

SOUTH MEDSTEAD | LARGE DEVELOPMENT SITE

INFORMATION PACK | SEPTEMBER 2019

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Land at South Medstead has been put forward for consideration as an option for a Large Development Site to help meet development needs in the district through the emerging Local Plan. Previously, three neighbouring parcels of land have been promoted by separate parties, but these parties are working together to allow the land to come forward as one large site, maximising the benefits of development for the local community.
- 1.2 National planning policy recognises that *“the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages or towns”*¹.
- 1.3 The site extends to 25 hectares, comprising grazing land adjoining the existing built-up area of South Medstead and Four Marks, but almost entirely contained by existing roads and development so that extension of the settlement in this location would not significantly encroach into open countryside.
- 1.4 The site is entirely outside the South Downs National Park. There are no environmental or archaeological constraints to development of the site. It has the potential to deliver a well-planned, mixed-use development including new homes, affordable housing, employment land and open space. There is also potential for a new primary school and accommodation for Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Alternatively, development could contribute towards making improvements to the existing school at Medstead and/or improvements to provide safe access to it.
- 1.5 Development would integrate well with the existing community, including the two neighbouring local centres with their range of local services and facilities. It could also deliver improvements to existing infrastructure, including the local highway network, additional public open spaces, green infrastructure, footpath and cycle path connections and community facilities.
- 1.6 Master planning is at a very early stage. Taking the Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan as a starting point, this provides an opportunity to work closely with the local community, including the parish councils, residents and businesses, to deliver a locally distinctive scheme that responds to an identified local need. For example, there may be particular need for specialised accommodation for the elderly that could be included.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 72

2. Site Promotion Team

- 2.1 The South Medstead Large Development Site option is being promoted jointly by three prominent housing companies, with a strong and successful history in the region:



