



Merstham Estate Local Centre Planning Framework

November 2011

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The Merstham Estate

- 1.1 The Merstham Estate is located in the eastern part of Merstham Ward, to the south of the M25 and east of the London-Brighton railway line. It comprises a housing estate with a centrally located local shopping centre on Portland Drive, a number of community facilities and large areas of open and recreation space. The Estate, built by London County Council in the 1950s, was transferred to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council in the 1980s and has a population of approximately 4,500, living in approximately 1,900 households. The Council subsequently transferred their housing stock to Raven Housing Trust, which now owns 39% of the total stock on the Merstham Estate as well as the retail units on Portland Drive.
- 1.2 The Merstham Estate is one of the most deprived areas within Surrey¹. Identified as a Priority Place for regeneration in 2009 by the Surrey Strategic Partnership, and as a Priority Scheme in the 2010 Surrey Local Investment Plan², the Estate is benefiting from coordinated and targeted efforts of public and voluntary sector partners to improve the local environment and life chances of the Estate's residents. The regeneration of the Merstham Estate is also one of the key priorities identified in the Council's emerging Core Strategy (2009)³ and in the Corporate Plan 2011-2015⁴.
- 1.3 A Merstham Estate Regeneration Plan⁵ was produced by the Borough Council on behalf of the Reigate & Banstead Partnership⁶ in April 2010, and updated in 2011. It identifies what action will be taken to tackle the problems that exist on the Estate. The Regeneration Plan has been endorsed by both the Reigate & Banstead Partnership and the Surrey Strategic Partnership, and key members of both partnerships have signed a statement of intent which commits them to supporting and delivering the objectives set out in the Plan.
- 1.4 The Merstham Estate Local Centre Planning Framework specifically focuses on physical regeneration at the heart of the Estate, to enable and facilitate objectives in the Corporate Plan, the Core Strategy, and Regeneration Plan.

Community engagement and consultation

- 1.5 Work on regeneration initiatives for the Merstham Estate has been ongoing for a number of years. This has included a range of options testing and consultation exercises:
- A Planning for Real consultation exercise was carried out in 2000, which identified a lack of facilities for families in the area and highlighted issues of concern regarding isolated families and literacy levels.
 - An 'Options' study was undertaken by housing consultants First Call in 2002, which identified similar concerns.

¹ Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010

² Available at: http://www.mole-valley.gov.uk/media/pdf/p/t/Surrey_Interim_Local_Investment_Plan_final.pdf

³ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/Images/RBBC%20Core%20Strategy_tcm9-41133.pdf

⁴ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/about_the_council/plans_and_policies/corporate_plan/index.asp

⁵ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/Images/main%20Regen%20Plan%20-%20website%20published_tcm9-43205.pdf

⁶ The Reigate & Banstead Partnership was the Local Strategic Partnership in the borough, which brought together public, community and voluntary sector organisations. It was disbanded in March 2011.

- An interactive study with residents was carried out in 2004 by the Reigate & Banstead Housing Trust (now Raven Housing Trust), which concentrated on proposals to regenerate the flats and shops in Portland Drive.
- A Community Provision report was prepared by Urban Practitioners for the Merstham area in 2006.
- A draft Merstham Regeneration Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was prepared in June 2006 to provide guidance on the interpretation of saved Borough Local Plan 2005 policies and how they should be applied within Merstham.
- Public consultation was undertaken on a draft version of this Planning Framework in Summer 2011.

1.6 These consultation and engagement exercises have informed the final Planning Framework. A consultation⁷ statement has been prepared to support the Planning Framework, which provides more information about the community engagement and consultation activities undertaken and a detailed analysis of the Summer 2011 draft Planning Framework consultation.

Appraisal undertaken on the Planning Framework

1.7 **Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** Sustainability Appraisal is a process designed to ensure that social, environmental and economic impacts are considered when formulating planning policies and proposals. It incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment. A SA Scoping Report was prepared prior to the drafting of this consultation document to inform its development⁸. A draft SA Report was published alongside the consultation document, and a final SA Statement accompanies the final version of the Planning Framework⁹.

1.8 **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA):** A Habitat Regulations Assessment of land use plans is required under the European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna, as transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. HRA provides for the protection of 'European Sites' which are sites which are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Community, one example of which is the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which lies within the borough. A screening stage assessment for the Merstham Planning Framework - undertaken at the consultation stage and updated once the final Framework had been prepared¹⁰ - concluded that the Merstham regeneration proposals would not have a significant adverse effect on any of the European Sites, and therefore that an Appropriate Assessment specifically for this Framework is not required.

1.9 **Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA):** The Council must carry out Equalities Impact Assessments on its strategies, policies, projects and functions to identify and remove discriminatory barriers. An EqIA has therefore been carried out on the final Planning Framework.

⁷ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/supplementary_planning_documents/merstham_regeneration_spd/index.asp

⁸ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/sustainability_appraisal/Scoping/index.asp

⁹ Both available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/supplementary_planning_documents/merstham_regeneration_spd/index.asp

¹⁰ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/supplementary_planning_documents/merstham_regeneration_spd/index.asp

Status

- 1.10 The Development Plan for Reigate & Banstead currently comprises the Borough Local Plan (2005) (BLP)¹¹ and until its abolition, the South East Plan. However the nature and scale of change needed in Merstham to deliver Regeneration Plan objectives requires proactive intervention, beyond the more reactive approach to development set out in the BLP.
- 1.11 The Framework has been prepared in advance of the Council's Development Management Policies (DMP) planning document, but the proposals in it will eventually form part of the DMP. Until the Development Management Policies planning document itself is adopted (expected to be in 2013), the Planning Framework will not be a formal part of the statutory development plan. However, having undergone public consultation and appraisal, and having been approved by the Council, it will have weight in the planning application decision-making process.
- 1.12 The Framework reflects current corporate priorities and provides a tool to help deliver these. It should be read alongside the Borough Local Plan (2005) and the emerging Core Strategy (2009).
- 1.13 It should be noted that the Planning Framework outlines what the Council wishes to promote on key regeneration sites in the Estate local centre. There is a high degree of interdependency between development options, and delivery will be dependent on the financial viability of individual proposals and the co-operation of various partners. However, the Council is committed to delivering the regeneration of the Estate local centre.

Next steps

- 1.14 Following approval of this Planning Framework by the Council, the redevelopment of Merstham Estate local centre is expected to progress in line with the following timetable:

Raven Housing Trust commence developer procurement	October 2011
Design consultation	Late Autumn 2012
First planning application submitted	Winter 2012/13
Start on site	April 2013
Completion of works	End 2015

The Council is committed to progressing the regeneration of the Merstham Estate local centre in a timely and cost effective manner.

