

Consultation Statement

for the

Lidsing Garden Community Supplementary
Planning Document (SPD)

August 2025

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1.Introduction

- 1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, which require local planning authorities to prepare a statement setting out the consultation undertaken during the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This statement outlines the consultation process, feedback received, and how this input has shaped the Lidsing Garden Community SPD.

2.Purpose of the Lidsing Garden Community SPD

- 2.1 The Lidsing Garden Community SPD is a planning guidance document which will support the delivery of the Lidsing Garden Community site allocation as set out in the Council's adopted [Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-38](#), particularly Policy LPRSP4(B).
- 2.2 The Maidstone Local Plan Review Policy LPRSP4(B) requires collaboration between public and private sector organisations to produce an SPD proactively and collaboratively for the Lidsing Garden Community. It is important to make sure that all those organisations work together to achieve shared objectives and avoid piecemeal development arising from competing interests.
- 2.3 This SPD is informed by collaborative planning and design, and draws together feedback from the Council, landowners, the local community and other stakeholders. It sets out clear shared objectives which all parties should aim to achieve, alongside guidance as to how to achieve them.
- 2.4 The purpose of this SPD is not to repeat the Local Plan Review policies. Instead, it sets out broad principles to show how the Garden Community should be designed, translating the policy requirements in the Local Plan Review into a well-designed and successful place. It also provides detailed guidance which interprets the Local Plan Review policies in a manner appropriate to the site and how the policies should be implemented and interpreted.

3.Status of the SPD

- 3.1 The SPD, once adopted, will become a material consideration in planning applications.

4. Consultation process

4.1 In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2020), a two-stage consultation process is being conducted:

Stage 1: Early Engagement (Informal Consultation)

- ▼ The informal consultation was undertaken with local Councillors, internal departments, consultants, relevant stakeholders, and delivery partners to gather initial insights and ensure the SPD aligns with existing policies, strategic plans and objectives.
- ▼ Feedback from these conversations informed the preparation of plans and materials for the wider public informal engagement.
- ▼ The wider public informal engagement was held to gather local community feedback.

Stage 2: Public Consultation (Formal Consultation Period)

- ▼ A draft Lidsing Garden Community SPD is published for a formal public consultation.
- ▼ Notifications are sent to statutory consultees, local councillors, community groups, and other interested parties.
- ▼ Hard copies of the draft SPD are made available at local libraries and council offices.

5. Early engagement

- 5.1 Key stakeholders were identified at the outset to initiate discussions on the SPD's role, scope, and programme. A Project Board and a Stakeholder Steering Group were established, followed by initial meetings and workshops.
- 5.2 The Project Board consisted of Maidstone Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority and the site promoter. Meetings of this board started in 2024 following adoption of the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 and proceeded on a bi-weekly basis.
- 5.3 The Stakeholder Steering Group (SSG) consisted of elected representatives of Maidstone Borough Council, Medway Council and Kent County Council, the site promoter and supporting officers. SSG meetings commenced in November 2024 with a joint meeting for all 3 strategic development sites (Heathlands, Lidsing

and Invicta), followed by individual Lidsing site SSGs held monthly in January, February, March, April and then July 2025.

5.4 Outside of these meetings officers held the following technical stakeholder meetings. These were with statutory bodies with technical expertise that included the following bodies:

- Kent Downs National Landscape
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Southern Water
- Locate in Kent
- Kent Police
- Medway Council
- Kent County Council
- Historic England
- Environment Agency

5.5 These were technical in nature and sought to understand the priorities of those organisations.

5.6 An informal public consultation was held between **06 March 2025** to **23 March 2025** and was promoted online through:

- The Council's website and consultation portal
- Social media channels and e-news bulletin

5.7 During the informal engagement, the council consulted a broad range of stakeholders. This included residents who had signed up for consultation reminders or previously requested updates on the Local Plan being notified and invited to participate. Others included statutory consultees, local parish councils, and key service providers. Local community groups, ward members, and local residents were also targeted for engagement, alongside stakeholders with a known interest in the site. E-news bulletin was also sent to 13,656 recipients. Information was also passed to Medway Council to advertise to their residents.