3. Map of South Medstead Large Development Site

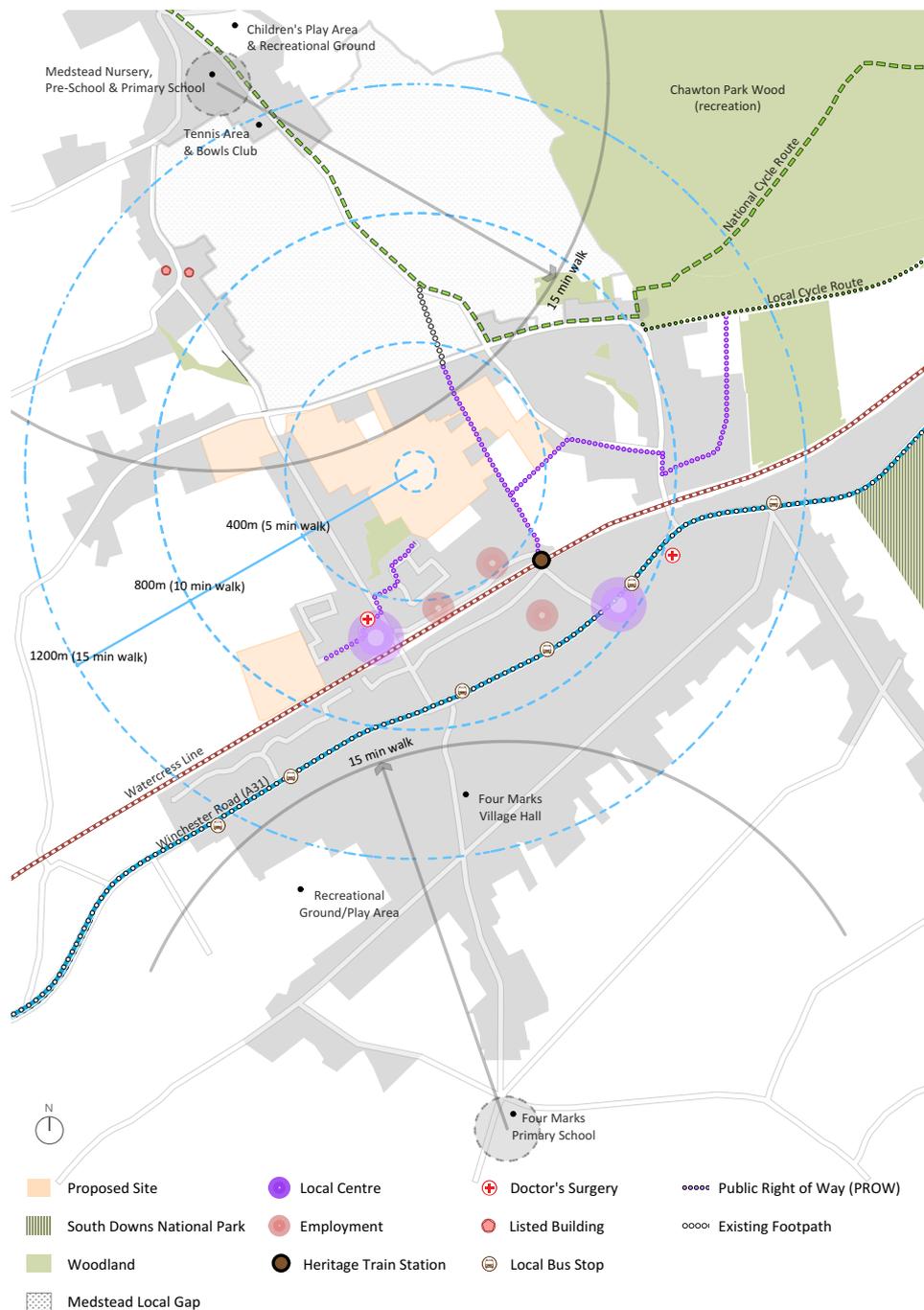


3.1 There is opportunity to invest in and improve the existing infrastructure, local services and facilities to create a genuinely sustainable and walkable neighbourhood.

3.2 The South Medstead Large Development Site is well located for the following reasons:

- Extension of South Medstead & Four Marks, a 'Small Local Service Centre' in the Council's settlement hierarchy;
- Good access to employment opportunities;
- Good footpath/bridleway/cycle links within the local area and beyond;
- Close to bus stops with regular services to Winchester & Alton (with mainline trains to London);
- Opportunity for a number of different vehicle accesses;
- Good access to the countryside including large areas of recreational woodland.