However, the delivery of individual schemes is subject to financial viability and the appointment of a development partner by Raven Housing Trust. There is a high degree of interdependency between development proposals for individual sites, and it may not prove possible to deliver the exact schemes outlined in this Planning Framework. In that event, alternative options may be considered and accepted by the Council if they support the regeneration objectives for the Estate.

¹¹ Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/the_local_plan/borough_local_plan_2005/index.asp

2 Vision

2.1 The vision for the Merstham Estate is identified in the Regeneration Plan for the area:

“Residents of the Merstham estate will benefit from the provision of appropriate and effective services and facilities. The estate will be a cleaner and safer community. Vulnerable people will be helped to lead positive lifestyles, and families will be supported to break the cycle of deprivation. Local people will be empowered to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem. Public and voluntary service providers will pursue opportunities to deliver shared services to maximise local benefits”.

2.2 The Regeneration Plan also identifies objectives for the Estate, addressing a range of issues (Table 1). Not all of the objectives are the responsibility of the Borough Council; nor do they all fall within the direct remit of the planning system. However successful physical and economic regeneration of the Estate local centre will improve the choice, quality and accessibility of services for local people and will, in turn, deliver social benefits across the Estate as a whole.

Table 1 Regeneration Plan Objectives and Lead Partners

Objective		Lead Partner
Cross cutting	To increase the accessibility of and maximise the benefit of existing service provision to Merstham estate residents	Merstham Community Development Group
Children and young people	To increase the life chances of young people and families, in particular vulnerable young people and families	Surrey County Council
	To reduce childhood obesity and encourage healthy lifestyles	
	To increase educational attainment and employability of young people	
Health and well being	To improve the health of Merstham estate residents	NHS Surrey
	To improve the mental health of residents of the Merstham estate	
	To support vulnerable residents of the Merstham estate, including older adult residents	
Economic development	To increase skills, aspirations, employability and entrepreneurialism of Merstham estate residents	Merstham Community Facility Trust / Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership
	To reduce unemployment and benefits dependency	
Housing, infrastructure and environment	To improve public and commercial facilities	Reigate & Banstead BC / Raven Housing Trust
	To improve the public realm in the Portland Drive area	
	To improve the quality of housing	
Safer and stronger communities	To reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime and increase residents’ feelings of influence and satisfaction with their local area	Surrey Police
	To reduce domestic abuse and increase awareness of domestic abuse and the need to report	
	To develop a stronger community	

Introduction to the regeneration proposals

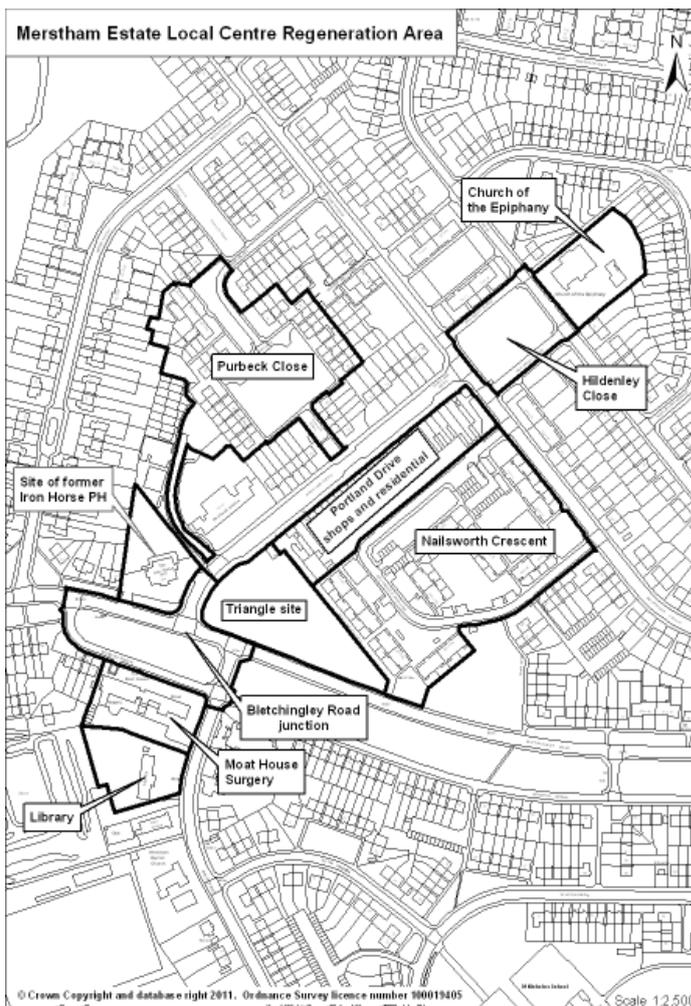
- 3.1 The Planning Framework is based around the following physical regeneration proposals:
- Creation of a community hub providing improved community facilities at the heart of the Estate centre.
 - Facilitating the upgrading of other community facilities in the Estate centre.
 - Provision of improved shopping provision in the centre of the Estate, including a small local foodstore.
 - High quality new housing, focused particularly on smaller family homes.
 - Improvements to the character and quality of the open spaces within the Estate, and creation of a better and safer pedestrian environment, especially to and from Portland Drive.
- 3.2 Annex 1 demonstrates how these proposals will help deliver the Regeneration Plan aims.

The sites

- 3.3 The Framework particularly focuses on the following sites for new development, in Council and Raven Housing Trust ownership:
- The Iron Horse site, currently vacant.
 - The western end of the 'Triangle' of green space between Portland Drive and Bletchingley Road, opposite the Iron Horse site.
 - The eastern side of Portland Drive, currently occupied by the parade.
 - The cleared Purbeck Close site.
- 3.4 It also provides a framework to guide possible future development on other sites:
- The current library site, subject to the relocation of the library to the new community hub.
 - The Moat House Surgery site, to facilitate upgrading of existing health provision on the current site.
 - The Church of the Epiphany site, to facilitate upgrading of existing community provision on the current site.
- 3.5 Alongside these sites, it also identifies the following areas for environmental improvements:
- Portland Drive.
 - Bletchingley Road at the junction with Portland Drive.
 - The eastern end of the Triangle site.
 - Hildenley Close at the junction with Portland Drive.
 - 'Epiphany Green' at Hildenley Close.
 - The area of green space in front of the Moat House Surgery.
 - Nailsworth Crescent.

