



Agenda Item No:

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 17/12/2020

Report Title: Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community

Report Author & Job Title: Dan Daley – Masterplanning & Delivery Coordinator

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Neil Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Planning & Chilmington Green

Summary: Following 18 months of stakeholder and wider public engagement, a resulting Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community is presented for adoption. This document sets out clear and achievable actions to be delivered by different partners, helping to join-up high quality placemaking with community-led governance and long-term sustainable development.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Weald Central, Weald South, Singleton West, Singleton East, Roman, Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. To recommend to Full Council, adoption of the draft Vision & Strategy and the forthcoming steps to implement the proposed action plan (along with strategic partners who have endorsed it)
- II. To delegate the Director of Finance & Economy and the Head of Planning, the authority to approve the final draft ahead of adoption by Full Council in March 2021

Policy Overview: The SAGC Vision & Strategy has been written with careful consideration to multiple Corporate and Planning policy documents. The two sites allocated within the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and are subject to relevant policies which the Vision & Strategy seeks to reinforce. These are detailed within the report.

Financial Implications: The high level objectives and associated action plan within the Vision & Strategy relates to existing budgets within respective ABC service plans. Further detail is included within the report.

Legal Implications:	None
Equalities Impact Assessment:	See attached
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	A DPIA is deemed not required. Whilst the Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community has not and will not require any large scale or high risk processing of personal data, the engagement of stakeholders and the wider public is crucial and this will involve the processing of basic personal information, opinions and views. As such considerations have been given to the nature, scope, context and purpose of any processing of personal data to ensure appropriate compliance and mitigation measures are in place to reduce any risks to the rights or freedoms of the individual.
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	<p>The draft SAGC Vision & Strategy is designed to add value to the project and to reduce risk for the Council by setting clear objectives and a clear plan for how key partners will help to deliver. This distribution of responsibility over a diverse range of actions, which is being endorsed by partners, will help to mitigate Council risk and ensure successful delivery. Without this Strategy, it is possible that the project will fall outside of the Council's risk appetite and therefore jeopardize deliverables.</p> <p>For more detail, see attached Service Risk Register.</p>
Sustainability Implications:	The Strategy has sustainability as a core theme, and it provides reasonable actions which detail how the South of Ashford Garden Community can help to meet the Borough's Carbon Neutral aims. If carbon reduction and increased biodiversity cannot be achieved within the Garden Community then this doesn't bode well for further housing development. The Garden Community must champion these aims and drive forward sustainable projects such as low-energy homes, community facilities which put energy back into the grid, green travel plans and the rewilding of designated ecological areas. Multiple partners play a role in these aims, including the Chilmington Management Organisation which will be responsible for some of the assets. The Department for Education is also making first steps to deliver one of the first carbon neutral secondary schools in the country, a great legacy project for the SAGC.
Other Material Implications:	N/A
Exempt from Publication:	NO

- Background Papers (blue cover pages)**
1. Report Back on the SAGC workshop outcomes – September 2019
 2. 'Our Garden Village' public survey results – September 2020
 3. Focus Group outputs for the CSG – September 2020
 4. **Draft Five Year SAGC Vision & Strategy**
 5. Table of feedback on draft SAGC Vision & Strategy

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Report Title: Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community

Introduction and Background

1. Having obtained Garden Community designation and funding from Homes England in 2019, a holistic programme of activities were set in place to masterplan three major development sites under a single Vision & Strategy. Chilmington Green, Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green were to be guided by a Garden Communities framework adhering them to high quality design and placemaking. Central to this framework was the active participation of existing and future residents in the shaping of the Vision & Strategy. Since the spring of 2019, such community participation has been robust and has resulted in significant input to help shape the proposed Vision & Strategy. The core principles of this approach were supported by Planning Policy Task Group in July 2020.
2. Planning policy considerations included the Area Action Plan for Chilmington Green and relevant SPDs which apply, as well as the Design Codes produced for each of the sites. Within the Local Plan 2030, two key policies which the Vision & Strategy sought to address included:
 - a. Policy COM1, 'Meeting the Community's Needs' by taking a Hub approach to strategic parks within the Borough. This includes Discovery Park which is a central project to bind the wider SAGC together.
 - b. Policy IMP4 'Governance of Public Community Space and Facilities' makes a commitment to community-led governance and stewardship. This is working well at Chilmington Green and has since been modelled for Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green. Adherence by all developments to this policy is crucial to the success of the SAGC.
3. In addition to the above, there were wider ABC corporate policies to consider. These included the Council's sustainability aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. A number of activities which will put the Garden Community on track to meeting sustainability targets, including a first for the Borough (and the Country) with the first carbon neutral secondary school.
4. Recognising some of the challenges presented by these developments, (commercially-led, private land, uncertain economic outlook, local resistance to development to name a few), the Council plays a central role in place shaping terms. Through planning policy and corporate aims, there is an imperative for the Council to broker partnerships and to contract specialist advice in the formation of healthy new communities. It also plays a central role in building civic engagement and community leadership. Delivering such ambitious aims is not achievable by the council alone, therefore this Vision & Strategy seeks to distribute the workload amongst strategic public and private partners. Public and voluntary sector partners will be encouraged to work in partnership to deliver in keeping with their social aims. Private partners will be obligated both through partnership working, where appropriate and subject to

formal decision making, section 106 agreements and planning permissions, and incentivised through the economic returns gained from delivering high quality placemaking. Key strategic partners are being asked to endorse the Strategy and its action plan.

5. The missing piece in this puzzle is to take the vision of the developers at Chilmington Green, the proposals at Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green and the aspirations of existing residents, and to set holistic objectives which bring them all together. This umbrella vision needs to be broad yet specific, representative yet directional. It needs to be realistic and open to change whilst being underpinned by planning policy and securely funded by multiple partners.

Proposal

6. The SAGC Vision & Strategy sets out a vision statement followed by five strategic objectives. They encompass the priorities which were voiced by partners and local community members. Arguably these five objectives offer a considered mix of ingredients important to any emerging development of a similar scale. The SAGC objectives, however, make reference to specific qualities which will distinguish this development, making it an exemplary new community.
7. Under the five strategic objectives there is a detailed action plan which identifies a responsible party to lead each action; the partners needed to support, co-deliver or advise; key challenges/risks to overcome and a broad timeframe. The action plan includes seeking out additional funding. This will be coordinated by the existing Chilmington Project Team, something this team already delivers working alongside the Theme Leads, identified in the Chilmington Together Partnership. Similarly, many of the actions identified are ongoing or are part of the day job for those identified as responsible. The key here is to join-up the approach and to set the framework needed for partners to start meeting the strategic objectives of the SAGC. (eg. there has been good intention by many partners, with much ambition to date, but not a road map to focus this energy). The action plan will be evaluated and revised each year to reflect the current environment and progress made.
8. In terms of core funding, the Homes England Garden Communities programme for 2021/2022 is pending (notice due December 2020). The programme pays for much of the ABC corporate level coordination of the wider SAGC project, but again many of the actions identified are within existing Council resource or are to be delivered by strategic partners. The Strategy's action plan includes work to secure additional funds above and beyond what has been secured to date. Although unlikely, should the Garden Communities funding not be obtained, nor any further monies secured, the proposed action plan will be reduced and/or suspended until a time when adequate funding can be secured.
9. To date the process of creating the Vision & Strategy has been about listening, retaining and reflecting back. This document being presented to cabinet will be subject to further modifications. This is in keeping with how the process of shaping the Strategy began. It began as a participatory exercise and, whilst this is not the end, it is the beginning of many more years of involving many different perspectives. This is a reflection of that process and

should it obtain Cabinet approval, it will go on to reflect any further input necessary. Specifically there is a desire to spatialize (put on a map) the action plan. This exercise will be carried out and included in the final publication for March 2021.

10. It is important to note that the SAGC Strategy will not be a standalone document, but will be underpinned by a Garden Community SPD. This is in development with Planning Policy colleagues. The SPD will aim to provide the necessary hooks to ensure Developer partners deliver the strategic aims of the Vision & Strategy. The SPD will set out in planning terms what specifically applies within the SAGC area, adding greater detail to pre-existing policy guidance on quality placemaking and methods of delivery.

Equalities Impact Assessment

11. Members are referred to the attached Assessment. The key issues arising include a wide diversity of views on the existing and proposed developments within the SAGC. The Assessment reveals no negative impacts on specific groups with protected characteristics. Likely positive impacts will be felt by those in the young adult and middle age categories, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, disability, race or religion. This indicates an age related impact as the outcomes of the proposal are likely to serve younger generations seeking affordable homes.
12. There are further positive impacts for those with certain protected characteristics should the aims of the proposal be met. This is because several actions within the Strategy directly address accessibility and inclusion. Actions to ensure disabled access within all community facilities, alternative and safe means of travel, as well as inclusive approaches to governance. These all seek to make a positive impact. The inclusion of these actions is the result of consultation that heard from some of these particularly marginalised voices.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

13. As the Borough's largest housing allocation with a total of 7,250 homes and associated infrastructure across three sites, an ambitious yet achievable Vision & Strategy is essential. What has been drafted represents 18 months of stakeholder and wider public engagement with the South of Ashford Garden Community. This engagement has included two public events held locally with total attendance above 250 people; three focus groups with representation across the SAGC area; an online survey using ABC's own public survey provider; one public webinar; ongoing Community Stakeholder Group meetings on a bimonthly basis; presentations to the Chilmington Together Delivery & Implementation Board (DIB); the Chilmington Management Organisation (CMO) and direct feedback by all partners on the draft SAGC Strategy document itself.
14. Further consultation included final presentations to the DIB and CMO Board on the 1st and 8th of December respectively, both of which have confirmed their endorsement of the draft Vision & Strategy. Feedback on the draft document so far has been about the actions with little to no change of the fundamentals behind it.

Other Options Considered

15. Without a Vision & Strategy, the SAGC relies on broader policy and guidance, eg. Local Plan, Chilmington Green AAP, etc. Whilst these are important documents, they do not (and cannot) go far enough in detailing all of the important elements to creating a vibrant and active community. There are limitations to the planning system which mean that it is vital to produce a Strategy which will deliver on the council's ambitious plans for its garden community.
16. Not having a Strategy and Action Plan which brings together our partners and to produce a collective vision and ambitions upon which we can focus resource, monitor and evaluate delivery, was therefore not an option.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

17. When the council secured garden community status from central government, this elevates the development as one which will break new boundaries, be innovative and seek to provide a community for the future. The council therefore needs to ensure it focuses its limited resources and that of its partners in achieving these aims. A strategy and action plan provides the tools in which to do this and a framework upon which to deliver.
18. These are the reasons why producing a Strategy has been supported by senior officers, the portfolio holder, ward members and Planning Policy Task Group.

Next Steps in Process

19. Should Cabinet approve the SAGC Vision & Strategy, it will undergo further refinement along with the production of a spatial plan (map) indicating how some of the actions will be located within the SAGC area. This is part of improving the accessibility of the document by making it easier for all readers to understand, in a visual way, what the Strategy is trying to achieve. This will be done alongside further graphic illustration and iconography to be produced by ABC's communications team. The final designed publication would, subject to delegated powers, be signed off by the Director of Economy & Finance and the Head of Planning.
20. Further to the point on accessibility, the ABC communications team will also develop a microsite for the SAGC utilising the same methods applied in the recent re-design of the Council's own website. This will make the SAGC strategy accessible to a wider audience through the use of screen readers, speech recognition and audio recordings.
21. Subject to the adoption of the Strategy by Full Council in March 2021, several project working groups will be established. These will include Council officers, key partners and members of the public. These groups will pick up specific actions and implement. Bimonthly reporting to the Community Stakeholder Group will proceed from there with further monitoring and evaluation as set out in detail within the Strategy. Cabinet will receive an annual report on progress and evaluation, together with an updated action plan.

Conclusion

22. Given the current economic circumstances and the future outlook in post-Covid-19 recovery, Ashford Borough Council has now, more than ever, a leading role to play in the SAGC. This Vision & Strategy offers a bold way forward which utilises the strengths of many different actors. This distribution of resource at the local level will help to maintain the health and wellbeing of existing and new residents through the tides of economic uncertainty ahead. Of course there is much within the Strategy which depends on our Developer partners to deliver at pace. This is why the tested project governance arrangement for Chilmington Green must be continued with ABC resource to coordinate. This governance needs to extend to the SAGC in time.
23. Further to the above, there is much within the Strategy which can be delivered without reliance on the market. Many of the actions around active travel, ecological enhancement, community development, access and inclusion, to name a few, can be led with existing resource. This is a milestone in the history of these developments and a real opportunity to set the bar for future development in the Borough. The SAGC Vision & Strategy, along with the above mentioned Garden Community SPD, will be a practical suite of aims and guidance to achieve this. The recommendations are set out on the summary page.

Portfolio Holder's Views

Cllr Neil Shorter, Portfolio holder for Planning

24. Building communities in the style of historic villages that have evolved over hundreds if not thousands of years as places that people “own” and are fundamentally part of rather than simply dormitory estates that people live in and take decades to make “home” is vital. This is at the heart of what the SAGC is endeavouring to achieve.
25. Chilmington Green, as a new community, when it was in its early formation had put forward a new stewardship model. This took the form of the Chilmington Management Organisation which is beginning to prove its value. This concept emerged in the early 2000s to the final model agreed at Planning in 2014. The same will be true for the SAGC as it too must be governed in a way which allows for community-led stewardship. This is why the SAGC Vision & Strategy sets out a clear plan which brings further proposed developments on board in a way which will ensure community cohesion and joined-up infrastructures.

Cllr Jessamy Blanford, Ward Member

26. The SAGC gives us the opportunity to knit the new residents and the current residents into playing an important role in developing the area in which they live. As the new dwellings are built and occupied the residents will have the opportunity to promote leisure, sporting, environmental and public art opportunities to make the SAGC a really memorable place to live.

Contact and Email

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Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:
 - (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
 - (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
 - (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
 - (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).
3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership*
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
 - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.
7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances The greater the potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.
8. In terms of timing:
 - Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
 - Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
 - The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.
10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:
 - Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
 - Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
 - The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:
 - Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
 - Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.

- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on “Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making” (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Dan Daley – Masterplanning & Delivery Coordinator
Decision maker:	Ben Lockwood – Director of Finance & Economy
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Cabinet proposal to Full Council to adopt Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community.
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	17 December 2020
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is for Cabinet Member’s approval to help bring a holistic vision for this project into focus; to champion the objectives and actions which the strategy proposes. • Once approved, the Strategy can be brought forward for adoption by Full Council in March, at which point all

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>partners and groups involved are invited to join working groups that will help implement the actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and future residents of the SAGC area are the primary benefactors of the Strategy. Its objectives are to shape a healthy new community within which they play a central role. The Strategy also affects all those named partners who are delivering new housing, key infrastructures and wider programming. They too will be expected to use the Strategy as a roadmap to successful delivery. • Whilst difficult to put a number on how many will be affected, likely in the immediate term this Strategy will affect hundreds. This will be nearer to thousands affected as actions taken over the next five years begin to impart a legacy on the SAGC.
<p>Information and research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research behind this decision extends to some of the earliest policy frameworks developed for the area now defined as the SAGC. From the Greater Ashford Development Framework (GADF) in 2005 to the Area Action Plan for Chilmington in 2013, it was established in policy that Chilmington Green would be designed and built following Garden City principles. In 2018, the concept of a South of Ashford Garden Community was put forward by ABC and formally recognised in the Ashford Local Plan 2030. This allocated two further sites adjacent to Chilmington Green and it recognised the inherent relationship between the three. • In addition to the above mentioned policy documents, further research was carried out to understand best practice in other parts of the country. At the time, a strong relationship was formed with RegenCo (consultancy setup by East Hants District Council) who were leading the Whitehill & Bordon development. This 'Healthy New Town' had a bold vision (not unlike a Garden City) which offered plenty of learnings for Chilmington Green to adopt. RegenCo helped Chilmington Green implement a similar project governance arrangement in the form of the Delivery & Implementation Board. It was evident from this approach that public/private partnership and multi-stakeholder engagement were critical to delivering high quality placemaking.
<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, two public workshops on the SAGC Vision & Strategy were widely publicised (one in March and another in September). In 2020 a public survey was published and a series of focus groups were organised with local residents chairing. Finally, a public webinar was held at the end of September where the draft principles for the Vision & Strategy were presented. Throughout the past 18 months, the County Council along with other key partners including the Developers of the sites have been consulted upon through reports and presentations. • The idea of the SAGC (its approach to joining up multiple developments etc.) has been widely supported by all

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>partners and most residents. Where differing opinion was encountered, the consensus has always been that a Vision & Strategy is essential to governing large-scale development. Those with opposing views were about the principle of development at all, but a majority are in favour of development if done to a high quality. In terms of the varying protected characteristics within those consulted, it was evident that young adults were most in favour of the SAGC over older generations. Inclusivity was a prominent point of discussion, particularly for persons with disabilities. It is for this reason that the SAGC Vision & Strategy sets out a commitment to delivering more inclusive and accessible community facilities.</p>
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Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	Medium	Positive (Minor)
Middle age	High	Positive (Major)
Young adult	High	Positive (Major)
Children	Medium	Positive (Minor)
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	Medium	Positive (Minor)
Mental	Medium	Positive (Minor)
Sensory	Medium	Positive (Minor)
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Neutral
<u>SEX</u>	None	Neutral

Men		
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	None	Neutral
Former service personnel	None	Neutral
Service families	None	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	
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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide , alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes

Conclusion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have 	<p>Due regard for the equality duty has been taken from start to finish in the lead up to the proposed SAGC Vision & Strategy in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and transparent communication with all parties involved in the development of the Strategy. In-person consultations held in facilities at ground level which are accessible to all. A variety of different consultation methods utilised in order to reach a diversity of characteristics

<p>been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey published using latest technology available to support interpretation and any assistance requirements needed in order to limit barriers to participate. • All communication material written in plain English, minimising jargon and use of colloquialisms which may discriminate against certain groups • Active encouragement of those who have a protected characteristic to get involved in the process • Proactive steps taken to encourage consensus building and collaboration amongst all persons with or without a protected characteristic <p>Based on the above and the nature of the decision being brought to Cabinet, no further adjustments are deemed to be necessary.</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation of the SAGC Vision & Strategy is clearly outlined within the document. A reporting schedule is included which will review the action plan annually. Interim reporting to MT and continued management of the action plan will be led by the Chilmington Project Team.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>30 November 2020</p>

Risk mitigation log

Ref	Risk title/description	Risk Owner	Potential consequence	Current controls and mitigation	Impact breakdown					Inherent rating			Within acceptable tolerance?	Further key actions (and action owners)	Notes
					R	S	O	F	C	Impact	L'hood	Severity			
1.1	Without a Vision & Strategy for the SAGC	ABC	Lack of clear objectives and a plan to deliver which distibutes responsibility to partners, causing greater delays, disconnected designs and lack of cohesion for the benefit of residents	Extensive consultation and engagement in the past 18 months to shape a Vision & Strategy with action plan, a document that all partners and community members can sign-up to and champion	4	4	3	3	2	4	2	8	Y	A comprehensive strategy prepared which is being endorsed by each partner involved. The next step is for ABC Cabinet to propose that the strategy be adopted by Full Council.	Producing the Strategy is about adding value to what is the Borough's largest housing development. Whilst there are risks to the Council in delivering such a project, taking the current actions described (including producing a Vision & Strategy) will ensure the benefits outweigh the risks.
1.2	Risk of funding bids, namely Homes England Garden Communities funding coming to an end	Chilmington Project Team	Without replacement funds, some Officer roles would be at risk and the SAGC programme would not have the resources needed	Maintaining good communication with Homes England, delivering housing on track and meeting the aims within the Garden Community Framework	4	3	5	5	2	5	2	10	Y	The SAGC Vision & Strategy includes actions to seek out additional funding sources to distribute risk. Also, making best use of existing ABC service plans.	November Update; Homes England GC funding notification is due (could be December or early 2021 before confirmed)
1.5	Risk of staff being redeployed to support wider council functions eg. flu pandemic (or similar) OR Change in Council's corporate priorities	ABC	Service delivery affected meaning less focus on programme management and progression on planning applications and SAGC project delivery.	Programme management approach is now in place.	3	3	4	4	2	4	2	8	Y	Robust programme planning and S106 monitoring will enable ABC to better plan and organise its resources to meet obligations and commitments.	November Update; programme planning went under review and a new programme framework has been deployed.
1.7	Housing Land Supply not met due to A28 delays, wider recession, etc. Appeals increase putting financial pressure on Council.	ABC, developers	Increase in Appeals. Financial and resource implications for Council.	Council and partners very aware of challenges and forthcoming risks. Mitigation being put in place where possible.	4	5	5	4	5	5	2	10	Y	Continued work with developers to overcome challenges through DIB and Planning system at CL/KG.	Impact on housing market still unclear although sales continue to be strong across much of Chilmington. The recovery plan for the Housing market could have implications for Garden Communities .
1.8	Sustainability requirements of government place further financial pressures on council and developers	ABC	Increase in financial pressures on council and developers, requiring re-negotiation of S106, costing time and money. Impact on housing supply.	Chilmington S106 has some sustainability obligations which could be flexed. CL/KG will meet new policy requirements. Further funding sources being explored to add value.	4	3	4	2	3	3	3	9	Y	The Five Year SAGC Strategy includes detail of actions to be taken which address sustainability issues, providing framework for action and delivery	November Update; Strategy is included in the Council's newly revised carbon neutral action plan. Secondary school planned for Carbon Zero. Stodmarsh notification from Natural England will require further mitigation measures to protect biodiversity. These costs to be born by developments still in outline planning.
1.9	Risk that recession impacts on ability of developers to sell land, build and occupy houses.	ABC/Land Agents/Developers	Delay to housing occupations, impacting on Land Supply. Risk of further appeals, costing council time and resource	The DIB provides a forum for sharing issues and partnership working and the new programme framework provides a basis for discussion.	4	4	4	4	2	5	2	10	Y	Programme planning and S106 Monitoring system in place will aid careful and clear management of risks to council and its partners, providing mitigation where possible, ahead of time.	November update; Hodson, BDW & Jarvis still selling houses. Due to Sodmarsh, significant delays to progressing CL and KG applications are expected (committee dates not set) but progress is being made on other S106 heads of terms.

Key:

Impact breakdown Impact assessment (1-5)

Monitoring questions

1) Have there been any changes to the risks?

R = Reputational Risk	1: Minimal
S = Strategic risk	2: Minor
O = Operational risk	3: Moderate
F = Financial risk	4: Major
C = Compliance	5: Catastrophic

Likelihood assessment (score 1-5)

1: Rare - very unlikely to occur, no recent similar instances elsewhere

2: Unlikely - could occur, not expected but not unheard of elsewhere

3: Possible - might occur, similar occurrences elsewhere

4: Likely - will probably occur; strong likelihood, know to occur often elsewhere

5: Almost certain - expected to occur in most circumstances; frequent similar occurrences elsewhere

2) Are there any emerging risks?

3) Have independencies with other risks been identified?

4) Are there risks not being mitigated against?

5) Are we comfortable that the controls are effective?

6) What is the progress against the key actions? Is it sufficient?

1

South of Ashford Garden Community

Report Back on the Workshop of Monday 30 September 2019



Report produced by Ashford Borough Council. For more information, please contact dan.daley@ashford.gov.uk

Background

On Monday 30 September 2019, two public workshop sessions on the South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) were held at Homelands Football Club outside the village of Kingsnorth. This was a follow-on to a workshop held in March which focused on revised development proposals at Court Lodge.

This time around the emphasis was on the whole of the garden community which includes the sites of Court Lodge, Kingsnorth Green (in outline planning) and Chilmington (works on-site). The aim of which was to further consult on the outline plans and to ensure a joined-up approach to key infrastructure, open space provision and community facilities.

In addition to local residents, parish councillors and ward members, attendees included planning officers from Ashford Borough Council (ABC), highways and drainage experts from Kent County Council, urban design consultants Urban Wilderness, Feria Urbanism and the Land Management Institute, developer partners Jarvis Homes and Hallam Land, as well as representatives from Kent Wildlife Trust, Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership and Ashford Vineyard Church.

The proceeding pages map key issues and ideas along with the material collected during the group table sessions, summarising participant views through key themes at the end.

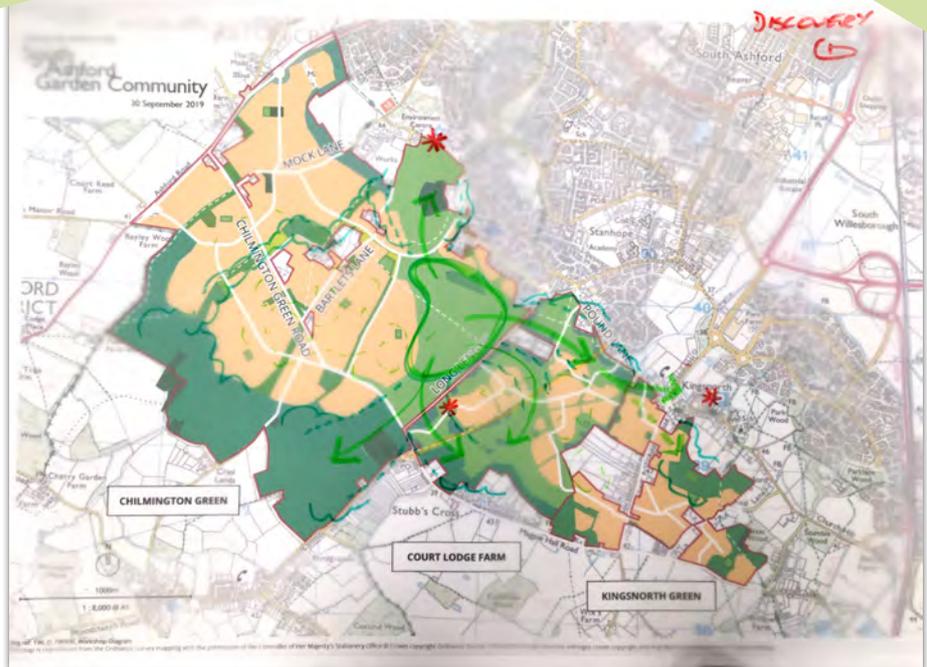
The following actions are to be progressed by ABC, developers and partners. These respond to some of the key issues raised during the workshop.

Key Actions in 2020

- ABC Culture to launch a project working group on the masterplanning of Discovery Park; looking at all aspects of the design and its requirements. To engage the public several more times as concepts evolve.
- ABC Planning with external partners to launch a project working group to create sustainability policy guidance in line with the Borough's wider action plan to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. Planning guidance on housing, public realm, energy provision etc.
- ABC's Chilmington Team (with support from Homes England) to draft a vision, strategy and programme plan for the SAGC, covering key areas of infrastructure delivery (highways, drainage, facilities), Section 106 triggers, quality monitoring and public engagement. And to identify additional funding opportunities.
- ABC and Developers to explore a revised project governance model which incorporates the SAGC, specifically redefining the role of the Chilmington Community Stakeholder group, including more voices and more opportunities to shape the SAGC strategy.
- ABC and Developers to continue strategic discussions with NHS about health provision in Ashford advocating for SAGC as a key opportunity for innovative approaches to health.

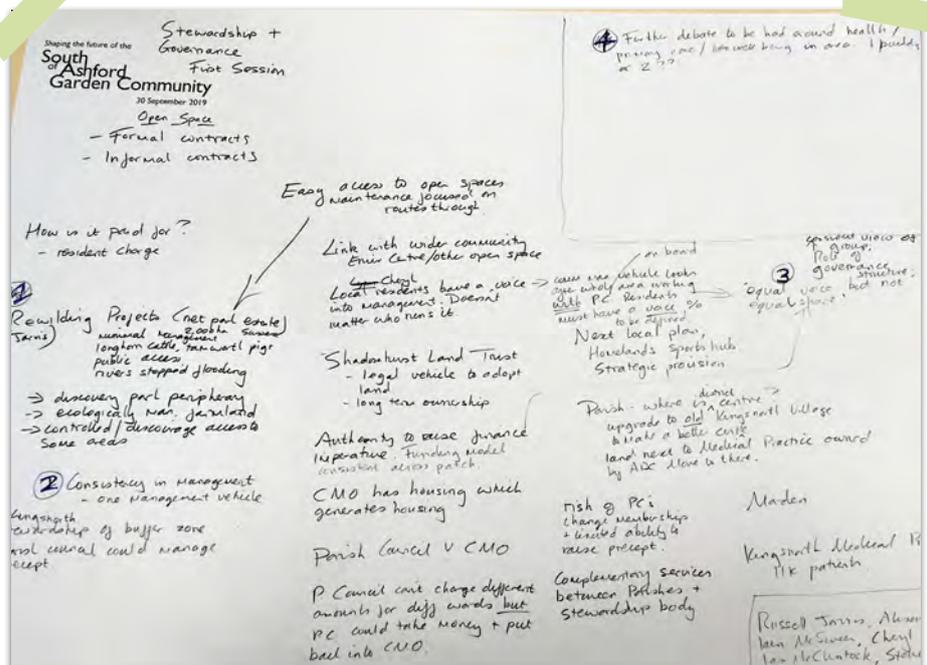
Discovery Park

- Close Long Length and make it a feature of the Park
- Create green corridors, buffer zones and ecologically protected areas
- Clarify the boundaries of Discovery Park
- Reduced development on the southwest corner of Court Lodge is good for the Park
- Placing formal sport next to informal parkland needs careful consideration
- Dogs often damage ecology along footpaths, but they need space too
- Who are the user groups of this future park?

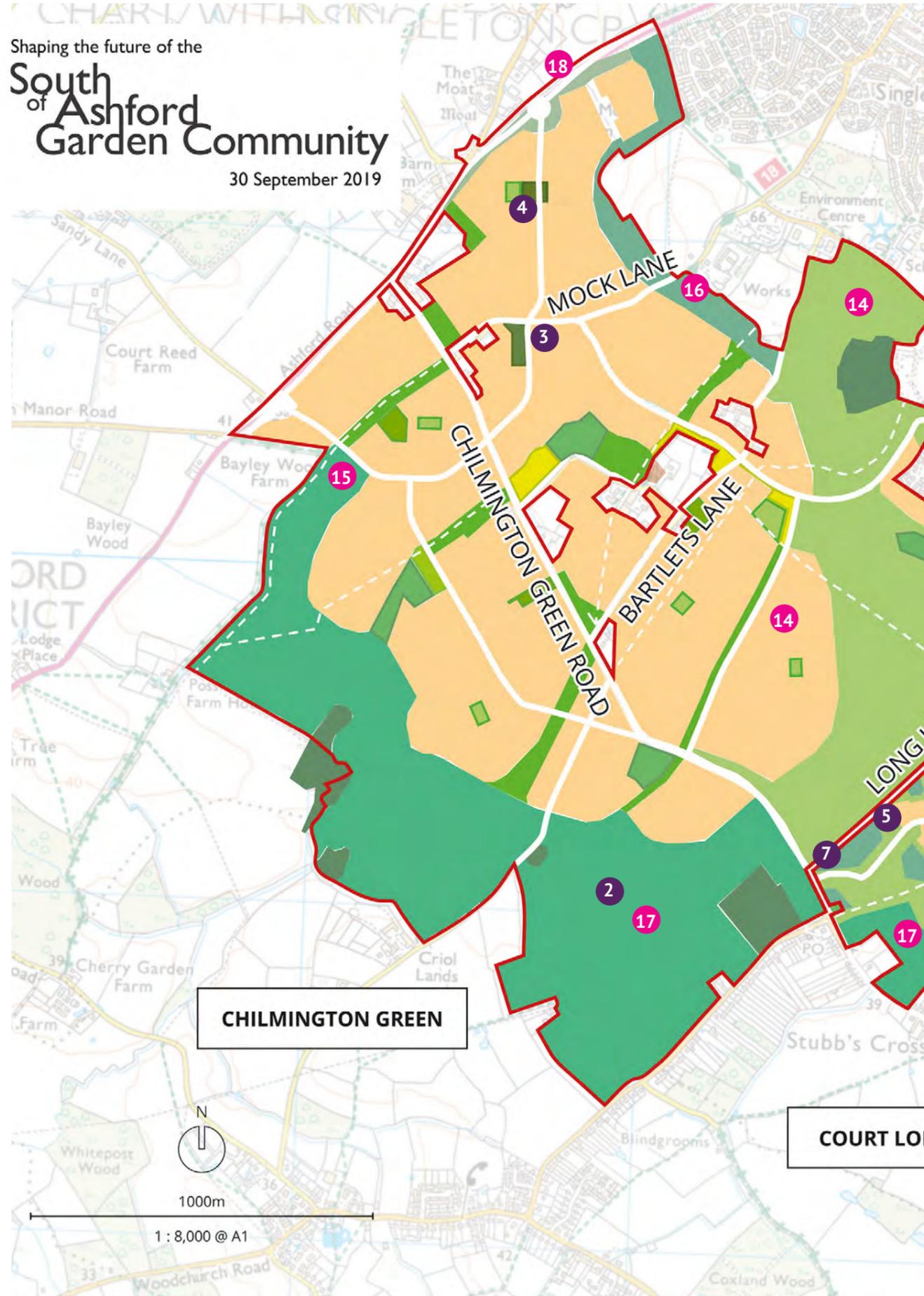


Stewardship & Governance

- Engage local knowledge early on to understand land management needs
- Give residents decision-making role within governance
- A mix of formal and informal arrangements can be a good thing
- Look at CMO and other examples to find the right balance
- Financial model needs to stand the test of time
- Don't neglect open areas, they can be managed by rewilding
- Work with the Parish Councils to find the right solutions
- Must be consistency of management whilst tailoring to different assets