5.8 Additionally, to engage closely with local residents and businesses, two drop-in sessions were held on:

- **06 March between 3pm and 9pm** at Blacksmith's Barn, Blacksmith's Court in Bredhurst, ME7 3JU.
- **10 March between 11am and 1pm** at the same address.

5.9 Planning officers and the site promote were present at these events to discuss with the local community about the plans and take feedback.

5.10 Feedback was sought on the following topics:

- Local environment & habitats
- Design
- Open spaces (including Open space in Kent Downs National Landscape)
- Movement & connectivity
- Local infrastructure
- New local centre

A. Summary of feedback

5.11 A total of approximately 130 people attended the two drop-in sessions.

5.12 156 responses were received via the informal online consultation. 88 of which came from Medway residents, 63 came from Maidstone Borough residents, five did not want to be identified or did not enter postcode data. Two letters were received by post.

5.13 Feedback received during Stage 1 (early engagement) can be summarised as below:

Local environment & habitats

- Suggestions to consider additional habitats and species: butterflies, bee lines, birds of prey, lapwings, ground-nesting birds, owls, foxes, badgers, squirrels, bats.
- Freshwater habitats should be included.
- Important areas highlighted: Bredhurst Hurst Ancient Woodland, Strawberry Banks Chalk Grassland, and links to Bredhurst Woods.
- General support for connecting habitat features using:

- Nest boxes
- Wildlife corridors
- Grass verges
- Walking/horse riding routes
- New water features
- 15m buffer between gardens and wildlife areas
- Retain existing trees/bushes, especially near Chapel Lane.
- Reference to the Kent Wildlife Trust's Medway Smile Project as a good example.

Design

- Desired features in the employment area include:
 - Mature, native planting with water features
 - Footpaths, trails, cycle paths
 - Parks & play areas
 - Active travel access to Hempstead
 - Adequate parking
 - Renewable energy
 - Natural colour schemes
- Housing-related comments focused on:
 - Location of affordable housing
 - Ensuring design quality is maintained
- Comments on schools suggested:
 - School is located near to link road to encourage slower/safer driving

Open space

- Suggested additions:
 - Cricket pitch
 - Walking routes from Wigmore to Bredhurst

- Equestrian considerations
- Retain established hedgerows
- Landscaping on site should be linked to surrounding green areas
- Desired open space uses:
 - Anti-social behaviour prevention
 - New Hempstead Cricket Club
 - Horse riding
 - Mixed recreational areas including –children’s play areas, walking, running routes (parkrun), skate parks, dog walking, picnic areas and outdoor gyms.
 - Tennis/racket sport courts
 - Ponds
 - Link to Capstone Valley Country Park
- Preferred locations for formal sports pitches:
 - Edges of site (motorway or near employment zone)
 - Walderslade, or near Chapel Woods, or near to Bredhurst, or near Hempstead Valley
 - Away from habitats

Open space in Kent Downs National Landscape

- Most found walking routes appropriate or were unsure.
- Suggestions included:
 - Pedestrian access to Strawberry Banks, Church Path, and White Hill
 - New path from The Street to Strawberry Banks via Kessler Street
- Anticipated uses:
 - Dog walking, running, horse riding, family use, mountain biking, bird watching
- Parking:

- Majority supported designated parking (online consultation: 48 yes, 25 no)
- New secure, free parking suggested at The Street/Kemsley Street Road junction

Movement & connectivity

- Desired walking/cycling connections:
 - Countryside, Capstone Park, Lordswood, Walderslade, Boxley, Bredhurst, Gillingham, Rainham, Wigmore, Maidstone, Hempstead Valley, Bredhurst Woods, North Downs Way
 - Clarification sought on how active travels will be favoured over private car use as the preferred transport
- Transport considerations:
 - Include horse-riding routes
 - Concern over bridge making Bredhurst-Wigmore route less direct
- Missing items identified:
 - Traffic calming, pub, gym, secondary school, dentist
- Employment area connections:
 - One-way access via M2 Junction 4
 - Minimise car use, add active travel and bus routes, provide screening, ensure disabled access
- Suggested options for closures:
 - Online consultation responses count: Forge Lane (22), The Street (5), Dunn Street Road (10), combinations (varied), no preference (26), none (27)
- Other suggestions:
 - More parking
 - Review Westfield Sole Road access
 - Bring bridge works earlier
 - Infrastructure before housing
 - ANPR access control

