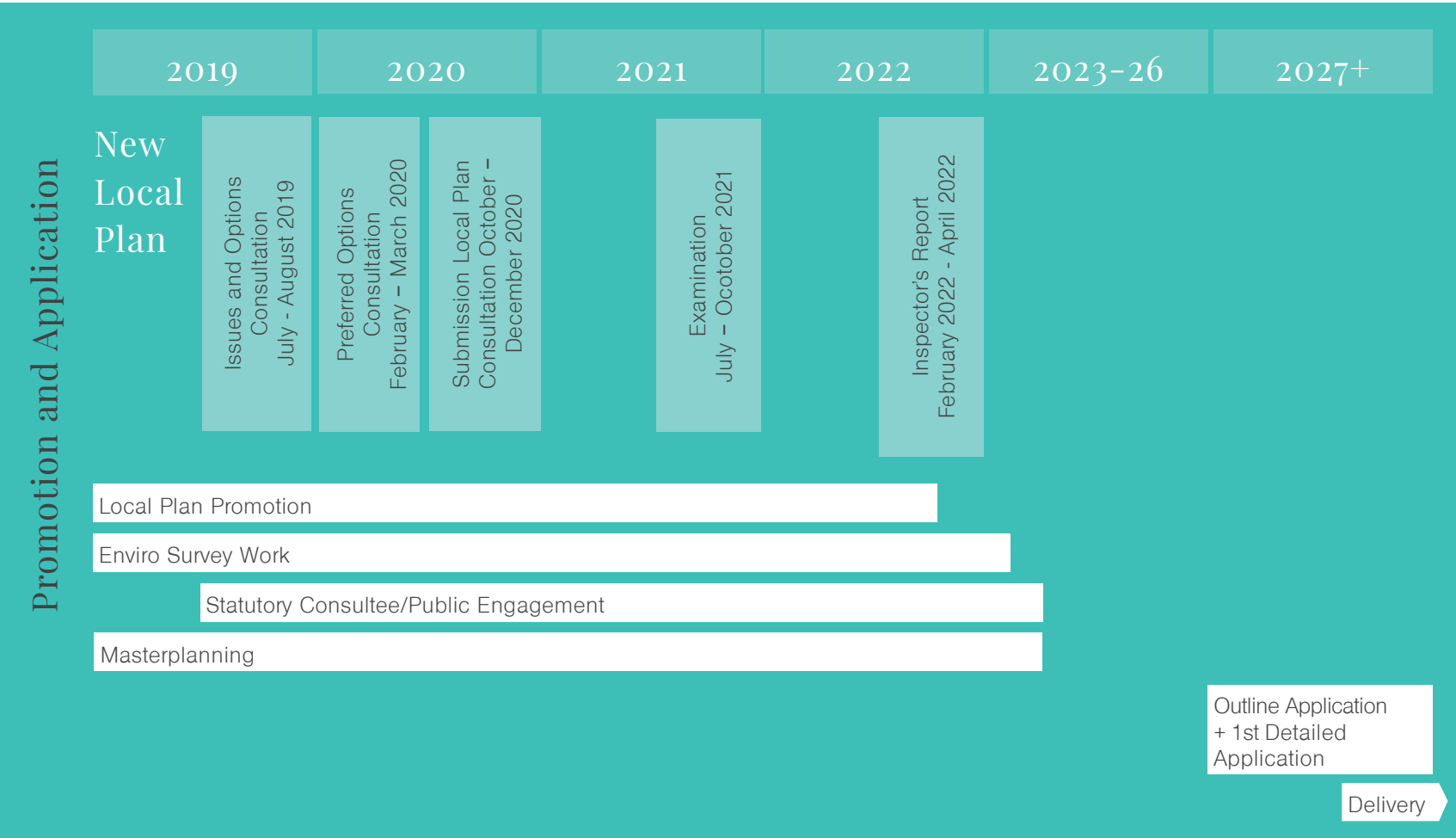
An indicative overall programme for the progression of MBC's new Local Plan and the delivery of Heathlands Garden Community is also set out below:

For further information, please contact:

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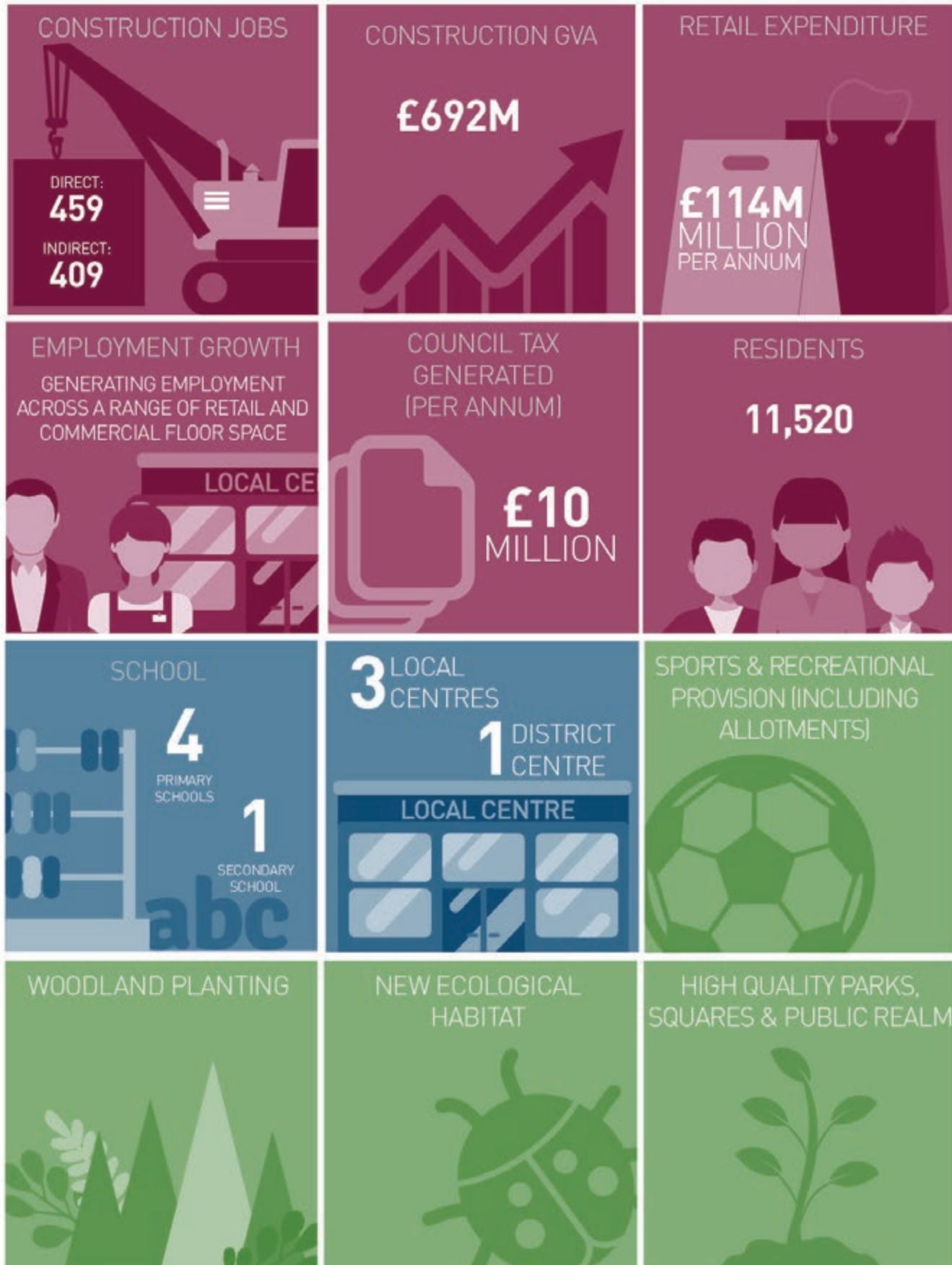
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As of May 2019



Heathlands Garden Community Economic Benefits Summary





**BARTON
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