Shaping the future of the
South of Ashford Garden Community
 30 September 2019



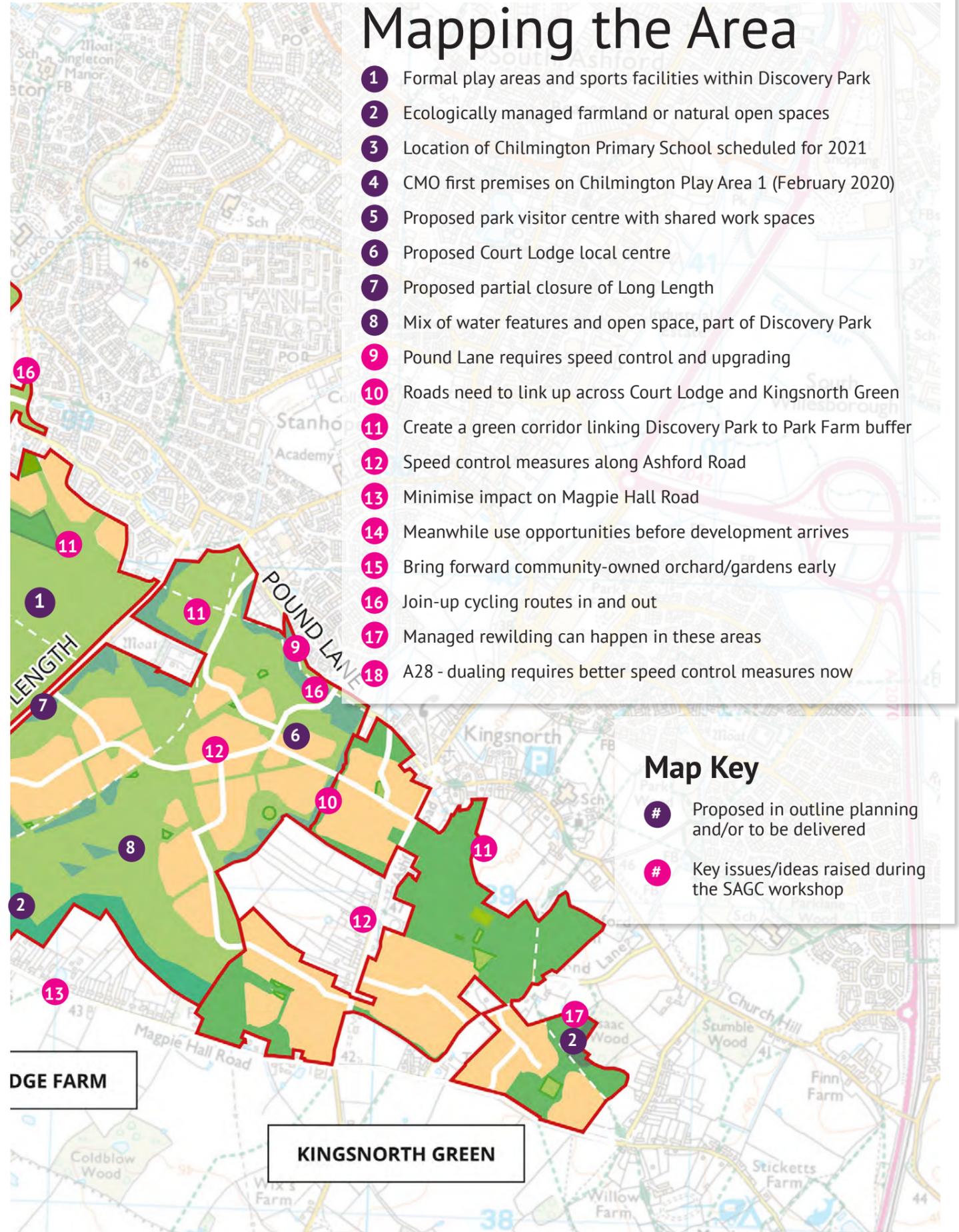
dwg ref: 196_D_190930_Workshop-Diagram
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Mapping the Area

- 1 Formal play areas and sports facilities within Discovery Park
- 2 Ecologically managed farmland or natural open spaces
- 3 Location of Chilmington Primary School scheduled for 2021
- 4 CMO first premises on Chilmington Play Area 1 (February 2020)
- 5 Proposed park visitor centre with shared work spaces
- 6 Proposed Court Lodge local centre
- 7 Proposed partial closure of Long Length
- 8 Mix of water features and open space, part of Discovery Park
- 9 Pound Lane requires speed control and upgrading
- 10 Roads need to link up across Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green
- 11 Create a green corridor linking Discovery Park to Park Farm buffer
- 12 Speed control measures along Ashford Road
- 13 Minimise impact on Magpie Hall Road
- 14 Meanwhile use opportunities before development arrives
- 15 Bring forward community-owned orchard/gardens early
- 16 Join-up cycling routes in and out
- 17 Managed rewilding can happen in these areas
- 18 A28 - dualing requires better speed control measures now

Map Key

- # Proposed in outline planning and/or to be delivered
- # Key issues/ideas raised during the SAGC workshop



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Key Themes

The following key themes offer a broad summary of the views of participants during the table sessions, highlighting where consensus points were had. These are based on the initial topic areas proposed for the workshop and drawn together where connections could be found. They will feed into a strategic plan for SAGC being written and further consulted upon in early 2020.

Getting about... safely

Participants had a broad consensus about the wider road network surrounding the SAGC and its inability to cope with the projected increase in traffic numbers generated by these developments. East to West traffic movements along Magpie Hall Road and Pound Lane were of particular concern in terms of road degradation, HGV use and the safety of pedestrians. A strategic traffic management plan is required across the SAGC, not simply on a site-by-site basis but for current and future developments. This plan should utilise the new road through Court Lodge to offset traffic wanting to travel to and from the A2042, it should provide options for road upgrading where appropriate, help to calm traffic and protect pedestrians and to discourage vehicle movements along rural roads not being considered as strategic routes. Many see the proposed partial closure of Long Length as a positive for the pedestrian connectivity of Discovery Park, further encouraging road users to pass through Court Lodge's local centre. While the discussion focused primarily on motor vehicles, the prospect of the SAGC being a commutable place via bus and/or cycle was generally welcomed, but most had doubts about whether the development would reach a critical mass quickly enough to put sufficient and viable demand on alternative forms of travel.

Discovery Park (or by some other name), an adaptable, multipurpose park

By looking beyond redline boundaries, participants were able to see how vital "Discovery Park" could become to existing and new residents as a central feature which binds the garden community together. Many agreed this is an exciting project but it requires clarity on the boundary, design, ownership and its future management. As a strategic park, it must offer something to the whole of Ashford whilst positively impacting upon local residents. Much discussion was had about the protection of existing species by creating protected habitats that are linked like a necklace of ecological corridors. Key views across the park should be maintained and dealt with sensitively when considering the types of built structures to serve sports activities. Although there were concerns about the location of these facilities on flood prone terrain, if well designed with quality changing rooms, social spaces and other amenities, there's potential to offer something for many different interests. Car parking will be a necessity, but this should be designed to expand and retract as demand changes, just as the facilities should be adaptable to new trends which are likely to emerge later on. Equally, what is in the landscape already should not be ignored. Without much intervention, allowing nature to reclaim areas of the park will be of great benefit to future residents especially when considering the historical and geological significance of the landscape.

Healthy places, healthy people

Health provision was of particular weight in the discussions, not simply a single GP practice but a contemporary approach putting health and wellbeing at the centre of decision making. As part of an emerging NHS policy to deliver super surgeries, it was suggested that such a model could be piloted in the SAGC. These are surgeries which provide holistic health care, off-loading hospital demand and catering to requirements for more long-term therapeutic treatment centres. Whether this sort of facility can be located within one of the developments or not, it raised a wider question about the role of health and wellbeing within placemaking agendas, naturally pairing with active lifestyle choices which can be encouraged by a mix of hard infrastructure design (ie. cycle lanes) and soft measures such as rambler groups and 'try before you buy' cycle/scooter programmes.

Sorting land management from the off

Given the complexity of joining-up three developments at varying stages, long-term stewardship was one of the obvious issues to tackle early on with many curious as to how the Chilmington Management Organisation's unique approach could be shared. The principle of consistency in land management was welcomed but with a tailored approach to different types of assets. This could take the shape of one umbrella management organisation with several subsidiaries for different sites, or a partnership arrangement between the CMO and other groups such as the Parish Council and local farmers through formal and informal contracts. There was a clear desire to see financial commitments agreed through Section 106 agreements that help finance land management requirements in the early days until a time that these developments reach a sufficient scale. Keeping land management local, not outsourced, and held to a high standard will be the aim going forward; whether it is the existing CMO or some other body which leads the way.

Local governance and local economies

With a productive project governance model already in place at Chilmington, the question of how this evolves to include the wider SAGC (and any other potential development coming forward in future Local Plans) remains to be determined. Regardless of what shape this takes, greater representation from the wider area is needed and from younger generations too. Governance in terms of local economic development was also discussed as there was an appetite for the creation of a business forum or local business network. Developers could provide spaces on an initial short-term basis within their sites for existing businesses to pilot their services, testing the growing market and potentially scaling their operations if demand warrants. It was also suggested that emerging creative businesses and small startups are in need of subsidised space that's fit for purpose. This should be part of a creative economy strategy, integral to ensuring money is spent locally within the future SAGC.

The right facilities in the right places

Many identified uneven provision of community facilities and places for social activities, especially meeting places for teenagers and programmes designed for this age group. They also identified limited access to fresh foods and locally grown produce in the area, suggesting that a development of this size should offer its own farmer's market or an affordable food hub. It was clear that some essential facilities and services should be carefully considered through future Section 106 agreements and conditions whilst a parallel piece of work is needed to forecast how these facilities might be used in fifteen to twenty years time. Getting this combination right will help address isolation and mental health, giving people a sense of social cohesion and hopefully avoiding duplication of unnecessary facilities and services.

Everyone has a role in climate change

A constructive debate was had about actions the developers, the Borough and County Councils and others involved in the SAGC can take to tackle the effects of climate change. While some parcels within Chilmington have begun construction, actions taken now will influence requirements upon future parcels coming forward for planning approval. Ideas included a Passivhaus design guide demonstrating the long-term cost savings and added value for developers; things like putting PV's on garage roofs for car charging and using building materials with high-insulation standards. More widely, the SAGC has the potential to offer carbon sinks by planting and fostering wooded and meadow areas, funding solar powered bus stops and electric bus services. Just some examples of how climate action cross-cuts many areas of development. This led all to agree that efforts to cut carbon emissions must be considered across every theme and workplan for SAGC, not in isolation. This will be recommended across the Borough as part of a commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.

Photos from the Workshop

Discovery Park group



Report back from the stewardship group



Stewardship & Governance group



Transport & Infrastructure group



Presentation from Ashford Vineyard



Discovery Park group



2

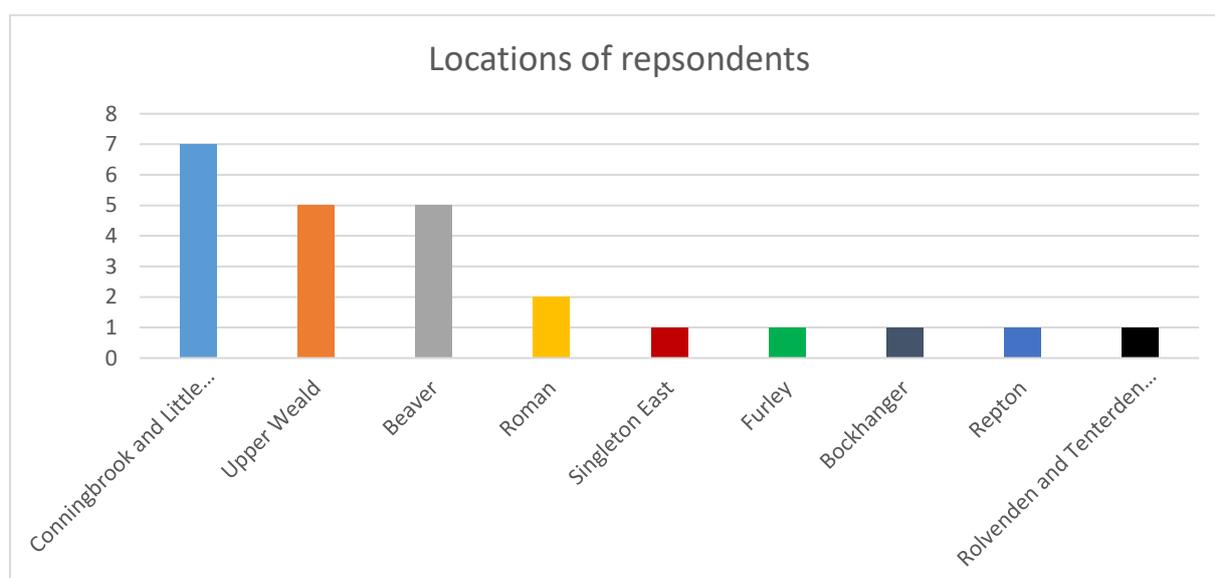
South of Ashford Garden Community

Survey Findings

Introduction

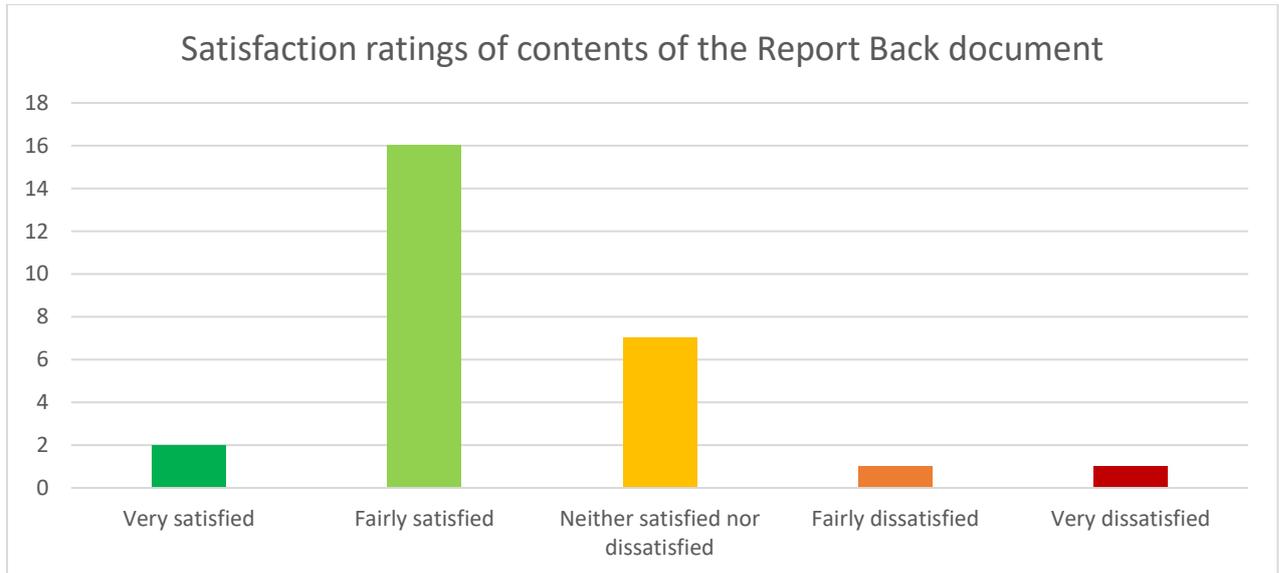
Between 2 September 2020 and 2 October 2020 Ashford Borough Council ran a public survey online on the priorities for the South of Ashford Garden Community. This was part of the suite of consultation events which took place in September. The survey follows consultation events in 2019, the results of which were used to create the Report Back document, in which residents and key stakeholders had shaped some initial priorities for the South of Ashford Garden Community.

