

# NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES PROSPECTUS







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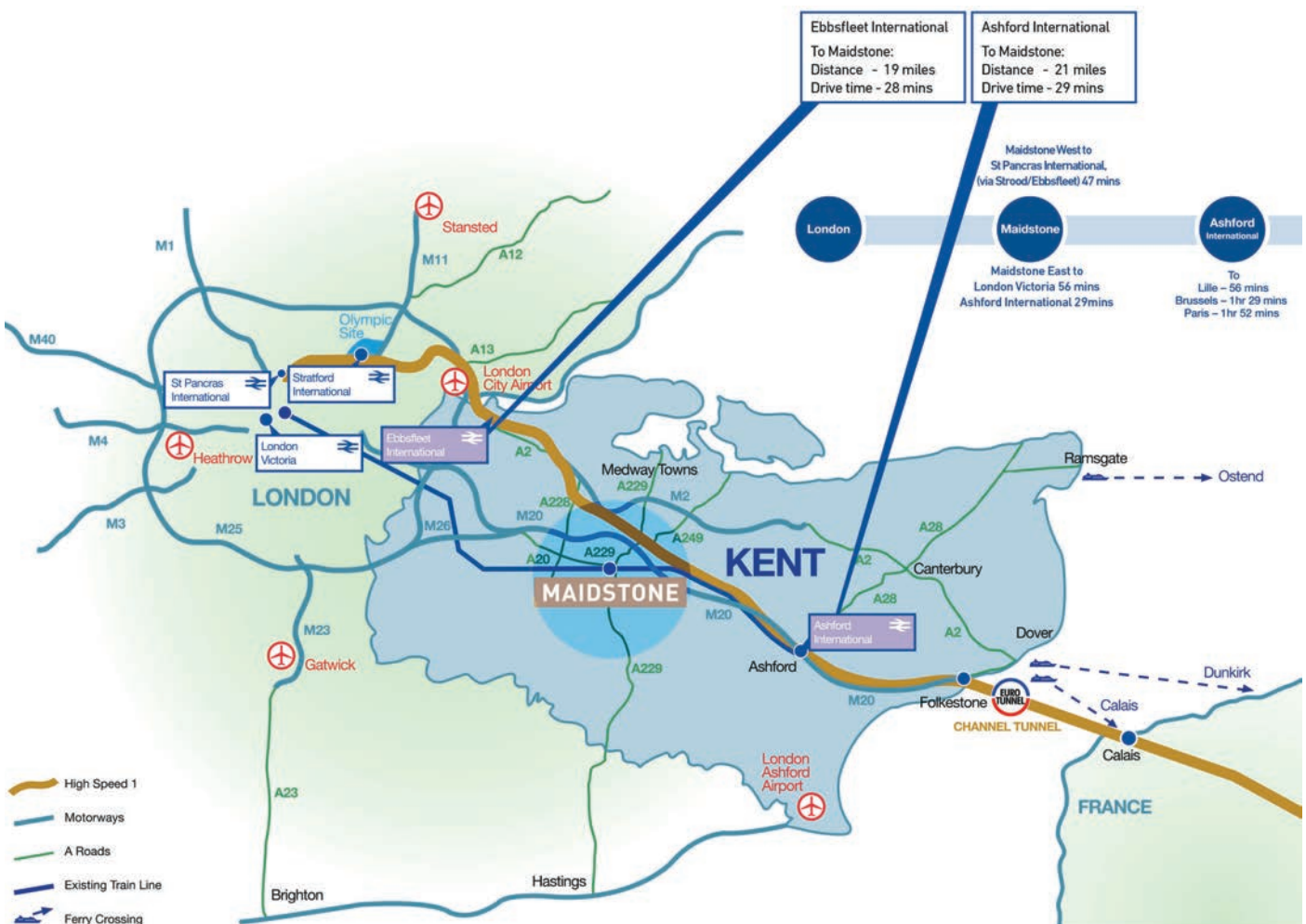
# INTRODUCTION

The council wishes to provide as much guidance as possible to those considering submissions for urban extensions and new settlements. This will allow the council to give full consideration to these forms of new development, given their potential scale and implications. The council's guidance aligns with the government's approach to these forms of development.