3.6 Map 1 indicates the location of all these sites.

Map 1



3.7 The key ‘themes’ for the physical regeneration are addressed in this section and further information about the individual regeneration sites is provided from Section 5 onwards. Section 4 of this Framework provides more information about design and sustainability principles that will be applied across the Estate local centre.

Community Facilities

3.8 The need for improved community facilities within the Merstham Estate has long been recognised, and is a key theme in the Merstham Regeneration Plan. Providing upgraded community facilities within the Estate local centre will ensure that the existing heart of the Estate will be maintained and enhanced as a focal point for local residents.

3.9 Urban Practitioners’ report ‘Merstham Community Provision’ (2006)¹² considered the need for improved community facilities in the area. It recommended that there was a need for a multi-purpose community facility, potentially on the Triangle site, and suggested that this should incorporate a range of uses. The study highlighted the possibility that the Church of the Epiphany, the Moat House Surgery and the library (Surrey County Council) could be potential partners in the delivery of the community hub.

¹² Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/supplementary_planning_documents/merstham_regeneration_spd/index.asp

3.10 Considerable work has been undertaken since the Urban Practitioners' study to explore a range of options for the provision of a community hub in Merstham. Pressure on public sector budgets, together with the complexity associated with developing a multi-purpose building with a large number of partners, mean that it has not proved to be viable to deliver a large-scale community hub. Options for delivering a smaller scale community hub (which still contributes to the regeneration of the local centre and wider Estate) have therefore also been explored.

3.11 **Preferred location for the community hub:** The Council's preferred location for the community hub is at a high profile location in the centre of the Merstham Estate. Two sites are being considered - the Iron Horse site and the Triangle site. Locating the new hub on one of these sites will ensure that the hub is highly visible and accessible to the local community.

3.12 At this stage, a final decision about the location of the hub has not been made, pending selection of a preferred developer by Raven Housing Trust. Leaving the option open at this stage for the hub to be on either site will ensure that the financial and design aspects of the proposals can be fully explored as part of the procurement process.

3.13 **What will the hub provide?** It is proposed that the hub will be around 600sqm. It will provide the following key services that have been identified as important by local people:

- Library
- Reception area
- Internet access
- Access to the services of key public and voluntary sector providers
- Training/meeting rooms
- Interview room(s)
- Café.

3.14 The detailed design of the hub will be dependent on its final selected location, site constraints and financial viability of the wider regeneration proposals. However, both sites are capable of accommodating a hub providing all of the above services.

Retail provision

3.15 Along with the provision of new community facilities, upgrading retail provision in the Estate local centre is an important aspect of wider regeneration proposals.

3.16 The Portland Drive parade is currently allocated as a local centre in the Borough Local Plan. Local centres have an important role to play in providing basic convenience goods and important, complementary, local services and facilities for the surrounding community. Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth¹³ supports the improved vitality and viability of town, district and local centres, and encourages investment and enhanced competition and consumer choice. It directs Local Planning Authorities to seek to meet the everyday needs of local communities in terms of shops and services.

¹³ Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicystatements/pp4/>

- 3.17 At present, the convenience stores located within Portland Drive parade offer limited product lines, low stock levels and little fresh produce. The parade building is in a poor state of repair, is in need of substantial investment and has a generally intimidating feel and a reputation as a location for anti-social behaviour. In general, the poor environmental quality and perception of the parade do little to attract either local residents, those from the surrounding area or passing trade. The physical state of the parade, together with the current economic climate and proposals to relocate the community uses into the hub, is likely to result in an increase in vacancy rates and future problems securing a good retail mix for the local community, exacerbating the decline, and further reducing the attractiveness of the parade¹⁴.
- 3.18 Few, if any, local residents use the existing parade for their main food shopping and only around 20-30% use it for top-up food shopping, the rest travelling further afield¹⁵. However, it was clear from consultation on the draft Planning Framework that many local residents have a strong loyalty to businesses currently located on the parade. Without some sort of intervention though, the parade is likely to decline further and may not continue to remain viable or meet residents' needs for local facilities and services. It would also be unlikely to attract a new foodstore provider. Together, this would compromise the delivery of wider regeneration initiatives for the Merstham Estate centre.
- 3.19 Options to overcome the problems with the parade by improving the existing retail units on the parade and the 42 flats above have been explored by Raven Housing Trust. This work has concluded that this would be likely to cost as much as fully redeveloping the site, and would still only provide a short term solution to the improvement of the Merstham Estate centre. The alternative option, which from this work appears more viable, is to create a new Merstham Estate local shopping centre on the western portion of the Triangle site, including a local foodstore, 5-7 additional shop units, and associated parking provision.
- 3.20 The total retail floorspace provision proposed on this site is around 700-900sqm¹⁶. This scale of provision is considered to be a realistic figure to ensure that the local centre remains viable and attractive to businesses and the local community.
- 3.21 The new consolidated retail provision will:
- Enable a small local foodstore of around 400sqm to be accommodated, which will improve local residents' access to fresh food and attract additional customers to the local centre (without diverting trade from larger foodstores elsewhere in the borough).
 - Enable provision of a smaller number of high quality retail units to accommodate businesses providing key services for the local community. Locating these on a prominent and visible site at the heart of the Estate will improve their viability and ability to draw in new trade. Consultation has indicated support for retention in the estate of a post office, pharmacy, dry cleaners, off-licence and restaurant/takeaway. Raven Housing Trust will own, let and manage the new retail units and ensure that a core provision of important and popular local shops and services are provided to maintain a vibrant commercial centre in Merstham. Responses to the consultation, and on-going discussions with local shopkeepers, will help inform their plans to deliver this objective.

¹⁴ Merstham Estate Retail and Future Options Update Study. Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/supplementary_planning_documents/merstham_regeneration_spd/index.asp

¹⁵ Merstham Estate Retail and Future Options Update Study.

¹⁶ The existing retail provision on Portland Drive parade currently comprises just under 500sqm convenience provision, just under 150sqm comparison provision and around 620sqm retail/leisure service provision.

- Create a clear local shopping/ service destination at the heart of the Merstham Estate (alongside improved community facilities), which will help dispel the negative perceptions associated with the Portland Drive parade. On the Triangle site, dedicated off street parking can be provided, along with local recycling facilities and improved access and servicing arrangements. High quality design and landscaping will minimise the opportunities for anti-social behaviour, and provide an attractive looking building set within a high quality public open space. Whilst there will be some loss of open space, the improved retail provision and new foodstore will provide important community and regeneration benefits. As outlined below, open spaces in the Estate local centre (including the eastern part of the Triangle site) will be upgraded to provide for the needs of the community as part of a wider 'green infrastructure' strategy.
- Enable the poor quality buildings on the south-eastern side of Portland Drive to be redeveloped to provide a more attractive local environment and high quality housing, together with other public realm benefits to help overcome existing anti-social behaviour problems.