In total, 27 people took part in the survey. This brief findings report outlines the survey results. Respondents were asked to read the Report Back document prior to taking part in the survey, as the questions were focused on what was missing from the document and which priorities needed amplification.



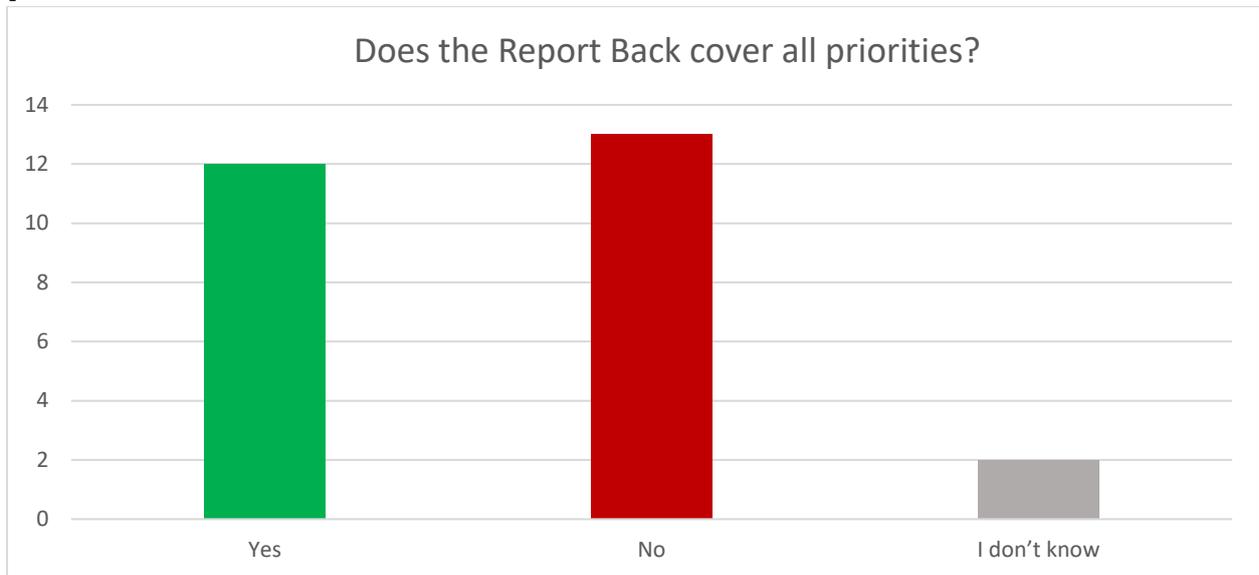
Respondents came from the wards outlined in the chart above. Some of the respondents postcodes were incomplete so could not be matched to a particular location in the borough.

How satisfied are you with the contents of the Report Back document?



Most of the respondents were fairly satisfied with the contents of the report back document (59%). No respondents selected the “I don’t know” response option. Only 2 respondents reported they were dissatisfied with the contents of the document to an extent (7%).

From your perspective does the Report Back cover all priorities?



12 respondents felt the Report Back document covered all priorities, whereas 13 respondents felt there were priorities missing from the document. These respondents were asked to elaborate on which priorities they felt were missing.

What do you feel is missing?

Broadly speaking, the two most frequently mentioned priorities that respondents felt were missing or under emphasised were regarding: conservation, ecology and greenspace, and healthcare provision.

With regards to conservation and green space, respondents felt the SAGC area should work towards integrating green space and conservation areas into the development, and link up with existing green space to create a “green corridor”. One respondent felt that residents should be encouraged to welcome wildlife in their own gardens. Another felt that the infrastructure of the houses should also be more environmentally friendly, such as with a roof water collection system. Overall, respondents felt that it was important to holistically integrate nature and conservation into the development from the outset, rather than it be included afterwards.

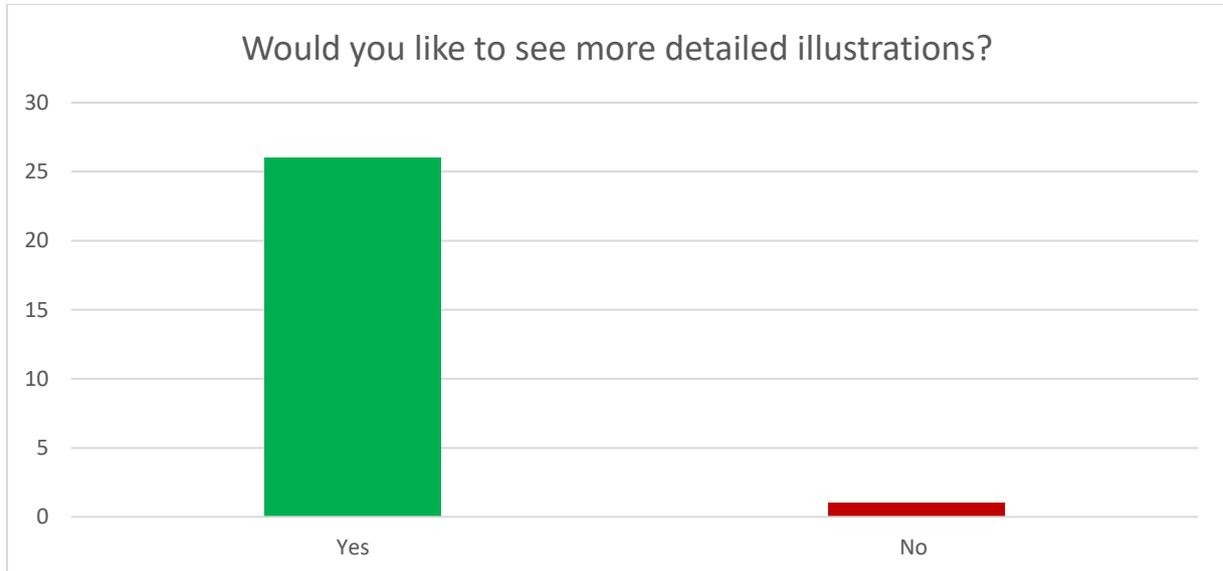
6 respondents mentioned greater emphasis on healthcare provision, primarily the implementation of doctor’s surgeries. Healthcare provision was also a focus of one of the focus groups ran in September with “fixed” healthcare provision like healthcare facilities being one of the topics discussed, among other ways to promote healthy lifestyles. However, survey respondents would mainly like to see plans set in place to provide medical centres to accommodate the influx of new residents.

Other topics mentioned include the following:

Topic	Mentions
Better road safety and traffic controls	2
Accessible education	1

Accessible shops	1
Emphasis on accessibility for disabled	1
Linking up with wider development operations	1
Allotments	1
Activities for children and young people	1
Cultural and leisure opportunities	
Job creation	1

Would you like to see a more detailed illustration of the SAGC in future, showing things like community facilities, public paths and other amenities?



All but one of the respondents said they would like to see more detailed illustrations of the SAGC in the future.

The survey asked a follow-up question, asking what respondents would like to see in particular.

If yes, anything else we should be trying to illustrate that would be helpful to you?

Areas which would be dedicated to environmental protection and provide space for wildlife were the most commonly mentioned additional illustration that the respondents would like to see. Respondents were keen for conservation and green areas to be integrated into the SAGC development, but would like it clearly detailed where these spaces will be and what their entry and exit points will be as well.

Another type of illustration which respondents would like to see is the location and type of community spaces or facilities, such as play areas, sports centres and walking trails.

Respondents also want to see the layout of housing on comparison to other facilities, and in particular, what the style of housing would be. Similarly, respondents also wanted the layout of footpaths and cycles routes illustrated and to see how road/pathway layouts link with other existing infrastructure and development sites.

Other aspects of the SAGC respondents would like to see are detailed in the table below:

Topic	Mentions
Road layout and traffic interventions	2

Parking	2
Health sites	1
Boundaries of the SAGC area	1
Timings for delivery of facilities and housing	1
Garden space	1
Map key	1

How to improve the vision statement

Respondents were asked to read and respond to the following:

“For the Five Year Vision & Strategy, it needs a bold vision to represent the views of local people and to set the tone for the future of these developments. Please see a draft Vision as an example below.

“The South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) will be the thread which fastens together a series of distinct neighbourhoods emerging amongst the existing communities to the South of Ashford over the next thirty years and beyond. By providing clear governance and a commitment to long-term stewardship, the SAGC will guide decision making on sustainable transport networks, green corridors, high quality landscaping and community facilities for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Priority will be given to pedestrian friendly spaces, inclusive venues and carbon neutral living using sustainable technologies where possible, whilst promoting healthy lifestyles and community leadership.”

We’d like to hear your thoughts on how you might improve this vision statement. In particular please tell us if you think anything is missing from this statement.”

22 respondents answered this question. As with previous questions, environmental and conservation aspects of the development were most mentioned. The key points raised are in the table below:

Topic	Mentions	Detail
Sustainable and environmentally friendly	8	These respondents felt that the vision statement needs to clearly outline the plans for environmental protection and promoting sustainability and conservation.
Inclusivity	4	These respondents referred to inclusivity in their comments: of the disabled, and both people young and old. The vision statement should emphasise creating a community that everyone is part of and catered for.
Make vision statement more succinct	3	A few respondents felt the current statement is too long and needs to be “snappier” in order for residents to clearly understand the statement.
Clean, tidy, well maintained	2	With regards to littering and enforcement, as well as maintenance of areas (e.g. hedgerows.)
Vision statement is fine as is	2	2 respondents felt the visions statement is fine in its current format.
Cycle routes	2	These respondents point out there is no mention of cycle routes or sustainable transport methods in the statements; they felt this should be included to promote this aspect of the development.
Health and wellbeing	1	This respondent felt health and wellbeing should be the priority

Lasting quality well thought infrastructure	1	In particular roads and pathways made to last the test of time
Covid nullifies original statement, think to the future	1	This respondents made the comment that the current vision statement is pre-covid. They state that in a post-covid world, the priorities and lifestyles of people may be very different. The statement should reflect these changes.
Strike a balance between natural and urban	1	Linking to nature conservation, the development should balance natural areas with housing and infrastructure.
Recreation spaces	1	In particular: play areas
Car-free	1	Linking with sustainability, this respondent feels the development should promote alternative transport to personal car use.
Traffic handling	1	This respondent was concerned with the level of traffic in and around Ashford. With the influx of new residents, they were worried about how the traffic would be handled.
Job creation	1	As new people move to the area, job creation will be integral to attracting and supporting new residents.

In your view, what are some of the priority actions to be included in [the] action plan?

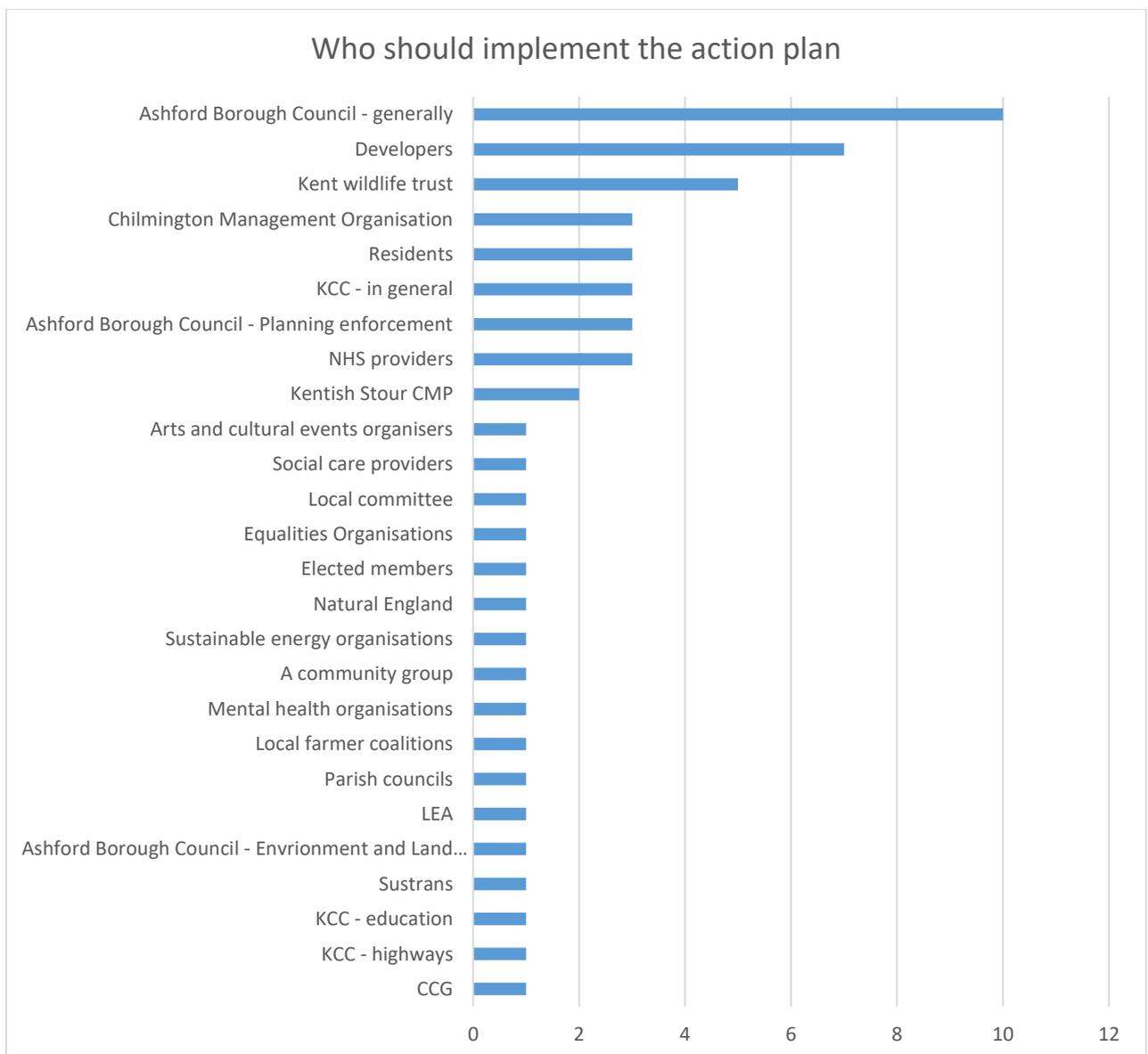
Respondents were asked to consider key actions to include in the action plan. 26 respondents answered this question. Key actions are outlined in the table below.