We are keen to receive submissions for new garden communities, recognising that the 2018 NPPF specifically highlights the role that such an approach can play in areas of high housing demand like Maidstone.

In order for submissions to be considered fully, they should be submitted on the Call for Sites submission form, having regard to the associated guidance as well as the matters set out in this Prospectus.

## MAIDSTONE BOROUGH AT A GLANCE





## NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES – DESCRIPTION AND PRINCIPLES

New Garden Communities need to be of a sufficient scale to deliver meaningful supporting infrastructure. The Government defines 'garden villages' as being of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes and 'garden towns' as being of 10,000+ homes. They can be new, freestanding settlements or a new neighbourhood created through a major extension to an existing urban area. In either case, they are areas which are comprehensively planned and co-ordinated from the outset where the new homes and other forms of development will be built over an extended number of years.

New Garden Communities also offer the prospect of achieving mixed, balanced communities through the supply of a range of types and tenures of housing and a highly integrated approach to the provision of supporting infrastructure, facilities and mix of uses. This integration, co-ordination and delivery-focus are likely to be best achieved by taking a masterplanning approach to the delivery of the new garden community.

Within its Garden Communities Prospectus, the Government has an inspirational view of what garden communities can be ;

"We want to see vibrant, mixed use communities where people can live, work and play for generations to come – communities which view themselves as the conservation areas of the future. Each will be holistically planned, self-sustaining and characterful."



“...at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.”

The council wishes to draw attention in particular to the Garden Community qualities that are contained in the Government's prospectus. These are provided in the following extract:

### **Garden Community qualities**

“High quality place-making is what makes garden communities exemplars of large new developments, and all proposals must set out a clear vision for the quality of the community and how this can be maintained in the long-term, for instance by following Garden City principles. Although we are not imposing a particular set of development principles on local areas, we do expect proposals to demonstrate how they will meet and embed the key qualities below.

- a. Clear identity** – a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, including at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.
- b. Sustainable scale** – built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a day to day basis, with the capacity for future growth to meet the evolving housing and economic needs of the local area.
- c. Well-designed places** – with vibrant mixed use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.
- d. Great homes** – offer a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life.
- e. Strong local vision and engagement** – designed and executed with the engagement and involvement of the existing local community, and future residents and businesses. This should include consideration of how the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected.
- f. Transport** –integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.

Beaulieu Park, Essex – Countryside Properties





- g. Healthy places** – designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health & wellbeing priorities and strategies.
- h. Green space** – generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental gains such as biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital.
- i. Legacy and stewardship arrangements** – should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.
- j. Future proofed** – designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures. “

The Council also wishes to draw attention to the Town & Country Planning Association ‘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:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.

Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.

- 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.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.”

The council believes that the above mentioned qualities and principles should act as a key point of reference for those considering proposals for urban extensions or new settlements.

### NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES – FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The council is keen to ensure that submissions are genuinely **deliverable** and will expect the **land value uplift** to be used to fund essential infrastructure. An important dimension will be how developers/landowners will work with the council in this regard – will the homes will be delivered through clear partnership arrangements to capture land value to secure all necessary infrastructure?

**Local community engagement, involvement and support** is also likely to be instrumental to delivering a successful proposal. Those people who are most closely impacted by the new garden community proposal will need an understanding of the benefits that the development will bring and will likely welcome opportunities for meaningful influence on the specific details of the proposal. Arrangements for the stewardship of community assets could be important in sustaining the benefits for the community as a whole in the longer term.

In addition to its regulatory role as planning authority, the council would also want and need to take a role as **community leader**, potentially taking on the role of advocate for the new garden







community (or communities) both locally and more widely, in particular with funding bodies.

An important aspect to achieving a mixed and balanced community will be ensuring that the **new homes match the diversity of local needs** and offer variety and choice, including in terms of affordability and tenure. This will likely include specialist provision in response to evidenced needs, such as housing for the elderly, serviced plots for custom and self-build and Gypsy & Traveller pitches.

A successful Garden Community is likely to contain a **genuine mix of uses**. Making realistic provision for additional employment floorspace will mean that some residents will be able to work locally. A local centre can contain a range of local shops, services and facilities; leisure and community uses; open space; formal recreation space and sports facilities. **Supporting facilities and services** that the residents will also need should be considered within the development as a whole, including schools, health centres, sports and leisure facilities, community buildings.