Housing provision

- 3.22 One of the Regeneration Plan objectives is to improve the quality of housing across the Merstham Estate and to develop a stronger community. Housing provision therefore is an important part of the regeneration proposals for the local centre.
- 3.23 Across the borough as a whole, there is a shortage of affordable housing, and it is therefore currently Council planning policy to seek provision of 25% affordable housing on new housing developments of over 15 units. The Council's emerging planning policy (within the Core Strategy) increases the requirement to up to 40% and also requires a financial contribution on smaller sites. The emerging policy also requires the replacement of any existing affordable housing that is lost through redevelopment.
- 3.24 The Merstham Estate has a relatively high level of social housing compared to the borough as a whole. Regeneration proposals need to balance the borough-wide need for additional and replacement affordable housing with the need to rebalance the tenure mix within and around the local centre and improve the quality and range of housing (including family homes). It is also necessary to consider the financial viability of proposals for residential development to ensure they are fully able to support the related regeneration and improvement of community facilities within the local centre.
- 3.25 In general terms, the Council would expect affordable housing to be provided in line with the existing planning policy outlined above. However, exceptions to this policy may be appropriate where:
- There is an identified imbalance in the mix of housing types or tenure and regeneration aspirations to achieve a more balanced community; and
 - Significant receipts from the proposed residential development are being 'recycled' into wider regeneration proposals in the locality, and provision of affordable housing would reduce the funds available to be recycled so as to compromise the overall viability of regeneration proposals; or
 - The proposed residential development is being used to fund enhanced community provision, with clear regeneration benefits, on the same site.

- 3.26 The total new housing provision within the Merstham Estate local centre is likely to be up to 135 new units (gross)¹⁷. This equates to a net increase of up to 44 new units (taking into account 49 units already permitted at Purbeck Close).
- 3.27 **Portland Drive, Purbeck Close and the Iron Horse Site:** Around 115 dwellings (gross) will be provided on the Portland Drive, Purbeck Close and Iron Horse sites. Redevelopment of Portland Drive for market housing would result in a net loss of 36 affordable housing units. Whilst the Purbeck Close site is currently unoccupied, planning permission has been granted for 49 affordable units (replacing the previous 34), which would not be delivered under this proposal.
- 3.28 Analysis by Raven Housing Trust indicates that - given the current resources available - the wider regeneration of the Estate local centre is unlikely to be viable if these affordable units were replaced on a one-to-one basis. It has, however, been agreed that Raven Housing Trust will endeavour to re-provide up to 20 social homes for rent (affordable homes) of a higher quality than those existing as part of the Purbeck Close development or elsewhere on the Estate as part of wider regeneration initiatives. The exact nature, location and number of units to be provided will be dependent on the financial viability of the final proposals, and further information will be required as proposals progress.
- 3.29 Subject to the following, the Council will not require affordable housing to be provided on these sites:
- An 'open book' assessment demonstrating that the receipts from these developments are being recycled into the wider regeneration proposals for the Estate local centre, and that provision (or replacement) of affordable housing would reduce the funds available to be recycled or compromise the overall viability of the scheme; and
 - A legal agreement to secure the regeneration benefits in lieu of affordable housing.
- 3.30 **The Library, Church of the Epiphany, and Surgery sites:** Affordable housing will not be sought:
- On the library site, if residential provision is being proposed specifically to secure relocation of the library elsewhere in the local centre as part of the community hub, and the inclusion of affordable housing would make the project financially unviable.
 - On the Church of the Epiphany and Surgery sites, if residential development is being proposed and if all development surpluses are being recycled to enable the upgrading of community facilities on these sites, and the inclusion of affordable housing would make the project financially unviable.
- 3.31 In all cases financial details will need to be provided showing the viability and/or regeneration benefits accruing from sites, and legal agreements will be required to secure the agreed position.

¹⁷ Assuming 50 new homes on Portland Drive, 50 new homes at Purbeck Close, 15 new homes on the Iron Horse site, and 19 new homes across the library, Surgery, and Church of the Epiphany sites.

Public open space

3.32 A valued characteristic of the Merstham Estate is its open character. As well as improved housing, retail and community provision in the Merstham Estate local centre, a key focus of the physical regeneration of the area is to improve the overall quality of the environment, public realm and safe routes to and from key public areas.

3.33 Work undertaken by the Council¹⁸ concludes that whilst there are some localised deficiencies of amenity green space across Merstham Ward, overall the quantity of open space is above the local standard. However, the quality of the open spaces in the Estate is relatively low, and many are poorly connected, which limits their current contribution. Play space and provision for young people is also below standard.

3.34 The proposed regeneration of key sites in the Estate local centre will provide the opportunity to improve pedestrian/cycle routes and upgrade these public open spaces to better meet the needs of the local community.

3.35 The Council is developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy which will deliver a network of multifunctional green space linked by green corridors. Within the Merstham Estate, the focus will be on improving local environmental quality, safety and connectivity to and between open spaces to provide more accessible and useable spaces for the local community. Public realm improvements across the Estate local centre will include things such as the creation of better pathways across areas of open space, provision of benches and bins, and improved facilities for young people. Opportunities will also be sought to incorporate accessible and connected areas of biodiversity value and for projects which encourage community participation, access to nature and open space. Specific priorities include:

- Creation of better pedestrian access across the area of green space in front of the Surgery and across Bletchingley Road to the Iron Horse and Triangle sites.
- The improvement of the area of open space at Hildenley Close opposite the Church of the Epiphany ('Epiphany Green') to create a more useable space for local residents/community activities.
- An improved area of open space at the eastern end of the Triangle site and creation of a landscaped 'public square' in front of the new shops.
- Upgrading of the open spaces in Nailsworth Crescent, improvements to the pedestrian environment along Portland Drive and through to Purbeck Close.
- Enhancing biodiversity connectivity across these spaces.
- Seeking to incorporate local priorities such as new play areas for children, on one or more of these open spaces.

Funding

3.36 Whilst there is considerable pressure on public sector budgets at this time, the regeneration of the Merstham Estate remains a priority for the Council and its partners. The physical regeneration of Merstham Estate local centre does, however, rely heavily on private sector investment.