Action	Mentions	Detail
Landscaping and maintenance/protection of green areas	16	Ensure nature conservation is a key part of the development and it has dedicated, protected areas for wildlife, which are well-maintained
Good well-linked and thought-out infrastructure including roads and paths	11	Including cycle paths, roads and footpaths. Key to this is ensuring these are put in place at the start of the development to promote use of the cycleways and footpaths and make these fit for the future. Ensure this becomes a pedestrian friendly development
Primary health care	7	To accommodate the influx of residents and ensure they have healthcare provision e.g. doctor's surgery
Keep residents informed and involved	4	Keep up with engagement activities and keep local people up to date with what's going on. Listen to what local people have to say. Be inclusive.
Sustainable and carbon neutral	4	In particular, ensure housing and infrastructure is sustainable and carbon neutral
Education provision	3	Include school provision for new residents
Ensure we set out actions and co-operate with developers	3	Set out plans with developers so they can deliver actions
Community facilities	3	Build facilities at the start of the development and deliver promised facilities
LOCAL RETAIL	2	Ensure local retail provision
Safety	2	Make preparations to ensure the development will be safe
Appropriate, accessible housing	2	Ensure housing is appropriate for the area and the residents who will live there: e.g. accessible homes for disabled people.
Take into account other developments and circumstances (e.g. Covid)	1	Link up with what's going on in wider Ashford and take into account current events like Covid and operation Brock.
Consult experts	1	Consult experts throughout the development
Appoint project managers	1	Ensure ABC sets out who is in charge of each action
Parking	1	Ensure the parking is fit for purpose and there is enough space for parking without negatively impacting accessibility
Lighting	1	Ensure lighting is included for safety
Links to town	1	Ensure development links to the town centre so that this can be easily accessed from the development site

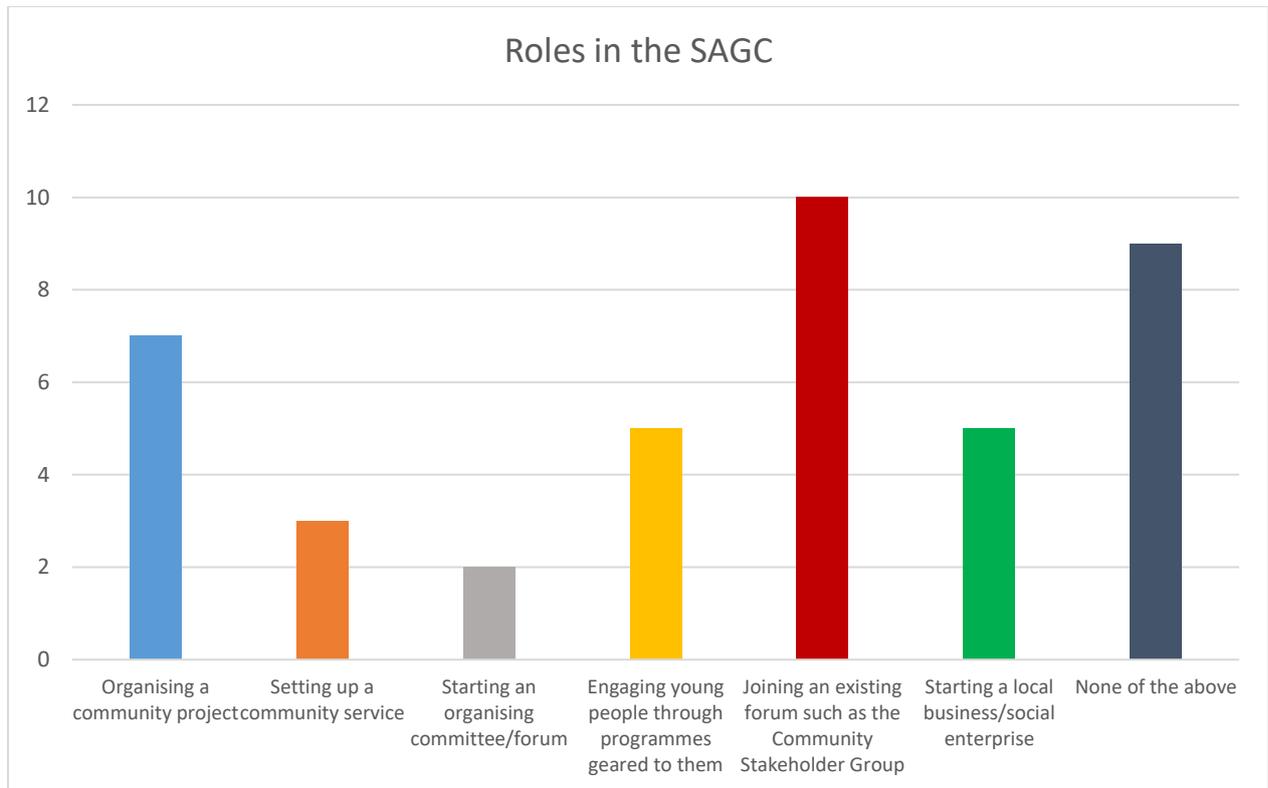
Job creation	1	Try to create jobs and work spaces for new residents
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Considering particular local organisations and businesses, who do you feel should implement the actions you have listed previously?

22 respondents gave answers to this question. Ashford Borough Council (generally, not a specific service or team) was mentioned 10 times, followed by developers for the site. Kent Wildlife Trust was also suggested to help deliver conservation and green space protection efforts, a topic that respondents felt strongly about throughout the survey.



Do you see yourself playing a role in the SAGC either now or in future?



Respondents could select multiple options for this question. 9 of the respondents felt none of these options were a role they would like to take part in. However, 10 respondents were interested in joining an existing forum, and 7 were interested in organising a community project.

Do you have any skills, experience or expertise you feel would be useful for the SAGC?

Just 13 respondents answered this question. Respondents felt they had expertise around conservation and were passionate about protecting wildlife, as well as a range of expertise in other areas such as healthcare, engagement, public speaking, law and skills from volunteering.

More broadly speaking, how do you feel the SAGC affects you, your family and where you live?

Some of the respondents felt that the SAGC development has the potential to affect their lives negatively if the right steps are not taken. The concerns raised are outlined below.

Topic	Mentions	Detail
Concerns about wildlife and green space protection	9	As with previous questions the protection of wildlife and green space was the most frequently mentioned concern. Some respondents felt that the development would remove the existing green space and have a detrimental impact on local wildlife.
Concerns about traffic volume	7	With the increased number of homes and increased residents travelling by car, respondents were concerned about the volume of traffic that may result from this development.
Concerns about the balance of housing with other features	5	Some respondents were concerned about balancing the level of housing with other aspects of the development; mainly green space but also cultural and leisure facilities. Some respondents felt that the area should not become too "urban".
Concerns about increased pollution	4	Regarding air pollution from increased traffic and homes, as well as noise pollution in the SAGC area.
Concerns about how to support new residents	3	With medical facilities, job opportunities, cultural and education facilities etc.
Concerns about the effect on existing cycle/walking opportunities	3	Some respondents noted they use the area for cycling and walking already and are concerned that development will result in these opportunities being lost. Their concerns are mitigated by the development implementing such opportunities early on.
Loss of rural identity	2	With the location bordering on rural Ashford, some respondents were concerned with losing their rural identity.
Foster community feeling	2	These 2 respondents were concerned with fostering a community feeling not only within the SAGC but between existing communities.
Concerns about flood risk	1	This respondent was concerned with the potential flood risk to the development and the properties built there.

Effect on house value	1	This respondent was concerned the new development would reduce their house value if they were to sell.
Support local business	1	This respondent was keen to see the development support new local businesses.
Concerns about the effect on job	1	This respondents was concerned about the effect on their job though they did not elaborate on what their job was or why it could be affected.

3

Our Garden Village

17 September 2020

Presentation to Members of the Community Stakeholder Group

Activities This Month

- Submitted bid to Homes England for funding to deliver on the SAGC Vision & Strategy
- Launch of a dedicated webpage for the SAGC on the ABC website
- Public Survey running until 2 October
- Three Focus Groups (30 participants) held the week of 7 September
- Working meeting with Focus Group participants on 14 September
- Our Garden Village Live Event via Teams on 25th September
- Ongoing meetings with local organisations

Survey URL:
haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk

Purpose of the Survey

To respond to this document published on the public workshops of 2019

South of Ashford Garden Community

Report Back on the Workshop of Monday 30 September 2019



Report produced by Ashford Borough Council. For more information, please contact dan.daley@ashford.gov.uk

Background

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This time around the emphasis was on the whole of the garden community which includes the sites of Court Lodge, Kingsnorth Green (in outline planning) and Chilmington (works on-site). The aim of which was to further consult on the outline plans and to ensure a joined-up approach to key infrastructure, open space provision and community facilities.

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ABC Culture to launch a project working group on the masterplanning of Discovery Park; looking at all aspects of the design and its requirements. To engage the public several more times as concepts evolve.

- ABC Planning with external partners to launch a project working group to create sustainability policy guidance in line with the Borough's wider action plan to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. Planning guidance on housing, public realm, energy provision etc.
- ABC's Chilmington Team (with support from Homes England) to draft a vision, strategy and programme plan for the SAGC, covering key areas of infrastructure delivery (highways, drainage, facilities), Section 106 triggers, quality monitoring and public engagement. And to identify additional funding opportunities.
- ABC and Developers to explore a revised project governance model which incorporates the SAGC, specifically redefining the role of the Chilmington Community Stakeholder group, including more voices and more opportunities to shape the SAGC strategy.
- ABC and Developers to continue strategic discussions with NHS about health provision in Ashford advocating for SAGC as a key opportunity for innovative approaches to health.

Photos from the Workshop

Discovery Park group



Report back from the stewardship group



Stewardship & Governance group



Transport & Infrastructure group



Presentation from Ashford Vineyard



Discovery Park group



Key Themes

The following key themes offer a broad summary of the views of participants during the table sessions. Highlighting where consensus points were had. These are based on the initial topic areas proposed for the workshop and drawn together where connections could be found. They will feed into a strategic plan for SAGC being written and further consulted upon in early 2020.

Getting about... safely

Participants had a broad consensus about the wider road network surrounding the SAGC and its inability to cope with the projected increase in traffic numbers generated by these developments. East to West traffic movements along Magpie Hill Road and Pound Lane were of particular concern in terms of road degradation, HGV use and the safety of pedestrians. A strategic traffic management plan is required across the SAGC, not simply on a site-by-site basis but for current and future developments. This plan should utilise the new road through Court Lodge to offset traffic wanting to travel to and from the A2042. It should provide options for road upgrading where appropriate, help to calm traffic and protect pedestrians and to discourage vehicle movements along rural roads not being considered as strategic routes. Many see the proposed partial closure of Long Length as a positive for the pedestrian connectivity of Discovery Park, further encouraging road users to pass through Court Lodge's local centre. While the discussion focused primarily on motor vehicles, the prospect of the SAGC being a commutable place via bus and/or cycle was generally welcomed, but most had doubts about whether the development would reach a critical mass quickly enough to put sufficient and viable demand on alternative forms of travel.

Discovery Park (or by some other name), an adaptable, multipurpose park

By looking beyond red-line boundaries, participants were able to see how vital "Discovery Park" could become to existing and new residents in a central focus which binds the garden community together. Many agreed this is an exciting project but it requires clarity on the boundary, design, ownership and its future management. As a strategic park, it must offer something to the whole of Ashford whilst positively impacting upon local residents. Much discussion was had about the protection of existing species by creating protected habitats that are linked like a necklace of ecological corridors. Key views across the park should be maintained and dealt with sensitively when considering the types of built structures to serve specific activities. Although there were concerns about the location of these facilities on flood prone terrain, if well designed with quality changing rooms, social spaces and other amenities there's potential to offer something for many different interests. Car parking will be a necessity, but this should be designed to expand and reflect any demand changes. Just as the facilities should be adaptable to new trends which are likely to emerge later on. Equally, what is in the landscape already should not be ignored. Without much intervention, allowing nature to reclaim areas of the park will be of great benefit to future residents especially when considering the historical and geological significance of the landscape.

Healthy places, healthy people

Health provision was of particular weight in the discussions, not simply a single GP practice but a contemporary approach putting health and wellbeing at the centre of decision making. As part of an emerging NHS policy to deliver super-surgeries, it was suggested that such a model could be piloted in the SAGC. These are surgeries which provide holistic health care, off-loading hospital demand and catering to requirements for more long-term therapeutic treatment centres. Whether this sort of facility can be located within one of the developments or not, it is a wider question about the role of health and wellbeing within placemaking agendas, naturally paired with active lifestyle choices which can be encouraged by a mix of fresh infrastructure design (ie. cycle lanes) and soft measures such as amble groups and 'try before you buy' cycle/roller programmes.

6

At the Table Sessions

Participants were invited to join one of six tables looking at different topic areas, each facilitated by an ABC officer or a consultant working on the SAGC project. Local residents and stakeholders more familiar with the SAGC were asked to sit at different tables where they felt they had the most expertise. Below are some of the table's notes with lists of key issues and ideas which were raised during the sessions.

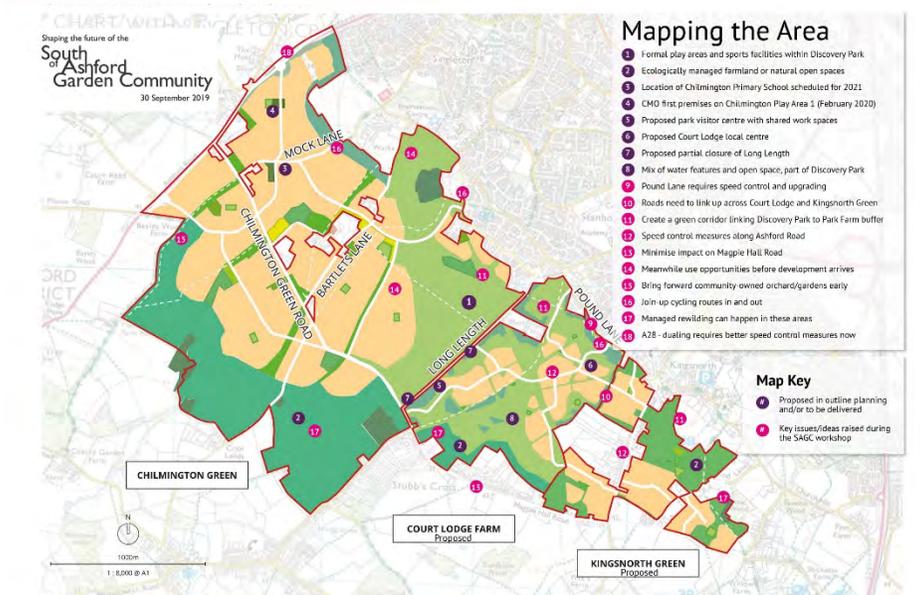
Sustainability

- Put PVs on every house and use them to charge electric cars
- Solar powered bus stops
- Build solar farms sensitively
- Follow Passivhaus standards
- Design in better recycling systems
- Reduce carbon first, offset if necessary
- Provide a protected space for a community orchard
- Look at geothermal and other heating alternatives
- Provide electric shuttle buses, make taking the bus attractive



Transport & Infrastructure

- Make Pound Lane safer with 30mph and protected footpath
- Put a stop signal at Queen's Head junction
- Send traffic through Court Lodge centre, not Magpie Hill Road
- Consider impacts on Coulter Road
- Current layout of A28 isn't calming traffic, future expansion works need to consider all road users
- Need to look at HGV movements as they are using rural roads
- Ensure an east-west road link between Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green
- More transparency about sewage management and flood mitigation



Mapping the Area

- Formal play areas and sports facilities within Discovery Park
- Ecologically managed farmland or natural open spaces
- Location of Chilmington Primary School scheduled for 2021
- CMO first premises on Chilmington Play Area 1 (February 2020)
- Proposed park visitor centre with shared work spaces
- Proposed Court Lodge local centre
- Proposed partial closure of Long Length
- Mix of water features and open space, part of Discovery Park
- Pound Lane requires speed control and upgrading
- Roads need to link up across Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green
- Create a green corridor linking Discovery Park to Park Farm buffer
- Speed control measures along Ashford Road
- Minimise impact on Magpie Hill Road
- Meanwhile use opportunities before development arrives
- Bring forward community owned orchard/gardens early
- Join-up cycling routes in and out
- Managed rewilding can happen in these areas
- A28 - dualing requires better speed control measures now

Map Key

- Proposed in outline planning and/or to be delivered
- Key issues/ideas raised during the SAGC workshop



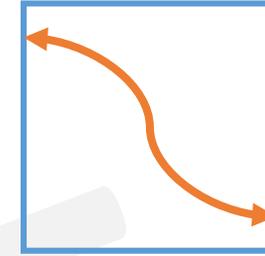
Testing the Ideas From the Focus Groups

Please read through the following 5 slides which are a collection of ideas, actions and principles proposed by participants of the Focus Groups. Whilst reading through, **keep in mind these are ideas in draft** but consider the following questions when reading them:

Questions to consider whilst reading through the following slides:

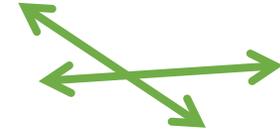
1. From these ideas put forward by the focus group participants, which do you like and/or not like?
2. Will these work? What needs further refinement to ensure it's actually deliverable?
3. What role can you play? Do you want to play a role and what would it be?

