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Media release

OUTLINE PLANNING APPROVED FOR 8,500 HOMES GARDEN TOWN NEAR FOLKESTONE, KENT

- *Otterpool Park Garden Town secured planning approval this evening, with work scheduled to start later this year.*
- *The new Garden Town will meet housing demand for a generation.*
- *Decision gives green light to early infrastructure delivery to benefit the new community and neighbouring communities.*
- *Design of garden town has been influenced by the site's landscape setting and heritage, and a commitment to creating a high-quality place of exemplary design and high sustainability standards.*
- *High value on protecting and increasing access to historic features including Westenhanger Castle, its Causeway and medieval barns, WWII facilities at Lympne Airfield, prehistoric barrows, and Roman villa.*
- *The new town will enable and encourage healthy, active lifestyles, with extensive areas of green space comprising half of the total area, and five new linked parks, including Westenhanger Castle Park, at its heart.*
- *Otterpool Park will draw on the vitality and creativity of the area, in particular Folkestone, providing cultural and recreational facilities and supporting rich and varied lifestyles.*

Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Planning and Licensing Committee has tonight (4 April 2023) resolved to grant outline planning permission for Otterpool Park, a new 8,500 home garden town near Folkestone in Kent.

The transformative development, led by master developer Otterpool Park LLP on behalf of Folkestone & Hythe District Council, supported by planning and development specialists Quod, Arcadis, Tibbalds and Farrells, will deliver homes, jobs and community facilities in a vibrant, sustainable new community characterised by large amounts of green space and its landscape-led setting.

The approved plans include:

- Up to 8,500 homes of a range of types and tenures, including over 1,870 affordable homes and over 400 self-build homes.
- Approximately 50% of the application site will be open space with new cycling and walking routes and significant historic features retained including bronze age barrows, Roman villa remains, Westenhanger Castle and its medieval barns, world war airfield remains and Folkestone Racecourse's parade circle.
- Creation of an integrated transport network to connect the new garden town and reduce car use centred around Westenhanger train station.
- Electric vehicle charging points and other measures aimed at limiting environmental impact and boosting nature biodiversity by 20%.
- Up to 29,000 sqm of retail and related uses.
- Up to 87,500 sqm of employment floor space including commercial business hubs, a commercial business park and a light industrial park.
- Up to 67,000 sqm of education and community facilities floorspace including up to 7 primary and up to 2 secondary schools as well as nurseries and crèches, health centres, places of worship and community centres.
- Up to 8,000 sqm of hotel floorspace and 8,500 sqm of leisure floorspace, including a sports pavilion and indoor sports hall provision.
- Infrastructure and utilities including a new electrical substation and potable water network reinforcement and provision of a fibre-to-home broadband network.

The outline planning consent gives the go ahead to the principle of a development at Otterpool Park, including the Development Specification, parameter plans and the Strategic Design Principles that will guide detailed designs for each phase.

It is the first stage of a three-tiered planning approach for delivering Otterpool Park and will be followed by frameworks for each development phase; incorporating a phased masterplan, design code and delivery plan (tier 2), and then reserved matters applications providing development detail (tier 3).

Master developer Otterpool Park LLP will now progress the detailed planning for the first phase. It includes the town centre and Castle Park, a park centred around Westenhanger Castle. Enabling works, including advanced planting on site, are expected to commence later this year.

Andy Jarrett, Managing Director, Otterpool Park LLP, said, "This landmark decision is a pivotal point in the delivery of Otterpool Park and follows seven years of planning, masterplanning and community engagement.

"We are committed to creating an exemplar and sustainable garden town that will do so much more than meet local housing needs. This is about creating a new community which includes everything it needs to thrive now, and in the future, with a fundamental focus on enabling healthy, active, and sustainable lifestyles and early delivery of the infrastructure needed to support a community of this scale.

"Having secured outline planning, our immediate focus now is to submit the details for the first phase and then start work on site by the end of the year."

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