¹⁸ Reigate & Banstead Open Space Assessment, available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/1df_evidence_base/landscapeandnaturalenvironment/index.asp

- 3.37 Delivery of new housing on Portland Drive, Purbeck Close and the Iron Horse site will enable a new community hub, improved retail provision and better public open spaces to be delivered whilst improving the quality and mix of housing in line with Regeneration Plan objectives. Similarly, development of new housing on the library site could help fund its relocation to the heart of the Estate. On parts of the Church of the Epiphany and Surgery sites, a small amount of enabling development could help fund improvements to the community uses currently offered by these sites.
- 3.38 An 'open book' approach will be required as development proposals progress to ensure that proposals are financially viable, allowing regeneration to be delivered and maximum benefit to be secured for the local community (including new residents), including in terms of infrastructure and service provision and public realm/green infrastructure improvements. The level of S106 planning contributions levied on the development will be determined with close regard to the overall viability and deliverability of the scheme.

4.1 This section provides more information about design and sustainability principles that will be applied across all the individual regeneration sites to ensure development is properly integrated. Any proposals for new development should also comply with relevant policies in the Borough Local Plan, including (but not limited to):

- Policy Ho9: Design and layout
- Policy Ho9A: Housing density and making the best use of land
- Policy Ho13: Maintenance of character and amenity
- Policy Mo4: Development related funding for highways schemes
- Policy Mo5: Design of roads within new development
- Policy Mo6: Servicing provision within new development
- Policy Mo7: Car parking strategy and standards.

Design & Sustainability Principles 1 : Maintaining and enhancing the green open character of Merstham

The Merstham Estate local centre already has a relatively green and open character. Regeneration of key sites provides the opportunity to enhance this character through integrating green infrastructure into new developments.

- a. Development on sites within this Planning Framework, and other sites in the centre that may come forward, must contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of a network of inter-linked and multifunctional green spaces.
- b. Mature planting should be retained wherever possible to maintain the green open character of the Estate local centre. Where this is not possible, alternative high quality replacement planting will be sought.
- c. High quality open space, providing a range of functions, should be incorporated within designs for the regeneration sites. These functions may include public recreation, pedestrian/cycle routes, visual enhancement, minimising noise/light pollution, biodiversity enhancement/wildlife corridors, enhancement of the setting of the historic environment, flood attenuation/sustainable urban drainage systems, and natural cooling/shading.
- d. Natural surveillance of open spaces and pedestrian/cycle routes should be secured by ensuring that these spaces are overlooked, well lit and faced by active frontages.

Design & Sustainability Principles 2 : Providing high quality building design and public realm

In order to deliver important improvements to the public realm and secure high quality buildings, the Council will expect the following:

- a. New development, including open spaces, to be provided to high quality, including in terms of the building design and materials, and quality of soft and hard landscaping.
- b. New development to be designed to contribute to the creation of a community heart, to be accessible to all, and to complement the existing character of the area and enhance the local character of the Estate local centre.
- c. Clear arrangements for the management and maintenance of new development and public open space and facilities.

Archaeological assessment(s) may be required at development sites covered by the Planning Framework.

Design & Sustainability Principles 3 : Maintaining and improving linkages between key regeneration sites and supporting sustainable transport choices

Securing improved physical and mental health for adults and children is an important wider regeneration aim for the Merstham Estate. Development of the regeneration sites identified in this Planning Framework can help facilitate this aim:

- a. Convenient, safe, direct and pleasant pedestrian routes between key community uses/services must be provided through the redevelopment of regeneration sites. Of particular importance are:
 - The route along Portland Drive linking the football club, Surgery, the new community hub and shops; and
 - Links between the Church of the Epiphany, the community hub and new shops, and to new and existing residential areas.
 - Links to and from the wider Merstham Estate and facilities further afield (such as Merstham Station, the recreation ground, local schools) will also need to be considered and upgraded where possible.
- b. New developments should facilitate sustainable transport choices, encourage walking and cycling, and provide safe and secure cycle parking.
- c. Car parking provision should not dominate designs for new development; however it should be located in areas that benefit from natural surveillance.
- d. Car and cycle parking should be provided in line with Local Plan standards. Off-street car parking provision will be sought wherever possible.

Design & Sustainability Principles 4 : Providing a safe and secure environment

One of the regeneration objectives for the Merstham Estate local centre is to reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime. Appropriately designed new buildings and public spaces¹⁹ have an important role to play in delivering this objective:

- a. Open spaces, pedestrian/cycle routes, and parking and servicing areas should be well lit and located to benefit from natural surveillance from nearby properties/streets.
- b. Servicing areas should be secure, enclosed and screened from direct overlooking by residential areas. Servicing access must be provided to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority.
- c. The presence of access ways and unused spaces that are not overlooked or fulfilling a clear access/servicing purpose should be avoided.
- d. Secured by Design assessment should be undertaken during design development and on completion.

Design & Sustainability Principles 5 : Secure resource efficient designs

To support the local response to the challenges of climate change, it is important that new development within Merstham Estate local centre contributes towards achieving the more efficient use of resources in Reigate & Banstead:

- a. New development should be designed to maximise energy and water efficiency, and options for inclusion of renewable technologies should be explored.
- b. As a minimum, developments will be expected to reduce CO2 emissions by at least 10% through use of renewable sources and providing high levels of energy efficiency.
- c. New developments should be designed to facilitate and encourage recycling, including through the re-provision of local recycling facilities.

¹⁹ For example, reflecting Secured by Design principles (<http://www.securedbydesign.com>)

Site description

- 5.1 The 0.25 hectare Iron Horse site, currently owned by the Council, is located to the south west of Portland Drive parade, opposite the Triangle site, and is a very prominent site within the local centre of the Estate. The site is currently vacant following demolition of the two storey Iron Horse public house.
- 5.2 Given its location at the heart of the Merstham Estate, it will be important to maximise the contribution that new development on the Iron Horse site makes to wider regeneration objectives. The prominent corner location makes it ideal for a high quality mixed use or residential development.

Iron Horse Site : Preferred development

The Iron Horse site will either be developed with the community hub on the ground floor with residential units above or for purely residential (if the hub is provided on the Triangle site).

Parking will be provided within the site. High quality hard and soft landscaping will be included as part of the development.