Flexible & Accessible Spaces



- *Multi-purpose spaces and radically inclusive thinking*
 - Facilities should be able to change over time dependent on changing needs
 - Facilities should have a minimum of two accessible entry-points for different user groups, setting an example for disabled access for others to follow
 - **Sports provision should be designed to be flexible (adaptable to new trends over time) whilst being high quality and low impact on the environment (for example, lighting, designed to focus where needed, mitigating impact at different times)**
 - Get the basics right in terms of sport provision (lean-tos, boot benches, lock-ups, places to change outside, accessible toilets)
 - Car parks, whilst needed should be well screened, creatively designed with permeable surfaces, and the demand for spaces should be offset by other means of transport & transport storage (cycle bays, lockers, charge-points etc.)
 - Culture-shift in modes of transport – alternatives need to be in place early on
- *Looking elsewhere:* sports and rec facilities which accommodate a diversity of uses, and minimise the impact of car parks

Local Connectivity



- *Meanwhile and permanent linkages early with a pedestrian first approach*
 - Active travel plans in the community and in the schools
 - Introduce a commuter programme for the Bus routing, call it the “Flyer”
 - Allow permissive paths in the meanwhile for adoption in future (taking a phased approach, ensuring early access)
 - Take small measures which link pathways (sleepers over ditches) other locally managed approaches to walkways and trails (old Kingsnorth Road running passed the KN medical practice)
 - **Introduce a Garden Village “twenty is plenty” speed control area with slightly higher speeds where necessary on main roads.**
 - **Take a pedestrian first approach, numerous crossing points, slow speeds, more lane space to walk or cycle (dropped curbs for access requirements)**
 - Wildlife corridors for the support of local species (often well located next to large motorways for example)
 - Capitalise on the digital agenda and the SPD for digital connectivity, tease out the new norm for many of our workplaces
 - Utilising GPS, other tech to identify management responsibility
 - A link across existing developments (example: Bridgefield) into SAGC (currently under utilised which could be pedestrian focused)

Looking elsewhere: Refer to TCPA guidance on sustainable transport

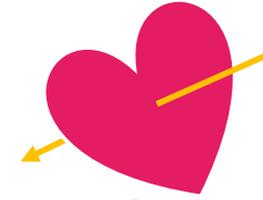
Leaders in Health & Wellbeing



- *Healthy living backed by innovative approaches to full patient care*
 - Take a comprehensive approach to health care, the full patient journey within one network of care professionals
 - Striking a careful balance between digitised services and in-person treatment
 - **Make the SAGC an area of opportunity for training the future health care workforce**
 - Setup local food growing (meanwhile or permanent) to incubate food businesses incentivising low impact / zero waste consumption
 - Recreational provision should be linked up with social subscribing (tackling mental health through activities such as gardening)
 - **Active travel programmes, rambler groups, mountain bike trails, and doorstep play are all informal opportunities to be prioritised in step with more formal provisions**
 - Prevention first to reduce impact on formal health care services, as opposed to reactive approaches

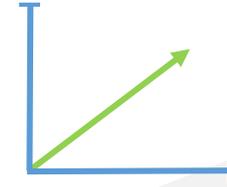
Looking elsewhere: The Limes in Roman Ward (involving refugees in gardening)
Also, Ebbsfleet and Cirencester developments as examples

• Community Ownership



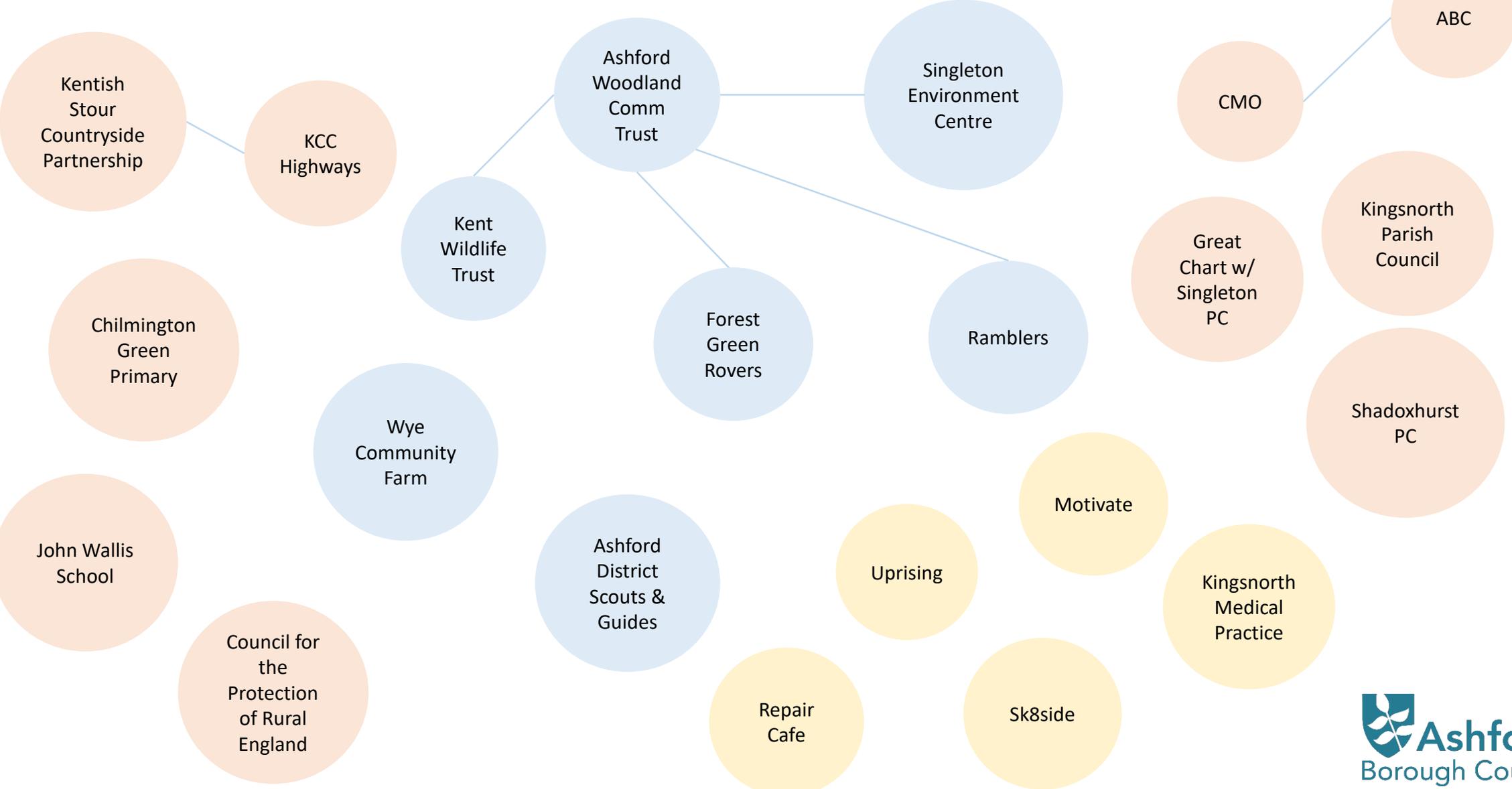
- *Strengthening the eyes and ears in the community*
 - Existing residents must be involved, and new residents must be brought into the fold as they arrive (Mandate to engage people the way they want to be engaged, finding different ways to meet them where they feel most comfortable)
 - **Active protection of Coleman’s Kitchen Wood, Joy’s Wood and others – define the roles for these places, might they have personas we can use to describe them?**
 - Projects such as community gardens help to create natural surveillance – what other projects do this?
 - Meanwhile projects such as wildflower meadows and forest school camps to educate young/old and to add meaning to the landscape (utilising parts of school lands)
 - Blue/Green management, not losing sight of the greater challenges around the Blue – water areas often require more thought (ponds for wildlife feeding, boating, fishing, not all in the same place, but consideration to each)
 - **Setup a Forum for the SAGC where governance and stewardship is discussed – this could have smaller groups responsible for specific areas/projects – or another model?**
 - *Looking elsewhere:* consider challenges at Kestral and Bridgefield, look to King’s Hill as a model

Building Community Value



- *Taking a community asset and ecological protection first approach*
 - **Local centres and facilities delivered with housing, not after**
 - Identify types of businesses in need of space which can operate without demand for passing trade in the early years
 - Propose creative ways to subsidise land for affordable housing and/or social/cultural use
 - Active protection of Coleman's Kitchen Wood, Joy's Wood and others
 - Diversify species and enhance existing habitats, tree growth, community gardens (and preservation of flora/fauna)
 - **A commitment to distinct character in terms of design and build – the SAGC is a Garden Village made up of distinct places, what do people value most when it comes to character?**
 - *Looking elsewhere:???*

Mapping the Actors (ADD MORE!)



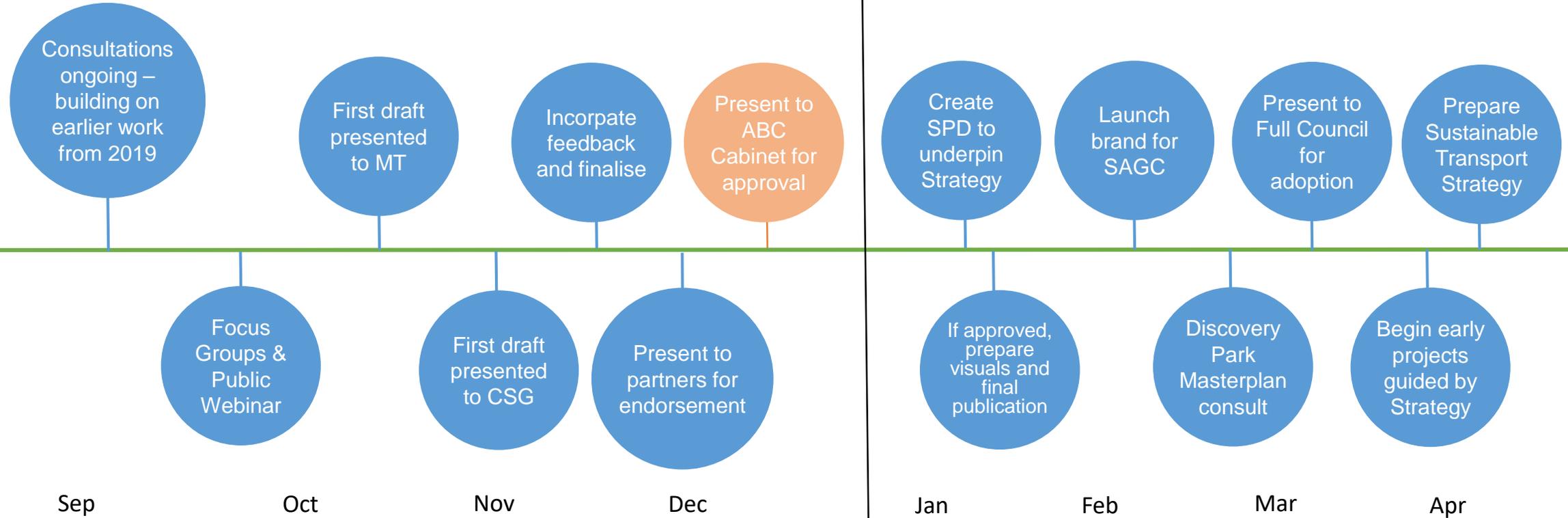
A Strategy in Draft

After 18 months of partner and local stakeholder engagement, a Vision for the South of Ashford Garden Community (inclusive of Chilmington Green, Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green) has been drafted. This is accompanied by five strategic objectives and an action plan for the coming five years.



Where we're at in the timeline

'20/'21



4

Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community

(draft document to Cabinet)

Contents

- Message from the Leader *(in draft, with Leader for review)*
- **The Story So Far**
- **A Vision & Five Key Objectives**
- Spatial Approach *(to be added to final publication)*
- **The Action Plan**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Appendices *(to be added to final publication)*
 - Background to creating this document
 - Summary of all feedback from partners, community members and local representatives
 - Governance and stewardship modelling
 - Equalities impact assessment

(Only items in bold are within the enclosed draft)

Message from the Leader (in review)

The Story So Far

On its surface, the South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) was conceived as a way to link together three residential developments within the 2030 Local Plan; these were Chilmington Green, Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green. What it actually represented was a complex endeavour to look holistically at the scale of potential development emerging in the South of Ashford. This was spurred by a growing shift in urban design practice, to depart from the 'great estate' and the conventions of placemaking which had been known to create poorly planned or over-planned communities. This was about achieving distinct character and design quality for each site whilst looking beyond the redline boundaries of individual building plots. It was about borrowing ideas from the Garden City, but updating them for the 21st century. And, critically, it was about taking a community-led approach to processes of governance and long-term stewardship.

No doubt the prospect of market-led development of this potential scale and its dramatic impact upon a predominately rural/agricultural landscape has never been fully embraced by all. There was always a balance to be struck for those looking to maintain things as they were, those looking for a new home and for those looking to return the landscape to a wilder past.

These diverse voices and those new voices yet to arrive here will continue to shape the future of this area even where, for example, elements of Chilmington Green are already planned. Still there remains years of work ahead to ensure the efforts of our house builders, the skills being developed and the ambitions for quality are not only met, but sustained. There remains a raft of infrastructural, programmatic and governance activities which will help these developments respond to shifting patterns in live/work arrangements and the imperative upon us all to reduce our carbon footprint.

The missing piece in this puzzle is to take the vision of the developers at Chilmington Green, the proposals at Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green and the aspirations of existing residents, and to set some holistic objectives which bring them all together. This umbrella vision needs to be broad yet specific, representative yet directional. It needs to be realistic and open to change whilst being underpinned by planning policy and securely funded by multiple partners.

The process of creating this document started in early 2019 with the aim of being inclusive and participatory for all who have taken part since. Throughout, all have been welcome to input thoughts and ideas whilst having opportunity to see their proposals reflected back to them.

The result is a set of five key objectives and an action plan which attempts to summarise their input. This is not a planning policy document, but it is a charter of commitments which should hold named groups and organisations to account. This charter will sit alongside a Garden Community Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will guide decision-making for Developers, the Local and County Councils. It will set out a governance approach to managing the action plan and how it will be funded, including efforts to seek out alternative sources of funding and revenue generation.

So far, Homes England has supported and will likely continue to recognise the SAGC as part of its Garden Communities programme. This comes with the funding which has delivered the process behind this document. And, it will help to support the implementation of the proposed action plan. Ashford Borough Council will monitor, evaluate and review this plan annually as part of its approach to securing ongoing funding.

A Vision & Five Key Objectives

The South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) will be the thread which fastens together a series of distinct neighbourhoods emerging amongst the existing communities to the South of Ashford over the next thirty years and beyond. By providing clear governance and a commitment to long-term stewardship, the SAGC will guide decision making on sustainable transport networks, green corridors, high quality landscaping and community facilities for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Priority will be given to pedestrian friendly spaces, inclusive venues and carbon neutral living using sustainable technologies where possible, whilst promoting healthy lifestyles and community leadership.

Led by local heritage, culture and community

The SAGC will be attractive to a diverse range of people, drawing upon existing local character, materials, crafts and traditions. Community buildings, sports facilities and communal spaces will be distinctive whilst adaptable to evolving needs, with a particular emphasis on access and inclusion. Early community programming will be prioritised with a mix of Council-led and locally led projects and activities designed to build lasting connections between residents new and old. SAGC will raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the archaeology of the area through both government and community led projects, connecting the new community to those who lived here in the past.

Sustainable and resilient in the long-term

The SAGC will seek to preserve and enhance existing habitats for wildlife through high quality landscaping which contributes to biodiversity net gain. The inclusion of robust ecological networks and the rewilding in some areas will help to connect people to nature whilst providing much needed spaces to capture and lock away carbon. Through clear governance and a commitment to long-term stewardship, mitigating impacts of development will be the responsibility of all stakeholders. The SAGC will work

towards carbon neutrality in line with the Borough's target of 2030, which will require retrofitting planned development (using sustainable tech where possible) and designing energy efficient (passive homes/facilities) into future development.

Well connected at every level

The SAGC will deliver upgrades to transport infrastructure with a renewed focus on active and sustainable transport using a mobility hub approach. These upgrades will also include speed control measures which improve public safety, giving priority to pedestrians and encouraging walkable neighbourhoods. Sustainable drainage systems will be prioritised in combination with other environmental improvement works, whilst digital connectivity is ensured for all in keeping with the Borough's pre-existing commitments.

A destination for health and wellbeing

The SAGC will design-in the health and wellbeing agenda across each development, both in terms of community programmes and in terms of built infrastructure. Planned GP services will include outpatient care and new approaches to holistic long-term treatment. Active travel networks will be put in place, and the use of green prescriptions will be promoted by partners able to facilitate resident engagement with nature. Social spaces will be more resilient to changes in social restrictions, with a focus on caring for all especially those most isolated within the community.

Governed by local people with a vibrant economy

The SAGC will borrow the principles of community-led stewardship similar to the approach taken at Chilmington, allowing some flexibility to different models of delivery. This will require an evolving governance arrangement which allows for emerging partners and new residents to take part. Residents should have a clear route to influence decision-making and opportunities to deliberate on changes within their communities. The SAGC will advocate for affordable housing, local economic investment and training for young people, key priorities to be maintained within the SAGC area.