- Cancel M2 Junction 4 upgrade; use Junction 3 instead

Local infrastructure

- Clarifications sought on:
 - Link road details, infrastructure timelines, transport mitigation for Boxley
 - Health facilities (Medway Hospital concerns)
 - Construction management
 - Favouring active travel over car use
 - Bus stop locations
- Suggested inclusions:
 - Youth activity spaces (e.g. Scouts and Guides)
 - Affordable housing for locals
- Key facilities valued locally:
 - Healthcare, schools, supermarkets, pubs, wildlife sites, library, sports facilities, post office, accessible green space, walking/cycling routes, gyms, train station

New local centre

- Comments included:
 - Include an event space
 - Arrange facilities around a village square/green
- Preferred design:
 - Central square/green layout
 - Traffic calming
 - Walkable with enough parking
- Desired features:
 - Village green
 - Bike parking

- Public seating and toilets
- Play space
- Bandstand/community hub
- Recycling points
- EV charging stations

5.14 Some respondents (participated in the online informal consultation as well as in the events) opposed development entirely.

B. How feedback has been addressed in the current draft SPD

5.15 As a result of the feedback received the following changes were made:

- Local centre – a village green and square has been added
- Open space sport – were consolidated into larger areas rather than distributed
- Environment – ecological connections were made across the site connecting habitat features
- Transport – active travel routes between the site and the surrounding urban areas

6. Next steps

6.1 The consultation process is instrumental in shaping the final version of the Lidsing Garden Community SPD. Received feedback will be considered and necessary changes will be made to the final SPD to address raised issues.

6.2 The final SPD will be considered by the Council to consider adoption so that it can be used as a material consideration in planning applications.

6.3 For further information, please visit the Council's website:

<https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/heathlands,-lidsing-and-invicta-park-barracks-spds/lidsing-garden-settlement-spd>

or contact the Planning Policy Team at ldf@maidstone.gov.uk.

7.Consultation materials

Drop-in sessions

Flyer :

Lidsing Garden Settlement Drop In Sessions

Residents and businesses are being invited to Community Voice Sessions for people to drop in and share their ideas to help shape the planned new development in Lidsing

When?

Thursday 6 March between 3pm and 9pm &
Monday 10 March between 11am and 1pm

Where?

Blacksmith's Barn, Blacksmith's Court in Bredhurst, ME7 3JU



Comments and feedback received during these sessions will be used to inform the emerging Supplementary Planning Document

For further information, please see our website
<https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home>



Event photo:



Council's webpage

localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/heathlands,-lidsing-and-invicta-park-barracks-spds/lidsing-garden-settlement-spd

[EXPAND ALL](#)

Get Involved

Close

Lidsing Garden Settlement Drop In Sessions

Residents and businesses are being invited to Community Voice Sessions on **Thursday 6 March between 3pm and 9pm** and **Monday 10 March between 11am and 1pm**. They will be held in Blacksmith's Barn, Blacksmith's Court in Bredhurst, ME7 3JU for people to share their ideas to help shape the planned new development in Lidsing. These sessions are designed for people to drop in and stay for as long or as little as they wish. Comments and feedback received during these sessions will be used to inform the emerging Supplementary Planning Document.

Furthermore, please keep an eye on our [consultation page](#) where any live consultations will be posted.

Council's consultation portal

[Home](#) / [Previous Consultations](#) / [Lidsing Informal Engagement](#)

Lidsing Informal Engagement

[Facebook](#)
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Consultation has concluded

Help shape the development of the Supplementary Planning Document for Lidsing Garden Settlement.

In March 2024 Maidstone Borough Council adopted the Maidstone [Local Plan Review 2021-2038](#). This document allocates sites for development and policies to manage that development. One of the sites allocated was the Lidsing Garden Settlement to the north of the Borough.