Policy designations and issues

- 5.3 The Iron Horse site is a vacant, previously developed 'brownfield' site. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development²⁰ encourages local authorities to bring vacant land back into beneficial use, and PPS3: Housing²¹ makes it clear that the priority for development should be previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites. Redevelopment of this site will therefore contribute to these policy aims.
- 5.4 Policy Cf3 of the Local Plan encourages the provision of new community facilities in locations where demand arises and which cannot be met from the use of the existing stock of community premises. As outlined above, there is a clear demand for new and upgraded community facilities at the heart of the Merstham Estate.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach IH 1 : Key corner location

Development of the Iron Horse site will play a vital part in - and be a symbol of - the regeneration of Merstham:

- a. The building on the Iron Horse site should be designed to a high standard to provide a focal point within the new Merstham Estate local centre and act as a key landmark building that signifies entry to the redeveloped Portland Drive.

²⁰ Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicystatements/pps1/>

²¹ 17 Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicystatements/pps3/>

Preferred Approach IH 2 : Trees

There is one oak tree of merit located towards the rear of the site:

- a. Any redevelopment proposals should seek to retain the tree located to the rear of the site unless it can be demonstrated that its loss is required to achieve wider community benefits.
- b. Issues of root protection and expanse of canopy (in terms of potential pressure to fell) will need to be considered.
- c. Should it be determined that removal of the tree is necessary and acceptable to achieve wider regeneration benefits, replacement planting will be required, of a sufficient quality and size to mitigate the loss of the existing tree.

Preferred Approach IH 3 : Residual densities

Housing to the west of the site (Wood Street) has a density of around 28 dwellings per hectare. Housing to the east (Portland House) has a density of around 78 dwellings per hectare:

- a. The prominent corner location of the Iron Horse site means that residential densities higher than the average density of surrounding 2-storey housing may be acceptable, depending on the design and siting of the development.

Preferred Approach IH 4 : Residential amenity

Two storey residential properties abut the western site boundary, with new build flats adjacent to the north eastern boundary. Adjacent to the access road running along the north western site boundary is the six-storey Portland House, which provides sheltered housing:

- a. It will be important to ensure that new development on the Iron Horse site complements the adjoining residential uses and does not compromise residential amenity.
- b. Any new development will need to be of a scale and design that reflects the adjoining storey heights and densities.
- c. Any new residential and community provision will need to be located to minimise noise impacts on new residents, for example arising from Field Oak Way.
- d. If the community hub is located on this site, measures will be required to protect residents in the flats above from noise transmission from the hub.

Preferred Approach IH 5 : Connectivity

The Iron Horse site is bounded to the south and east by Bletchingley Road and Portland Drive respectively:

- a. Any new development on the Iron Horse site must be designed to maximise connectivity and accessibility, particularly to the Surgery and Triangle site, as well as access along Field Oak Way to new residential development on Purbeck Close.
- b. Any new development must enable clear sight lines from vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists at the junction of Bletchingley Road and Portland Drive.

Site description

6.1 The Triangle site is an area of green open space in a prominent location, with an area of 0.54 hectares. It is currently owned by Raven Housing Trust. Located at the entrance to Portland Drive and at the centre of the Estate, it is a key site for consideration in any regeneration plans for the centre of Merstham. The site is currently used as a pedestrian cut through, for dog walking and on an occasional basis as an informal recreation space. It also provides benefits to the local area in terms of visual amenity: along with the narrow linear greenspace buffer to the south, it contributes to the sense of openness when entering the Estate from Bletchingley Road.

Triangle Site : Preferred development

The western part of the Triangle site will be developed for retail, including a local foodstore (around 400sqm) and 5-7 smaller retail units providing other key local centre services. The total retail floorspace (including the foodstore) would be around 700-900sqm. The community hub will be provided on the Triangle site if it is not accommodated on the Iron Horse site.

In either case, the eastern part of the site would be retained as upgraded public open space. Parking areas would be provided with high quality hard and soft landscaping to provide a pleasant local centre, and an improved recycling area will be provided. Screening will be provided to minimise the impact on adjacent properties.

Policy designations and issues

6.2 The Merstham Estate as a whole benefits from a significant number of open spaces providing opportunities both for formal and informal recreation. Several of these have been improved recently:

- The Brook Road recreational space has recently been improved by the provision of new play equipment.
- Works in Furzefield Wood as part of the Surrey Greenspace Project to improve the quality and accessibility of the site.
- A new community orchard has been planted in Huddleston Crescent.

6.3 The Council's Open Space Assessment²² concludes that whilst there are some localised deficiencies of amenity space across Merstham ward, overall the quantity of amenity green space available is above the local quantity standard. It notes that it will be important to maintain open space provision in areas with small gardens.

6.4 The Triangle site itself is not designated within the Borough Local Plan. It is not marked as Urban Open Land (UOL) on the 1:10,000 scale proposals map and, whilst the supporting text to policy Pc6 indicates that areas which are too small to be readily identified may be treated as UOL, the map includes several areas of land noticeably smaller than the Triangle site, therefore the policy is considered not to apply.

²² Available at: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/planning/planning_policies/local_development_framework/ldf_evidence_base/landscapeandnaturaleenvironment/index.asp

- 6.5 The site currently provides some recreational benefits to the local community as an area to walk, exercise dogs etc. A number of local residents have raised concerns about the loss of part of the Triangle site, particularly those living in adjacent properties. In considering the potential for development on the site, the current value of the site for local people has to be weighed against the wider regeneration aims for the Merstham Estate, and in particular, the role that the site could play in delivering wider community benefits and encouraging economic activity.
- 6.6 It will be important to retain some open green space at the eastern end of the site for informal recreation and to maintain and enhance the outlook from adjacent residential properties. However, on the western part of the site, provision of small scale retail, service or community uses is considered to be acceptable - provided that, overall, the uses on the site benefit the local community and help deliver wider regeneration objectives. New development on part of the site would also enable the remaining open space to be provided to a higher quality than the existing space.
- 6.7 A small amount of residential use alongside retail/service/community provision to benefit the wider community may be acceptable in planning terms subject to design and amenity considerations.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach T 1 : Key corner location

Development of the Triangle site will play a vital part in - and be a symbol of - the regeneration of Merstham:

- a. The building on the Triangle site should be designed to a high standard to provide a focal point within the new Merstham Estate local centre and act as a key landmark building that signifies entry to the redeveloped Portland Drive.
- b. Building design will need to be carefully considered as the site is overlooked/viewed from every side. Servicing arrangements will need to be carefully considered to minimise any impact on nearby residential properties (especially Nailsworth Crescent).
- c. Any new development must be designed to have a legible, attractive layout and discourage anti-social behaviour.