Spatial Approach

(Illustration of the SAGC which reflects Vision & Objectives – to be developed for the final publication)

Action Plan

Guide to Acronyms in the Action Plan:

HD – Hodson Developments, Lead developer at Chilmington

SAGC Developers – Includes developers at Chilmington, Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green

ABC – Ashford Borough Council

KCC – Kent County Council

CMO – Chilmington Management Organisation

KSCP – Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership

DSE- Design South East

ISSK – Inclusion Support Service Kent

EASS – Equality Advisory and Support Service

SELEP – South East Local Enterprise Partnership

KWT – Kent Wildlife Trust

CPRE – Council for the Protection of Rural England

EA – Environment Agency

KPC – Kingsnorth Parish Council

GCSPC – Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council

Led by local heritage, culture and community					
	Action	Responsible	Partners	Challenges	Timeframe
1.0	Ensure accessibility and inclusion aspects are featured in the design of all community assets, open spaces, where practical and possible, eg. establish working groups for the design brief and spec of the First Play Space and Discovery Park Masterplan	ABC	-CMO -KCC -Great Chart PC -ISSK -EASS	-Generating awareness, educating partners on what falls under Access & Inclusion -Influencing decision making, demonstrating best practice and greater return on investment across a variety of projects -Balancing multiple design and placemaking priorities	Already underway, to complete in 2021

1.1	Design South East to facilitate a design review for all future RM applications across each site.	SAGC Developers	-ABC -DSE -Lee Evans -KCC	-Future developers of Court Lodge unknown -Cost of design review weighs on the shoulders of developers	April 2021 onward
1.2	Setup of the Creative Chilmington Advisory Group with the first tranche of Public Art money at 99 occupations and deliver on first activities including: the launch the Civic Design Room & completion of the first phase of 'Welcome to Here' (artist-in-residence)	Alison Breese (Advisory Board Chair)	-ABC -CMO -Residents -Local artists & institutions Janetka Platun -Great Chart PC	-Bringing local people into the process so that they own the output -Evolving impacts of Covid-19 on community engagement -Innovating an approach to community engagement against the backdrop of many other tested approaches	March 2021
1.3	Evolve CSG into a group which shapes and implements local projects which benefit their communities. Attract new members to the group	CSG	-ABC -KCC -Great Chart PC -Kingsnorth PC -Residents -Other voluntary sector groups	-Finding a local champion to take a leading role -Keeping existing CSG members engaged in an evolving process whilst responding to ongoing site-management issues	January 2021 onward
1.4	Launch the proposed Community Development Programme at Chilmington, finding opportunities to overlap with wider SAGC activities	CMO	-ABC -SAGC Developers -Great Chart PC -Other voluntary sector groups -Registered Providers (when appropriate)	-Evolving impacts of Covid-19 on community engagement -Dependent on housing occupation trajectory	January 2021 onward
1.5	Establish a Strategy for Archaeological Resource Management which will set out a broad approach to identifying, conserving and	KCC and SAGC developers	-CMO -Parish Councils	-Generating awareness and understanding,	April 2021 onwards

	enhancing the heritage resource to the benefit of the community and develop the understanding and awareness of the historic environment for future generations.		-Local Heritage groups -HLF projects	-liaising with development-led and commercial archaeological investigations	
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Sustainable and resilient in the long-term					
	Action	Responsible	Partners	Challenges	Timeframe
2.0	Align with the Council's Carbon Neutral Action Plan. Eg SAGC could implement a zero single-use plastics programme	SAGC Developers	-ABC -KCC -KSCP -EA -CPRE -Local businesses -Local institutions	-Council's own operations to become carbon neutral as a priority, so Developers will need policy guidance, monitoring and evaluation in place as early as possible -Other organisations named are working on carbon reduction but more resource and investment needed -Likely needs to start with soft campaigns before turning to hard measures	2021 - 2030
2.1	Embed sustainability into the core of CMO activity and deliver an education programme on sustainable living	CMO	-ABC -KSCP -KWT	-CMO in care & maintenance mode into 2021 -Secure expertise to lead such a programme	2021 to 2023
2.2	Scope potential for community energy delivery; involves setting up a community benefit society which pools energy to be sold back into the grid.	A community energy charity	-ABC -KCC -UK power networks -SELEP	-Securing available land and funding -Bringing together the right investors and knowledge to deliver -Organising residents around the project, ensuring buy-in	2022 to 2025

2.3	Create a green travel plan for residents of the SAGC, supporting commitments made within KCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan – this includes early rewilding practices, some of which can easily be led by residents such as hedgehog ways and organised habitat management days.	KCC PROW	-ABC -Transport consultancy -Local cycle campaign -KSCP -KWT	-If active travel infrastructure is not timely, this will cause delays -A travel plan will need to be part of a wider sustainable transport strategy -Building enough momentum at the right time, critical mass of volunteers and outreach	2022
2.4	Engage with existing groups to explore the potential of a Garden Community food share through a social enterprise model	CMO	-ABC -Wye Community Farm -Limes Community Garden -FareShare Kent	-Plenty of desire to do this, but not necessarily the capacity -Existing groups could expand to take this on, but they will need funding and resource -Reaching a critical mass is key	Late 2021
2.5	Blue management, prioritise sustainable drainage, and scope potential for a protected Garden Community wetland. Whilst necessary at existing sites, this could also be part of new mitigation requirements upon sites yet to receive planning permission.	-SAGC Developers	-ABC -CPRE -KWT -KSCP -Natural England -KCC -EA -CMO	-The land exists for wetland formation, but the expertise and resource to deliver need to be assembled -matching blue/green open space enhancement with other requirements to mitigate needs a careful balance -Timeline of these measures not yet clear, could be an opportunity for multiple stakeholders to take leadership	January 2021 onward
2.6	Strategic tree planting programme to improve green corridors – start with evolution of Urban Tree Challenge moving towards active management of Coleman's Kitchen Wood. Look beyond to other sites within SAGC where early tree planting can be funded.	Aspire Landscape and the CMO	-KSCP -KWT -ABC -Singleton Environment Centre	-Maintaining momentum from Urban Tree Challenge (completes in spring 2021) -Bringing in additional funding beyond Forestry Commission's role	March 2021 onward

			-Great Chart PC -Kingsnorth PC	
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Well connected at every level					
	Action	Responsible	Partners	Challenges	Timeframe
3.0	Identify infrastructure funds for specific projects to be accelerated ahead of housing deliveries	ABC	-SAGC Developers -KCC	-Substantial funds needed to de-risk projects for market to deliver on -Implementation of sustainable transport needs greater investment	January 2021 onward
3.1	Scope potential for joint-authority investment in sustainable public transport – new technologies, alternative modes etc.	KCC	-Folkestone & Hythe Council -ABC -Department for Transport -Electric vehicle providers	-Establishing a formal partnership arrangement -Identifying new roles that could be shared whilst maximising existing resource	January to March 2021
3.2	Implement a safer streets campaign for limited speed zones within the Garden Community and create more opportunities for spontaneous play	KCC	-ABC -SAGC Developers	-Coordination with existing infrastructure planning -Aligning with existing traffic management plans	2021 - 2022
3.4	Deliver high quality 'play along the way' provision which is integrated into circular routes around the garden community	-SAGC Developers	-ABC -KCC	-Working with existing infrastructure -Finding early wins that demonstrate the model	2022 onward

3.5	Define the role that each partner plays in securing funding for both programming and infrastructure costs over the next five years	ABC	SAGC Developers -KCC -CMO -Other Voluntary Groups	-Looking beyond central government programmes -Developing alternative revenue streams	2022 onwards
3.6	Support policy team currently developing Garden Community SPD, ensure objectives of this strategy are embedded in its policies	ABC	-KCC -CSG	-Bringing this forward in a timely manner -Application of the SPD amongst other planning policies	January to March 2021
3.7	Produce a Sustainable Transport Strategy and action plan which includes the SAGC and wider area. Plan to include considerations around landscaping and the formation of ecological corridors.	KCC & Consultants	-SAGC Developers -Homes England -ABC	-Funding is pending for this piece of work -Ensuring this is specific and actionable -Being realistic about where movement can be reduced and where/when it needs to be more sustainable -Secure resource to coordinate and deliver action plan	March to May 2021

A destination for health and wellbeing					
	Action	Responsible	Partners	Challenges	Timeframe
4.0	Work with the CCG to identify additional site(s) for GP practices	CCG	-ABC -SAGC Developers	-Unlocking sites for delivery -Overcoming regulatory hurdles	March 2021 onward

4.1	Ensure preventative services are provided within the Garden Village as early as possible, eg. social subscribing and green prescriptions,	KCC Public Health	-CCG -Healthwatch Kent -ABC -CMO	-Reaching the demand at the right time -Attracting innovative approaches to health provision	2021 to 2025
4.2	Support the establishment of rambler groups, and other informal active lifestyle activities as part of the community development plan	Great Chart PC Kingsnorth PC	-ABC -CMO -KCC -Healthwatch Kent	-Capacity of existing groups, appropriately addressing the need to setup new groups -Securing funding to equipment or to pilot various programmes	July 2021
4.3	Incubate local food growing enterprises using the CMO's 'community cabin' as a base	CMO	-ABC -Ashford Vineyard -The Limes -GCSPC -KPC	-Building up critical mass amongst community members -Defining a mix of uses for the CMO's community cabin early on	2022 onward
4.4	Gearing up existing services in terms of health and education to meet needs of a rapidly growing community	KCC	-GCSPC -KPC	-Broad coordination of multi-tier services -Providing infrastructure for these services	2021 onward

Governed by local people with a vibrant economy					
	Action	Responsible	Partners	Challenges	Timeframe
5.0	Setup garden community project governance arrangements including representation across all developments within the SAGC to help support quality agenda and to maintain delivery at pace	ABC	-KCC -SAGC Developers -GCSPC -CMO -KPC -Shadoxhurst PC	-Bringing existing partners on the journey -Anticipating future house builders at Court Lodge, and taking early steps to form a strong relationship -Demonstrating the benefits of the time and resource required through partnership working	May 2021 onward

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Other voluntary groups -Registered Providers 		
5.1	Setup stewardship body/ies at CL and KNG using best practices from CMO, and utilise HE capacity funding to support legal arrangements for stewardship.	Jarvis Homes Pentland Homes Hallam Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ABC -CMO -GCSPC -KPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensuring that adopted land management approaches have the potential to merge with the CMO in future, or the potential to mirror similar principles to stewardship -Aligning different stakeholder interests under a stewardship approach with a similar set of values. 	-March 2021 onward
5.2	Develop an SAGC volunteering strategy which sets out opportunities for engaging and working with local people and the voluntary and community sectors	ABC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ashford Volunteer Centre -Great Chart PC -Singleton Environment Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Making sure this strategy does not duplicate activities at Chilmington -Avoiding volunteer burnout and providing interesting projects with long-term outcomes 	2022 onward
5.3	Develop brand for the SAGC through external and internal design resource, working with strategic partners and community members. This includes creating an annual programme of communications activity which actively promotes the garden community locally, regionally and nationally.	ABC and Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lee Evans -CSG -SAGC Developers -Homes England -KCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Giving this process the time it needs, finding a brand that is relevant and timeless -Ensuring all partners and the wider community to recognise and adopt the brand. 	January to April 2021
5.4	Create a dedicated website for the SAGC utilising best practices from other Garden Village sites	ABC and Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SAGC Developers -ABC 	-Making the website relevant and practical, not simply a mouthpiece.	March 2021 onward

				-Finding a person/group interested in using the website as a platform to build networks	
5.5	Establishing economic opportunities, job creation and upskilling for local people through on-site training (apprenticeship scheme or other format)	ABC	-SAGC Developers -Ashford College -CMO	-Capacity of Developers to support / communicating mutual benefit -Space for training to take place either on or off site -Existing models that have been successful	August 2021 onward
5.6	Explore spaces for co-working in the early years ahead of permanent provision	SAGC Developers	-ABC -Social Enterprise Kent -Ashford BID	-Economic outlook remains unclear, whether working patterns will permanently change -Demand for such provision may take many years, timing is key	2022 onward
5.7	Produce a summit on garden villages and housing, what is the future of work which mitigates self-isolation? Post-Covid work/life balance in the future economy	ABC	-SAGC Developers -SELEP -Registered Providers	-Making sure this sort of event brings profile to the SAGC -Finding resources to organise and to maximise benefit for all participants	Autumn 2021
5.8	Take first steps towards the establishment of a new Parish for Chilmington Green, to encompass the larger population	ABC with Boundary Commission	-GCSPC	-Timing of this, and how it is done -Communicating the transition to residents	Early 2025

Monitoring & Evaluation

The action plan will be under an annual review by key partners named within and coordinated by the Chilmington Project Team. As the current project governance arrangement at Chilmington evolves into one for the wider SAGC, further partners will step in to support the review and management of the action plan.

Monitoring of the Strategy and action plan over the coming five years will include both internal and external reviews. These include:

- Bimonthly reports to the Community Stakeholder Group
- Every six months, report to ABC Management Team
- Every six months, report to Chilmington Together Development and Implementation Board
- Annual report to the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board

The Community Stakeholder Group

This existing group has evolved substantially since its establishment during the GADAF planning policy consultations. It now comprises a growing mix of residents from not only Chilmington Green, but also those living in the Parishes of Kingsnorth Green and Shadoxhurst. It is envisaged that this group will support/champion specific projects related to the objectives of this Strategy, but will primarily be focused on Chilmington Green in the first few years. Project leads will be nominated and their role will be to report back on their progress at the bimonthly meetings.

Those leading projects need to have a real understanding of what will be deemed a success for residents and what will help them to be engaged and empowered. Some measures of this can be outlined as:

- Know what has changed and what works about a project
- Know the extent and intensity of the change
- Benchmark and make comparisons
- Learn and make improvements
- Test assumptions
- Provide evidence of value for money
- Detect any unintended impacts

5

From	Comment(s)	Notes on edits
Vicky Ellis - CPRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting schemes. There is no scientific evidence that lack of street lighting increases RTAs or antisocial behaviour/crime rate. Therefore, the use of lighting should be kept to a minimum where possible. The use of off white LED bulbs should be utilised to have the least negative impact on invertebrates. No housing should face out so as to minimise window light pollution and outside lights. Street lights that are directional and do not flood out into the surrounding area should be utilized and avoided all together on the outskirts of the development and around the park area. • Housing. The use of bat bricks, house martin nests and other wildlife friendly nesting and roost boxes should be used whenever possible. • The area should designed in such a way as to encourage feeding corridors for bats at night, so the use of native hedges, low light or no light and areas of water bodies • Wherever possible, hedges should be used to mark boundaries and not fencing along with standard trees. Street lights should not be placed near canopies. • Any fencing should have hedgehog highways incorporated • Drives should be gravel rather block pave to allow for drainage • Green roofs should be used on any community building and grey water facilities utilized • Solar panels used on all roofs with the option of installing grey water facilities • Discovery Park sounds like the Discovery Park near Sandwich which is an industrial estate specializing in science – hence the name Discovery • Incorporate patches of wild areas in and around the park to create connectivity and to bring nature out from the park and into the estate and built up environment • Limit areas where dogs can go and place wild areas of the park away from housing due to recreational pressure and domestic cat predation 	Predominately environmental focus here as anticipated, ADD line on drainage and another on potential of green roofs on public buildings. Something focused on habitat corridors
Ian Wolverson -Resident and SAGC Focus Group Chair	The problem is you have had a very large number of comments and ideas passed to you. The assembling of all of those into five groups is great - along with the idea for 'objective' boxes within each of the five. I found 40 objective boxes a bit overpowering and also thought some perhaps overlapped. This led me to wonder if we were making the task look too big, especially considering the limited number of 'active' people we can call upon. Now, theres a lot of criticism - and without offering any sort of solution, other than perhaps attempting to combine some of the objective boxes to reduce the total.	Mainly focused on the structure and arrangement of the document – need to condense and refine