The Lidsing Garden Settlement allocation includes:

- 2,000 new homes to be built (40% to be affordable homes)
- 14 hectares of new employment space
- A new 3 form entry primary school
- c.44 hectares of open space
- A new local centre of no less than 1,500 sqm of retail, leisure and services
- A new medical facility

Lidsing Garden Settlement Drop-In Sessions (March 2025) - Existing Masterplan

Lifecycle

- Open**
 This consultation is open for contributions.
- Under Review**
 Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. The feedback will help inform the formal consultation.
- Next Steps**
 The information you provide will help us to shape the SPD. There will be a further formal consultation in Summer 2025.

Related Links

- Consultation Documents**
 - [Lidsing Informal Engagement Paper Form \(Word\).docx \(7.67 MB\) \(docx\)](#)
 - [Lidsing Informal Engagement Paper Form \(PDF\).pdf \(1.37 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
- Transport Ideas**
 - [Lidsing Option 1 \(689 KB\) \(jpg\)](#)
 - [Lidsing Option 2 \(698 KB\) \(jpg\)](#)
 - [Lidsing Option 3 \(698 KB\) \(jpg\)](#)

Queries

For queries or questions relating to this consultation please email: consultation@maidstone.gov.uk

Questionnaire survey via consultation portal

Between 06-23 March 2025 Maidstone Borough Council ran an online questionnaire on the Lidsing SPD. It consisted of 16 questions in the following topic areas:

Environment

1. Are there any habitats or environmental features that we have not considered?
2. Would you like habitat features to be connected and how?

Employment

3. How should this area connect to the rest of the site and beyond?
4. What design features would you like to see here e.g. parks, trails, colour etc?

Open Space

5. What activities should open spaces be able to accommodate?
6. Where is the best location for the formal sports playing pitches on the site?

Vision for the Local Centre

7. How should the local centre be designed e.g. facilities set around a village square or green, along a street or streets?
8. What design features should be in the local centre e.g. trees, seating, art, play facilities, bike parking?

Facilities & Transport

9. Is there anything missing from the list in the plan attached?
10. What facilities are locally important to you?
11. Where would you like to walk/cycle from the site?

Open Space in Kent Downs National Landscape

12. Are the walking routes in the right place?
13. How might you use this area?
14. Should there be designated parking to access this space?



Transport Ideas

15. Do you have a preferred option or combination of options (see website -

<https://LetsTalkMaidstone.uk.engagementhq.com/lidsing-informal-engagementquestionnaire>)?

16. Do you have any other suggestions or comments on the ideas?


E-news bulletin



Everyone welcome at drop-in sessions for Lidsing Garden Settlement

Maidstone Borough Council sent this bulletin at 20-02-2025 09:36 AM GMT

[View as a webpage](#) / [Share](#)



Everyone welcome at drop-in sessions for Lidsing Garden Settlement

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Email Address

e.g. name@example.com

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Share Bulletin



Social media

Table 1: Social media posts metrics

Date (2025)	Platform	Interactions	Comments	Shares	Impressions (number of times a post is seen)	Reach (number of unique accounts reached)
19 February	Facebook	108	2	17	16,383	8,300
19 February	LinkedIn	9	0	0	261	172
19 February	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA



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Date (2025)	Platform	Interactions	Comments	Shares	Impressions (number of times a post is seen)	Reach (number of unique accounts reached)
23 February	Facebook	2	0	0	1,956	1,300
23 February	LinkedIn	24	0	2	507	309
23 February	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA
28 February	Facebook	3	0	0	1,964	1,400
28 February	LinkedIn	9	0	0	188	137
28 February	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA
2 March	Facebook	0	0	0	1,675	1,200
2 March	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA
3 March	Facebook	4	0	1	1,912	1,200
3 March	LinkedIn	12	0	0	274	190
5 March	Facebook	12	0	2	7,299	4,300
5 March	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA
9 March	Facebook	18	0	5	6,043	2,300
9 March	Bluesky	0	0	0	NA	NA