Preferred Approach T 2 : Trees

Three oak trees located in the northern corner of the site are covered by a group Tree Preservation Order, and present a constraint to the development of this part of the site. Previous investigations have indicated these may have a relatively limited lifespan:

- a. A full assessment of the trees on the Triangle site, their anticipated life expectancy and current health and condition will need to be undertaken as part of any planning application by the Council's Tree Officer and the applicant's arboricultural expert.
- b. The wider community benefits that could be achieved by the future development of this site will be weighed against the contribution that the trees make to the visual amenity of the locality.
- c. Should it be determined that removal of the trees is necessary and acceptable to achieve the desired regeneration benefits, replacement planting would be required. Such planting should be of sufficient quality and size to make an important contribution to the visual amenity of the area, in order to mitigate that loss.

Preferred Approach T 3 : Green buffer

The site is currently bounded by a mature hedgerow running the length of, but set back from, the boundary with Bletchingley Road:

- a. An area of green space should be retained to the eastern end of the Triangle site, helping to retain the visual buffer.
- b. Any new development should respect the existing hedgerow and be set back from the southern site boundary. A balance between retaining an open green buffer and the need to provide a feature building on the corner of Bletchingley Road and Portland Drive will need to be struck.
- c. Any development on this site will need to take account of, and complement, any development on the Iron Horse site opposite, and create a positive streetscape along Portland Drive.

Preferred Approach T 4 : Amenity space

The site currently provides public amenity space:

- a. Any new development on the Triangle site should retain an area of high quality amenity space to the eastern end of the site and integrate with the wider green infrastructure strategy.
- b. The detailed design of this space will need to be discussed with the Council but should significantly improve the current offer.

Preferred Approach T 5 : Connectivity

The Triangle site is bounded to the south and west by Bletchingley Road and Portland Drive respectively:

- a. Any new development on the Triangle site must be designed to maximise connectivity and accessibility, especially to the new community hub and the existing Surgery.

Preferred Approach T 6 : Residential amenity

There are two blocks of three storey flats situated along the north eastern boundary overlooking the existing open space. New residential provision is also proposed to the north of the site along Portland Drive and opposite on the Iron Horse site:

- a. Any new development on the Triangle site must be sited so as not to create any overbearing or unneighbourly impact on existing or new residential units and appropriate screening should be provided (especially between the site and properties at Nailsworth Crescent).
- b. Arrangements for servicing should be designed to minimise the visual and noise impact on nearby residents.
- c. An area of high quality open space should be retained and enhanced at the eastern end of the site adjacent to the existing properties.

Site Description

- 7.1 Portland Drive runs north east from the junction with Bletchingley Road. The parade, owned by Raven Housing Trust, is located on the south east side of Portland Drive. It currently comprises 21 retail units (some of which are double units), and includes 42 flats above and a servicing yard to the rear. The retail units house a mix of uses including convenience stores, a sub-post office, a pharmacy, several food and drink uses, community facilities, and other retail/leisure uses. A number of the units are currently vacant. The majority of the flats comprise 2-3 bedrooms and are let as affordable units by Raven Housing Trust. The total site area is around 0.56ha.
- 7.2 Physically, the parade buildings are in a poor state of repair and would require a high level of investment to bring them up to a decent standard. Problems of anti-social behaviour on this part of Portland Drive are thought to be, in part at least, related to the poor design of the external areas and stairwells of the parade buildings, and the access ways to the flats and retail unit servicing yards. Together with the poor quality environment, this means that the Parade is generally perceived negatively by local residents and those living in the surrounding area and does not act to attract non-residents into the area to use the services currently provided.
- 7.3 Nailsworth Crescent is located behind Portland Drive parade, and accessed from Malmstone Avenue. It comprises 96 self-contained bedsits and 1-bedroom flats in three storey blocks, along with poorly defined surface parking and some grassed semi-public open space.

Portland Drive/Nailsworth Crescent : Preferred development

The south east side of Portland Drive will be redeveloped to provide a mix of houses and flats (around 40-50 units in total) including appropriate parking provision.

Public realm improvements to Portland Drive will be implemented alongside the new residential development in Portland Drive to contribute to a higher quality local environment overall.

There is also scope for improvements to the public areas around Nailsworth Crescent.

Policy designations and issues

- 7.4 To achieve the wider regeneration objectives for Merstham, it is proposed to replace the retail units and affordable housing provision on Portland Drive parade with new market housing, in conjunction with improved alternative shopping provision on the Triangle site and some replacement affordable housing provision as part of the Purbeck Close redevelopment or as part of smaller infill development elsewhere on the Estate.
- 7.5 Portland Drive is designated as a local shopping centre. As such, under Policy Sh1 of the Borough Local Plan, environmental improvements will be encouraged and proposals which result in the loss of existing retail floorspace will normally be resisted. Policy Sh11 expands on this, requiring that retail floorspace (A1 use class) should normally be retained unless:
- Evidence that reasonable attempts have been made, without success, to let it for A1 retail use.
 - Alternative shopping provision is made within the locality.

- The proposed use would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the local shopping centre.
- The proposal complements the character of the area and would not have an adverse effect on the environment and amenities of the surrounding area.

7.6 The existing retail units on the parade are of a poor quality, and several are currently vacant. Vacancy levels are likely to rise with the relocation of the Help Shop and Merstham Community Facility to the proposed new community hub, and provision of a new foodstore could further compromise the viability of existing occupiers were it to be located on a nearby site.

7.7 The loss of retail units is only being proposed as alternative provision is planned on the Triangle site. It will be important to ensure that development is phased to secure continued provision of local services throughout - the Triangle site has the benefit of adjoining, but being separate from, the existing parade thus enabling it to be developed without affecting the existing shops.

7.8 It was clear from consultation on the draft Planning Framework that many local residents have a strong loyalty to businesses currently located on the parade. Research undertaken for the Council indicates that the relocation of retail provision would not have an adverse effect in terms of the vitality and viability of the local centre (see section 4 above). Rather, the preferred option (albeit for a smaller number of units and less floorspace) would allow a new local foodstore to be accommodated, resulting in a higher quality of convenience goods and fresh produce provision for local residents, and together with new community hub, can provide for key local services needed to support the Merstham Estate. In particular, the foodstore would act as an attractor to passing traffic.