	<p>Both individuals and companies are named in the 'responsible' column. If the Strategy is a long term document those names will quickly become defunct. No criticism at all of the names listed, just that we have to think about when they have moved on, up or away.</p> <p>Do we have good enough developer support in this? If we have it across the board (i.e. the whole of SAGC) that's fine - but if not? I ask this as recent comments - from all over - concerning involvement by the main developer have not been at all 'exciting'?</p>	
<p>Kate Beswick – KCC Public Rights of Way & Access Service</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SAGC Draft Strategy. As a general statement, the Kent County Council (KCC) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Access Service is keen to ensure that their interests are represented within the local policy frameworks of the Districts and Boroughs in Kent. The team is committed to working in partnership with Councils to achieve the aims contained within the KCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This aims to provide a high-quality PRoW network, which will support the Kent economy, provide sustainable travel choices, encourage active lifestyles and contribute to making Kent a great place to live, work and visit.</p> <p>KCC PROW welcome the inclusion in the Vision and Five Key Objectives of the focus on Active Travel and sustainability with the aim of "Well Connected at Every Level".</p> <p>Action Plan: <i>Sustainable and resilient in the long term</i></p> <p>2.3 Green Travel Plan – request inclusion of KCC PROW in creation of Green Travel Plan, focusing on Active Travel utilising and investing in the significant network available.</p> <p>2.6 Sustainable Transport Strategy – see above.</p> <p>3.1 KCC PROW request participation to enable successful partnership working to continue and deliver improvements to the PRoW network in South Ashford. Joint delivery of a strategic plan will ensure significant benefits, while its omission could result in a loss of access to additional funding opportunities sought through development.</p> <p>Sustainable connectivity for all users across the developments, focusing on the impact on the wider area is a priority for KCC PROW. Increasing levels of Active Travel participation improves public health and well-being, in addition to improving air quality by reducing short vehicle journeys and vehicle congestion. We would therefore welcome inclusion as above and within any other relevant partnership.</p>	<p>Green travel plan, include KCC PROW creation in drafting, active travel network</p> <p>Enable partnership working and joint delivery of strat plan to ensure shared benefits.</p>

<p>Aline Hicks – Resident and Former Kingsnorth Parish Councillor</p>	<p>You may know that Kingsnorth Medical Practice is looking to expand and they have identified two possible site, however both of these are indicated green area, and in my opinion these green areas should not be sacrificed. I would welcome the allocation of another site that is more suitable and able to accommodate a large surgery perhaps similar to the new one at Ivycourt in Tenterden and giving room to expand in the future.</p>	
<p>Ian McIntock – Great Chart Parish Council</p>	<p>After having a brief look at this, I see the final item in the Action Plan is the formation of a Chilmington Parish, I made it quite clear early on that I would like to see this happen as early on as possible, legislation say at the point that 350 electors a new PC can be created.</p> <p>But, it is the Boundary Commission that are the creators of this and we are governed by them, unfortunately adjustments to our boundaries occurred in 2019 at the last elections which means there is a moratorium on changes for 5 years after that date - in reality this will mean the BC will not get round to looking at us again for another 6 to 8 years. This means the creation of a Chilmington PC will not happen until this time.</p> <p>The downside of this for our PC is it will mean some very careful thoughts about budgeting for the years approaching this change will mean that a fair number of houses will have been built that will be paying our precept, the loss of these houses sharing our precept will be removed in one instant. The effect this will have is our precept will be shared between less houses and will create a marked increase for those left to pay it.</p> <p>It was for this reason that I would have liked a PC to be created as early as possible, but the Boundary Commission have put paid to that, so we are left to deal with this issue is due course when it comes around?</p> <p>FOLLOW-ON COMMENT Parish Councils really don't work like that, the precept received is for the whole parish, we cannot 'ring fence' funds raised to specific areas - we don't get that complicated?</p> <p>Generally, what we plan and put in our budget should benefit the whole parish, as Chilmington member on the PC we might find that we are putting on something within Chilmington that would be open to the rest of the parish or by using the SEC there will be opportunities for working with and inviting all parishioners to those things.</p> <p>So I think there is some scope here and there looks like it could be a bit of a learning curve for us too as Singleton was well under way when I joined the PC and we are a very</p>	<p>Parish boundaries, how the change will be implemented within the coming 5 years – Ian wants to see this process begin as early as possible. Risk of increase precept to pay between fewer households in the transition until enough houses are built.</p>

	<p>different animal now than we were during the 1980's and 90's - so it looks to be an interesting time.</p>	
<p>Nicky Britton-Williams – Kent Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>We are supportive of the ambition to update the principles of Garden Communities for the 21st century. Whilst the principles of Garden Cities include the creation of “biodiversity rich parks” this is now an updated concept. It is widely accepted that wildlife should not be constrained to specific parks, but be an integral component of the scheme design. In updating these principles there should be a key focus on delivering the governments commitments to the environment within its 25 Year Plan for the Environment, including developing a nature recovery network and delivering biodiversity net gain. Whilst a district or county level nature recovery network is yet to be developed for Ashford or Kent, the SAGC should work to deliver this network locally, integrating Lawton’s principles into every aspect of its design; creating habitats which are bigger, better and more joined up. There is opportunity to use the SAGC as a model for high quality development which contributes to a nature recovery network, but this will only be possible if nature (and its multitude of benefits for the community) is at the heart of decision making. The ‘modern day’ garden community should seek to be the gold standard in the delivery of biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks.</p> <p><u>Vision:</u> The vision for the SAGC doesn’t seem to reflect aspirations for creating a garden community that supports both people and wildlife. The inclusion of green corridors is not a novel concept and does not reflect the aspirations of local residents (as raised multiple times during the webinar) to see the SAGC contribute to the creation of robust ecological networks, including the “rewilding” of parts of the site, connect people to nature and to use nature as a tool to improve health and wellbeing. May I suggest the inclusion of the following edits (or similar) to align the vision with the Governments aspirations for natures recovery:</p> <p><i>By providing clear governance and a commitment to long-term stewardship, the SAGC will guide decision making on sustainable transport networks, <u>a local nature recovery network</u>, high quality landscaping which contributes to biodiversity targets and community facilities for the benefit of both new and existing residents. Priority will be given to pedestrian friendly spaces, <u>protecting and restoring biodiversity</u>, <u>facilitating access to and the enjoyment of nature</u>, inclusive venues and carbon neutral living using sustainable technologies where possible, whilst promoting healthy lifestyles and community leadership.</i></p> <p><u>5 key objectives:</u></p>	<p>Written comments from Nicky, further detail awaited in phone call on 20 Nov</p>

	<p>Protecting and restoring wildlife, for the benefit of both people and wildlife, seems to have been overlooked within the objectives. The second objective lends itself most to nature conservation, however I do not think that this accurately reflects the Councils nor the residents aspirations for the natural environment. Whilst carbon neutrality and habitat protection and restoration do go hand in hand, it seems that the focus of target two is predominantly on carbon neutrality with habitat restoration as an afterthought. As I have only begun to speak with you recently regarding the SAGC I regret to have missed the stage where these objectives were first developed. I would strongly recommend that the issues of carbon neutrality and biodiversity enhancement be separated out to give six objectives. I propose the following (or similar) and would be happy to work through this with you further.</p> <p><i>Sustainable and resilient in the long-term: The SAGC will aim for <u>achieve</u> carbon neutrality in line with the Borough's target of 2030, which will require retrofitting planned development and designing in energy efficient approaches to future development, including opportunities for carbon offsetting. Alongside a programme of carbon reduction, <u>nature-based solutions will be employed to 'lock-up' carbon through habitat restoration and creation.</u></i></p> <p><u>The natural environment at its core: The SAGC will be designed with nature at its heart in line with the Borough's commitments to biodiversity set out in the Local Plan and the Governments commitments under the 25 Year Environment Plan. This will require the creation of a local nature recovery strategy which includes opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to engage and connect with wildlife and for biodiversity enhancements to be woven throughout the entirety of the SAGC. Alongside the benefits for local residents, the SAGC will be designed to leave areas to be "rewilded" solely for the benefit of Ashford's valuable wildlife, to ensure that our rich natural assets are available for future generations to enjoy.</u></p> <p>Failing this, at a minimum, I would suggest renaming the second target to reflect both issues equally and add specific objectives for biodiversity.</p> <p>In addition to my comments above, there is opportunity to incorporate biodiversity into all of the key objectives: 1) Connect people to both nature and their neighbours through a coordinated scheme of community engagement, with nature at its heart. 2) as above 3) Promote carbon neutral public transport and link to and extend the existing Ashford green corridor. Sustainable urban drainage should be designed and managed to also provide benefits for wildlife. The management of these features will be particularly important to ensure long-term benefits.</p>	
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	<p>4) Pioneer approaches to green prescriptions and green social prescribing. Kent Wildlife Trust have already been doing a lot of work in this area and I am aware of new projects starting to emerge next year.</p> <p>5) The governance of the SAGC should not just focus on two pillars of sustainability (social and economic) but also make decisions in the interest of the environment. I would advise the following revision: <i>This will require an evolving governance arrangement with local people at the table along with a diversity of project partners to ensure decision-making is in the interest of local socio-economic growth, <u>environmental protection and restoration,</u> access to affordable housing and other local amenities.</i></p> <p>Spatial approach: It would be useful to know how this was developed, what mapping work of biodiversity assets has been done and how this has/could inform the SAGC strategy. The SAGC should link with the Ashford Green corridor and a Nature Recovery Network for Ashford.</p> <p>Action Plan: Heritage, culture and community at its core: Inclusion of a target to ensure that people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities have access to nature as part of their daily lives. This could include the provision of community gardening for wildlife using accessible raised planters and facilities, nature walks and activities aimed at children, a variety of workshops aimed at adults to target health and wellbeing including social isolation and the inclusion of accessible nature trails.</p> <p>Action 1.7: Please could you expand on what the Community Development Programme will entail?</p> <p>Action 2.1: It would be great to discuss this further and to expand this to include elements of environmental stewardship, and environmental education. Our People Engagement Team and Consultancy would be very well placed to deliver this work.</p> <p>Action 2.2: Please can you expand further on this? Does this relate to the Local Electricity Bill? The Bill is currently on its second reading in the House of Commons and has the potential to reduce land requirement for solar energy generation. Whilst investment of renewable energy is essential if we are to meet climate change commitments, there is a risk of other adverse impacts to biodiversity through land take for these schemes. The SAGC could pilot a scheme – either under the Local Electricity Bill or by working with an existing energy supplier as a sponsor – where every suitable building is fitted with solar panels, and the SAGC residents benefit from surplus energy creation as a community (could perhaps supplement community facilities / landscape maintenance or provide additional community benefits voted for by the community).</p>	
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	<p>Action 2.7: Nothing to add, but it would be good to discuss further.</p> <p>Action 2.8: KWT would look to take a role in community led rewilding schemes and habitat management alongside the councils structured tree planting.</p> <p>4.1 – As detailed above, KWT has led numerous schemes aimed at improving health and wellbeing through nature (including our Take Root social prescribing project, our reserve volunteers and previous work with those with dementia and the elderly in care homes). I think that promoting preventative services such as these could be massively beneficial, and KWT could play a key role.</p> <p>4.2 – Informal activities could include organised habitat management days, KWT could support if involved with SAGC habitat management. Show some specific examples of green actions that we are achieving in this 5 year timeline -</p> <p>Biodiversity net gain – see what they can deliver on-site within their boundary.</p> <p>Ensuring that a ecological expert is on the team at the CMO and to help land management to be done in a way that is more holistic.</p>	
<p>Wendy Rogers – KCC Heritage</p>	<p>Thank you for sending us this draft SAGC strategy. We welcome the opportunity to provide comments.</p> <p>Set out below are a few general comments from Paul Cuming:</p> <p>It is important that the new community in south Ashford takes ownership of its own environment and heritage. The Community Archaeology programme embedded in the S106 for Chilmington is a good example of how this can happen and I would suggest that similar agreements be developed for future developments. If the area is to be integrated into a community as the Strategy envisages, however, it is important that such community archaeology programmes are not constrained by development boundaries and are allowed to work with the both the existing and new communities so that the two can be fully integrated.</p> <p>Ashford’s Green Infrastructure network</p> <p>If properly designed, Green Infrastructure has the potential to help new development be better integrated into the existing rural and urban landscape by ensuring that it fits into the</p>	

	<p>grain of what is already there. The pattern of roads, tracks and lanes in Ashford has been used for centuries to link Ashford's towns, villages, hamlets and countryside. By taking advantage of these existing and historic routeways people will be able to move through the Ashford area while retaining the historic geography of the region, but also following routes more likely to be accompanied by historic hedgerows and planting. This has the potential to unite heritage and ecology to help people access and enjoy GI features more easily and naturally.</p> <p>Using historic routeways also allows GI designers to incorporate heritage assets to provide features of interest. In turn this will help people accessing the GI to become more aware of and value Ashford's heritage which will in turn assist their conservation and re-use. GI can also be used to support public health and well-being by providing leisure and exercise opportunities by linking heritage assets in trails.</p> <p>To fully appreciate Ashford's landscape character and incorporate it into GI effectively, it is first important to understand it. The main method for investigation historic landscape character is by historic landscape characterisation. This is a method of assessing the pattern of tracks, lanes, field boundaries and other features that comprise the historic character of the modern landscape. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent but more detailed refinement is needed to bring the baseline data for the rest of Ashford up to a more detailed standard. We would be happy to discuss this further.</p> <p>The text rightly highlights the contribution of GI to health. Historic England has released research that demonstrates how heritage actively supports health and well-being through contributing to a generally more attractive environment, allowing activities that encourage participation and inclusion and by encouraging outdoors activities.</p> <p>Ashford's blue infrastructure network</p> <p>The ponds and streams of south Ashford have the potential to play an important role in making the landscape more attractive and thereby helping the new development be successful. Many of these will be of heritage interest, representing historic features that have played a role in the community for centuries. This heritage should be studied and revealed so that their potential can be realised. Similarly, any works associated with the creation of the BI must ensure the conservation or enhancement of any heritage assets affected.</p> <p>A few more specific comments from me:</p>	
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	<p>A Vision and Five Key Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage, culture and community at its core – the culture and community elements are in the paragraph but not heritage. As such can I suggest a sentence specifically on heritage such as: “the SAGC will raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the archaeology of the area through both council and community led projects, connecting the new community to those who lived here in the past.” • Sustainable and resilient in the long-term – “Positive sustainability measures include conservation of archaeology and archaeological landscapes where possible through design.” <p>In the Action Plan table, can I suggest another bullet point for the Heritage, culture and community at its core section:</p> <p>1.8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Establish a Strategy for Archaeological Resource Management which will set out a broad approach to identifying, conserving and enhancing the heritage resource to the benefit of the community and develop the understanding and awareness of the historic environment for future generations. • Responsible: ABC, SAGC, developers • Partners: KCC, Parish Councils, Local Heritage groups, Other local groups, HLF projects • Challenges: generating awareness and understanding, liaising with development-led and commercial archaeological investigations • Timeframe: April 2021 onwards 	
<p>Jennifer Wilson Planning Specialist Environment Agency</p>	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>Five Year Vision & Strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community Strategy – Draft November 2020.</p> <p>Thank you for consulting us on the above. We have the following comments to make.</p> <p>General Comments</p> <p>We welcome you looking at the sites in South Ashford strategically. This is something we support. The strategy is light on biodiversity / nature and we should request this area is strengthened.</p> <p>The idea of a wetland is welcomed. This should be multifunctional and could contribute to flood risk management, nutrient neutrality, water resources, biodiversity, leisure, health & well-being and landscape. Water efficiency should also be incorporated into the green credentials.</p>	

	<p>Groundwater and Contaminated Land We would recommend that site allocations on land with previous use will need to address potential contamination issues by adequate investigation and risk assessment. This includes historic landfills sites, a number of which are within the proposed boundary of this development.</p> <p>Detailed comments on any specific site will be provided at the planning application stage, to ensure adequate investigation and if necessary remediation is carried out to address any identified contamination and risks to controlled waters.</p> <p>Any new proposals should ensure that sustainable drainage design will achieve appropriate protection of groundwater.</p> <p>In the case of limited mains sewer provision, we would also object to major development sites that do not tie into upgrade of sewer capacity in the area. This is for the LPA and utility company to manage in terms of timing for release of permissions for sites being developed. This is particularly important in stressed groundwater catchments and where Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are evident.</p> <p>Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology <i>Objective 2 Sustainable and resilient in the long-term</i> Unfortunately this document refers to sustainability but overlooks the developing requirements of the new Environment Bill, the (likely) mandatory need for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and the development of Local Nature Recovery Network Strategies (LNRNS) to deliver the national Nature Recovery Network.</p> <p>The above will require addressing in detail and additional work to ensure this document incorporates the work of the Kent Nature Partnership on BNG and on the LNRNS, new legislation, new planning policies and, the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan.</p> <p>Flood Risk We have no detailed comments to make regarding flood risk, but reference is made to 'blue management'; it must be ensured that any management of waterways is fully compliant with the Environment Agency, the River Stour Internal Drainage Board, Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council's existing regulatory regime and their associated guidance documentation.</p> <p>We look forward to reviewing an extensively revised document in due course</p>	
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