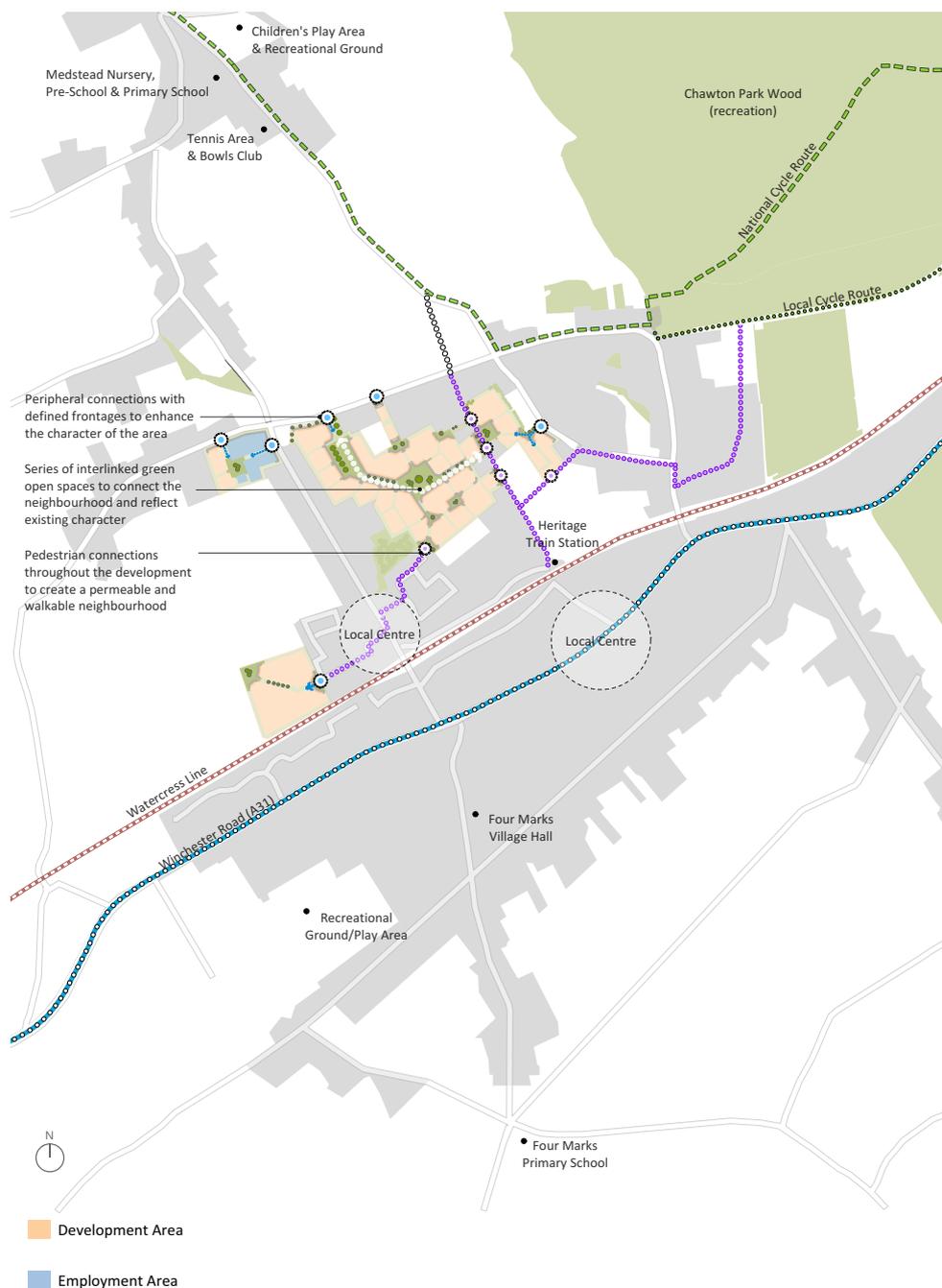
4. Site Considerations



4.1 The South Medstead area is relatively unconstrained:

- It is entirely outside the South Downs National Park and any landscape designations;
- There are no environmental or heritage designations;
- It is in a low risk of flooding from rivers;
- It largely comprises predominantly open agricultural fields and paddocks, therefore likely to have low biodiversity/wildlife interest;
- None of these open areas are specifically protected in the Neighbourhood Plan;
- It does not affect the Medstead Local Gap;
- An opportunity to integrate development with the existing community with a comprehensive master plan.

5. Proposed Development Opportunities



5.1 The total area of the Large Development Site at present is 25 hectares.

Land Use	Appropriate quantum
Homes (C3)	650 including affordable homes
Gypsy and Traveller accommodation (pitches)	TBC (see para 8.19)
Travelling Showpeople accommodation (plots)	TBC (see para 8.19)
Employment (B use classes)	2ha
Possible Primary School (2 Form Entry)	1.2ha TBC

5.2 Other than the location of the proposed employment land, which would be located on the western parcel of land adjacent to the existing local centre, the location of the different land uses is still to be determined following community engagement and master planning.

6. Understanding Constraints and Considerations to Identify Proposed Development Opportunities

- 6.1 At around 25 hectares, the site could accommodate around 650 new affordable and market dwellings, together with open space, employment land, a potential new primary school or upgraded infrastructure to existing Medstead School and infrastructure improvements to the local area.
- 6.2 The site represents a logical extension of the existing urban area by utilising under-used land which is broadly surrounded by existing development. The proposal does not significantly extend the urban area into open countryside and preserves the Medstead Local Gap.
- 6.3 The available land is well located between existing local centres and provides an opportunity to integrate with, and add to, existing services and infrastructure to reinforce a sustainable, walkable neighbourhood. There may also be opportunity to help to facilitate delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan's vision for a 'railway station hub' which in turn seeks to create a new 'heart' to the community.
- 6.4 There are opportunities for several vehicular accesses, linked by a principal 'lane' through the development helping to avoid a concentration of traffic onto a single point on the local highway network. Together with new footpath and cycle links into the existing networks, this will help to reduce the impact of traffic and help to achieve a genuinely walkable neighbourhood.
- 6.5 The site can link Lymington Bottom Road and Boyneswood Road with access to Chawton Park Wood beyond. These links will respect existing green infrastructure and reinforce existing routes (Stoney Lane, Boyneswood Lane etc). The new neighbourhood will also provide a sequence of green spaces through the development providing green 'stepping stones' to the open countryside.
- 6.6 Frontages onto Lymington Bottom Road and Five Ash Road/Soldridge Road could comprise lower density development and/or additional green infrastructure to reinforce the rural character of the village 'edge'.
- 6.7 There is opportunity to improve safe, off-road connections to the two existing local primary schools. There is potentially the capacity for a new two form entry primary school onsite, providing the opportunity to increase the number of school places, meeting both existing and future needs of the community. This location between Medstead and Four Marks provides a logical location for further education provision.