A new Garden Community is a particular opportunity to set an exceptional standard of building and urban design. Some underpinning **themes** which a new Garden Community should have particular regard to are;

- Creating a distinctive place to live at a sustainable scale which responds to local character in the heart of Kent
- Providing a clear, holistic masterplan that integrates the new development with its surroundings
- Giving residents the best opportunities to follow healthy lifestyles, allowing activity to be built into their daily lives and providing opportunities to buy and grow healthy food along with ensuring that health services are close at hand
- That generous amounts of green space, landscaping, trees and hedgerows are integrated into the design of the development - with the purposes of achieving biodiversity net gain, an attractive setting for development, informal recreational space, and attractive walking and cycling links
- Integrated and accessible transport choices, with a particular emphasis on active modes (walking and cycling), public transport and low emission technologies
- Buildings and places designed with a strong focus on energy efficiency, reduced carbon emissions and climate change mitigation
- Exceptional connectivity through superfast broadband

## NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES – THE ROLE OF MBC

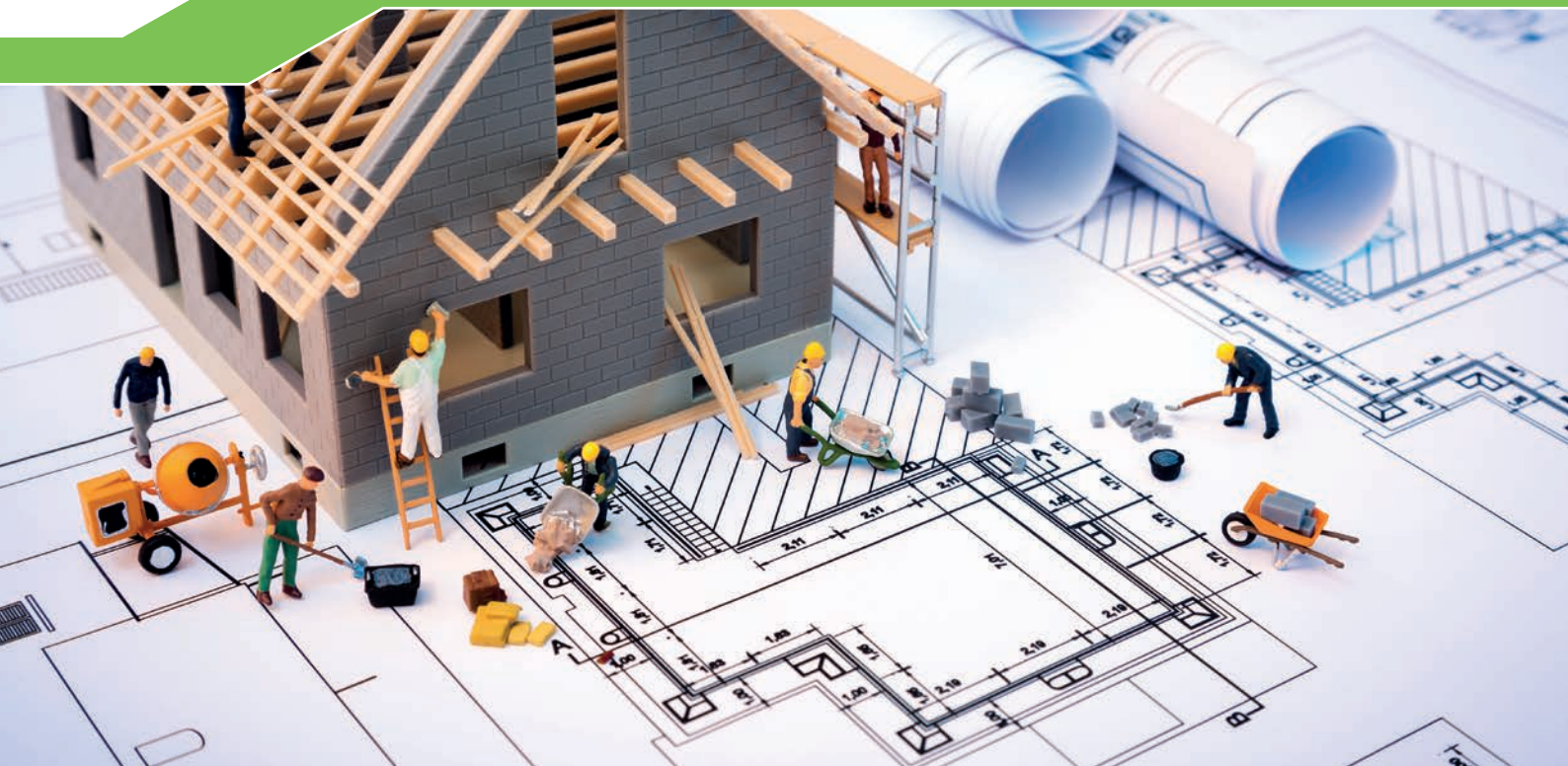
Strong local leadership is crucial to developing and delivering a long-term vision for these new communities.