7. Delivery and Timescales

- 7.1 Development of the site is likely to be in phases over the following indicative period, with key infrastructure provided in step with occupations;

Year	Housing	Other Uses
1	Site Preparation	
2	80 (80)	Employment land (1 hectare)
3	100 (180)	Employment land (1 hectare)
4	100 (280)	
5	100 (380)	
6	100 (480)	
7	100 (580)	
8	20 (600)	Primary School opens (TBC)

- 7.2 With three house builders, the rate of delivery is likely to be quicker than normal, thereby helping to meet the District's development needs earlier in the Plan period.

8. Meeting Identified Needs in a Sustainable Way

8.1 The Government's national planning policy says, *"The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way."*

Supporting a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities

8.2 With reference to the Land Budget / Development Opportunities Plan (page 5), this Large Development Site provides opportunity to integrate development with the existing community, helping to sustain the existing local services and facilities, including primary schools, doctor's surgeries, local shops and businesses, while adding new facilities and better connections to create a walkable neighbourhood.

8.3 Although master planning is at a very early stage, the proposed development includes committing 2 hectares of the available land to employment uses, helping to generate new job opportunities alongside the new homes.

8.4 Larger scale development, rather than further piecemeal development, provides opportunity to secure more development contributions, and land, which can help to deliver objectives such as creating a more distinctive heart to the community around the heritage railway station.

8.5 As well as reinforcing the sustainability/self-sufficiency of the existing community, new homes in this location will have good access to sustainable forms of transport and employment opportunities further afield, including Alton and Alresford, Winchester, Guildford and London (via regular bus services and the mainline rail services available nearby at Alton). New homes are also linked to Alton via a national cycle route through Chawton Park Wood.

Opportunities to improve and invest in infrastructure

8.6 In addition to provision of on-site infrastructure and community facilities, the proposed site could contribute towards delivery of the following items identified in the Medstead & Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan, either directly or through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions:

- A mixed-use hub around the heritage railway station
- enlargement/improvements to the village hall (including additional car parking);
- an extension to the cemetery;
- a tarmac area for teenagers;
- a youth sports building;
- a 3G artificial sports pitch;
- improvements around Oak Green to replace and replant the raised beds, resurface the front car park and re-line the parking spaces; and
- adult multi gym equipment for the recreation ground.

8.7 Large scale development will generate more Community Infrastructure Levy (25% of which is retained by the parishes following adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan) and s106 contributions, and is therefore, a means of maximising the benefits of development.

Economic opportunities

- 8.8 As well as helping to sustain the existing local services and facilities, and the existing employment opportunities in the local area (by providing more homes alongside the employment), the site includes capacity for an additional employment area of around 2 hectares.
- 8.9 Given the proximity to the existing and proposed residential areas, it is likely that this employment land would be suited to a mix of office, research & development and light industrial uses, possibly with some complementary retail space, all of which will create more local job opportunities. Heavy industry and/or warehouse storage/distribution is unlikely to be appropriate in this location.
- 8.10 With good access to the A31, this location is also convenient for access to work opportunities further afield, including Alton, Alresford, Winchester and Guildford. There is the mainline railway connection to London, less than 5 miles away at Alton (including cycle path links).

Opportunities for environmental improvements

- 8.11 The available land is predominantly agricultural fields and paddocks surrounded by development, therefore is not expected to be of high biodiversity/wildlife value. There are some existing trees and hedgerows, some of which could be retained as green features within the development. These would be supplemented with new planting as part of a comprehensive landscape master plan, which would include employing sustainable drainage systems to create wildlife and amenity features, such as swales and ponds. There is therefore opportunity to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

- 8.12 New public open spaces would be created within these areas, to create a green setting for the new homes and other development. New planting and 'green corridors' could be including, as well as potential for 'wildlife' walks as identified in the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, helping to maintain a soft transition between the built-up areas and the surrounding open countryside.