As noted earlier in the prospectus, an important dimension will be how developers and landowners will work with the council. The council echoes the Government's proposition that "strong local leadership is crucial to developing and delivering a long-term vision for these new communities" .

If a new Garden Community or communities are to be part of the preferred way forward in this borough, future roles for the council could include the following;

- Local planning authority - establishing the planning policy framework for the new community, directing its detailed masterplanning and delivering consents through the development management process
- Partner (possibly a lead partner) to secure funding from Governmental agencies
- Advocate for the new Garden Community, including with other public sector bodies and neighbouring authorities
- Active role in land assembly
- Investor, including as a possible landowner
- Role as an overarching 'master-developer'

Your submissions should set out how you will work with the council to bring forward your new Garden Community.





## DELIVERABILITY & VIABILITY

This prospectus has already touched on the importance of deliverability. The Government identifies “the delivery of a new Garden Community is a complex, long term project which will deliver homes over a number of decades.” This means that interested parties must have a concerted approach to deliverability from the outset.

Promoters of new Garden Communities should give particular consideration to how barriers can be overcome and delivery can be accelerated, as well as sustained, over longer time periods. Measures which may be utilised are;

- A clear role for a master developer
- Opportunities for multiple suppliers including SME builders to accelerate and sustain delivery rates.
- Setting out roles, responsibilities, timeframes and commitments of key parties through, for example, a Memorandum of Understanding with the council and/or other key parties. This should progress to a Planning Performance Agreement in due course
- Collaboration between landowners/developers and the council on bids for funding (including forward funding)

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Those submitting proposals for new Garden Communities to provide between 1,500 and 10,000+ new homes as part of a mixed use development should elaborate on their proposal by providing supporting information covering the matters set out in this prospectus with a particular focus on the following aspects;

- a plan showing the area covered by the submission, detailing the extent of different landownerships and interests
- the proposal – numbers/amount of different types of housing and how the site will deliver a diversity of housing types and tenures
- details of proposed layout of uses across the development and how the development integrates with the adjoining area
- the details of supporting uses, such as employment, local shopping and community facilities, which will be needed as part of the new community and how these will be delivered in conjunction with the new homes;

- details of the supporting infrastructure – schools, healthcare, transport improvements, formal and informal green space – that will be required to make the new community a sustainable and highly desirable place to live and how this will be funded and delivered in conjunction with the new homes;
- how best use will be made of the existing physical and social infrastructure in the locality;
- the scope for environmental benefits to be achieved in conjunction with the development, for example gains in biodiversity through the creation of new habitats;
- a development trajectory for the site, specifying the measures that will be employed to accelerate housing delivery rates;
- any significant constraints to development and how these will be overcome;
- Programme of technical studies to evidence the proposal – likely to include
  - ◆ Transport & highways
  - ◆ Ecology and protected habitats and species
  - ◆ Arboricultural and hedge surveys
  - ◆ Heritage – including archaeology
  - ◆ Flood risk assessment and hydrology
  - ◆ Ground conditions and contamination
  - ◆ Air quality
  - ◆ Utilities and services
  - ◆ Topography
  - ◆ Landscape and visual impact
  - ◆ Minerals
- Your expectations of the council and how you will work collaboratively with the council in the delivery of the proposal; and
- What delivery vehicle and governance arrangements you envisage using.

Responses to these points should be provided as part of the 'additional information' section of the Call for Sites submission form.