Creating and maintaining a quality place

- 8.13 Rather than continuation of the pattern of piecemeal development in South Medstead & Four Marks, which is less successful at delivering wholesale improvements to local infrastructure, a large scale development with a comprehensive master plan, has the advantage of being able to plan for significant new community infrastructure and help deliver the community vision for the mixed-use railway hub as a new, distinctive heart for the community.
- 8.14 Master planning is at a very early stage, therefore, there is opportunity to work closely with the community to create an ambitious development proposal that manages to integrate significant growth, required to help meet the District's development needs, with the established community.
- 8.15 A comprehensive master plan could be supported by a Development Brief or Area Action Plan, adopted by the District Council but with input from local stakeholders, to set out strong development parameters and design quality objectives.

³ In accordance with the NPPF2019 definition of affordable housing

Meeting the housing needs of everyone

- 8.16 The site could make provision for affordable housing to meet the identified need at the time of the development, including:
- affordable rent;
 - affordable routes to home ownership (including shared ownership);
 - starter homes; and
 - discounted market housing.
- 8.17 Given the ageing demographic of the local area, special provision could also be made for those looking to downsize or elderly persons accommodation. Given the sustainable location, there are opportunities to deliver a retirement village or extra care accommodation.
- 8.18 The site also presents opportunities for custom and self-build homes.
- 8.19 The site could in principle accommodate a number of gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling showpeople plots, but further investigation is required to determine a suitable location for the pitches and plots within the site boundaries; and discussions with East Hampshire District Council are required to determine the scale of the need for each type of accommodation in this area.

Accessing the site by walking, cycling and public transport

- 8.20 With reference to the Land Use / Site Considerations Plan (page 4), the site will be a walkable neighbourhood, close to existing local facilities and services. A network of existing public rights of way cross the site, linking Five Ash Road to Station Approach, and Boyneswood Road to the local centre on Lymington Bottom Road, and the potential Railway Station 'hub' without using the local road network. The site is also linked to Medstead village and the surrounding rural area via a network of public rights of way that avoid the local road network.
- 8.21 A national cycle route passes along the boundary, linking the site to Alton (mainline rail services to London) via Chawton Park Wood (30mins).
- 8.22 The site is close to bus stops on the A31 which provide frequent services to Winchester and Alton, further reducing the reliance on private car use.
- 8.23 The site provides opportunity to deliver an additional primary school, which could serve the existing community as well as new development. Alternatively, new development could contribute towards additional footway provision/ improvements to access the existing primary school in Medstead.

9. Local Communities

Concerns, opportunities and benefits

- 9.1 As recognised in the Medstead & Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan (2016), the local area has seen significant growth since the turn of the 21st Century. However, this has been piecemeal growth, with several separate sites being developed in turn, not necessarily with an overarching plan. Being outside of the National Park, with few constraints to development, and with good access via the A31 and proximity to mainline rail services at Alton, development pressure is likely to continue in this area. The South Medstead Large Development Site option provides opportunity for a further chapter of growth but with the benefit of a comprehensive master plan, helping to deliver a vision for a strong, sustainable community for the future, and help deliver community objectives such as the mixed-use railway hub.
- 9.2 The Neighbourhood Plan celebrates the rural character of the settlements and seeks to protect this into the future. Additional growth will inevitably be perceived to threaten this approach. However, recognising the significant development needs in the District, and benefits of further development in this location, a master planned development offers opportunity to maximise the benefits of new development, with an appropriate mix of uses including new employment land and potential for a new primary school, with appropriate infrastructure and other investment in the area.
- 9.3 Development would come forward in a series of phases, over a number of years, allowing key infrastructure to be put in place to support the growing local population, and assist in integrating development with the established community.

Working together going forward, in an inclusive way

- 9.4 The site is now being promoted jointly by three parties: Bargate Homes, CALA Homes and Redrow Homes, two of whom have been involved in local development schemes in recent years and are therefore familiar with local stakeholders and the local issues.
- 9.5 This consortium of developers is committed to engaging the District Council, Parish Council and other local stakeholders to evolve these very early proposals into a well-coordinated and locally distinctive development opportunity. Therefore, this option has the advantage of providing scope for significant input from community stakeholders from the outset to help determine how the available land could best be developed for benefit of the community. A master plan could be supported by a Development Brief or Area Action Plan, prepared with the District Council with strong input from community stakeholders.

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