7.9 The proposed replacement use on the Portland Drive parade site - market housing - will also contribute positively to the vitality and viability of the local centre and local community. It will result in a more diverse mix of housing types and tenures in the centre of the Estate and contribute to the creation of a stronger community. The new population will bring additional disposable income to the area and be important to customers for the relocated retail and service provision. In addition, the redevelopment of the site will result in increased environmental quality and decreased opportunities for anti-social behaviour, and a more attractive Estate centre for residents, non residents, and businesses, with the potential to encourage increased investment in the wider area.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach PD 1 : Residential densities

The existing residential density on the Portland Drive site is around 75 dwellings per hectare. On the north west side of Portland Drive, it is 38-40 dwellings per hectare, and in Nailsworth Crescent it is around 95 dwellings per hectare:

- a. The focus of provision on the Portland Drive site should be a mix of houses and flats, with a total provision of around 40-50 units.
- b. Any new development will need to be of a scale and design that complements the adjoining building heights and densities.

Preferred Approach PD 2 : Design

New residential development should seek to complement and enhance local character and the public realm, including the new developments on the Iron Horse and Triangle sites:

- a. Residential units facing on to Portland Drive should be introduced, with some private front garden space provided for these properties.
- b. Proposals should seek to maximise natural surveillance and achieve coherence and continuity with the Nailsworth Crescent public realm.

Preferred Approach PD 3 : Residential amenity

The site is bordered by three storey flats to the south and south east, two-storey houses to the north west. Portland House, to the north west of the site, is a six storey flatted development:

- a. It will be important to minimise the impact of any new development at Portland Drive on the adjoining residential properties.

Preferred Approach PD 4 : Connectivity

The site is located at the heart of the Estate:

- a. Any new development at Portland Drive must be designed to maximise connectivity to the new retail provision and community hub.
- b. Any new development must be designed to discourage vehicular speed. Use of shared surfaces should be explored.

Site description

- 8.1 Purbeck Close is located behind the north western side of Portland Drive, and is accessed via Malmstone Avenue. There is pedestrian access from Portland Drive. The development site is currently vacant. It previously comprised a central area of grassed open space, surrounded by 35 housing units (mainly bedsit/bungalows). Portland House, a six-storey block of flats, is located to the south west; the site is otherwise surrounded mostly by two storey dwellings and associated gardens/garages. The site is approx. 1.2ha in area.
- 8.2 In 2010, full permission was granted for demolition of the existing 35 units and construction of 49 new affordable units with associated parking and landscaping. However, this has not been implemented. The site will now be developed as part of the wider regeneration proposals for the Estate local centre.

Purbeck Close : Preferred development

Purbeck Close will be redeveloped to provide 45-55 houses/flats, including appropriate parking provision.

Pedestrian access through the site to Portland Drive and the Iron Horse site will be enhanced as part of the development.

Policy designations and issues

- 8.3 The established use of the site is residential. The 2010 planning permission has established the principle of redevelopment of the site, including retention of a central area of open space, high quality landscaping and good connectivity across the site and to the surrounding area including Portland Drive.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach PC 1 : Residential densities

The residential density to the north west side of Portland Drive is 38-40 dwellings per hectare. The density of the north side of Purbeck Close is around 48 dwellings per hectare; and on Greensand Close/Malmstone Avenue it is around 46 dwellings per hectare:

- a. The focus of provision at Purbeck Close should be a mix of houses and flats, with a total provision of around 45-55 units.
- b. Any new development will need to be of a scale and design that reflects the adjoining building heights and densities.
- c. Options for incorporation of energy efficiency (such as Passivhaus design as per the approved scheme) should be considered.

Preferred Approach PC 2 : Residential amenity

The area surrounding the site is characterised by two storey residential accommodation, with a new development of houses and 3 storey flats to the south west. Portland House, to the south west of the site, comprises 6 storeys:

- a. It will be important to minimise the impact of any new development at Purbeck Close on the adjoining residential properties.
- b. Sufficient parking should be provided for the new development and the retained houses that face on to the site.
- c. Adequate and sensitive boundary screening should also be introduced.

Preferred Approach PC 3 : Open space

The existing open space at the centre of the site contributes to the open feel of the area:

- a. It will be important to maintain the open character of the Purbeck Close site, with provision of an area of accessible open space and high quality landscaping and design, integrated with the wider green infrastructure strategy.

Preferred Approach PC 4 : Connectivity

The Purbeck Close site is located at the heart of the Estate:

- a. Any new development at Purbeck Close must be designed to maximise pedestrian and cycle connectivity between Purbeck Close and Portland Drive, as well as to the new retail provision and community hub, and north towards Merstham Station, whilst taking account of the needs of existing residents in the vicinity of the site.
- b. It is suggested that the main vehicular access to the site should be via Field Oaks Way.

Site description

- 9.1 The library site, owned by Surrey County Council, is around 0.27 hectares in area and is located to the south west of Portland Drive. It lies to the south of the Moat House Surgery and currently comprises the single storey library building, an area of open space to the rear and surface parking and driveway area to the front of the building. Vehicular and pedestrian access is off Weldon Way.
- 9.2 The Merstham Day Centre site lies to the south of the library site, and the access road to the football club (located to the rear of the day centre) runs directly along the southern site boundary. Both these buildings are single storey. On the opposite side of Weldon Way is St Teresa's Catholic Church. Relocation of the library to the community hub on either the Iron Horse or Triangle site would free up this site for alternative uses.

Library Site : Preferred development

It is anticipated that the library will remain on this site until it is relocated to the new community hub. Once relocated, the current library site may be redeveloped for a small number of houses or flats.

Policy designations and issues

- 9.3 The site is currently in community use. Under Policy Cf1 of the adopted Local Plan loss of the community use on this site will therefore only be acceptable if proposals for the community hub - incorporating the other identified community needs - come forward and alternative library provision is made in the local centre (for example, within the new hub). It should be noted that any decision to relocate the library rests with Surrey Council Council.
- 9.4 The south western edge of the library site falls within the Environment Agency identified Flood Zones 2 and 3. Policy Ut4 of the adopted Local Plan states that 'new development ...will not normally be permitted in areas at risk from flooding' and that 'appropriate flood protection and mitigation measures will generally be required as part of development in areas at risk from flooding'. PPS25 seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, direct development away from areas at highest risk, and where development is, exceptionally, necessary, to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 9.5 The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (2007 - currently being updated) recommends that residential development should be avoided in Flood Zone 3, and that any development should be conditioned in accordance with the recommendations in the SFRA. The presence of the Flood Zone is therefore likely to reduce the capacity of the library site to accommodate residential development.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach L 1 : Flood risk

As identified above, part of the library site falls within flood zones 2, and 3:

- a. The impact of the flood zone on the development potential of the library site could be significant. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required as part of any application to redevelop the site. The Environment Agency should be engaged at an early stage.
- b. It may be possible through the FRA to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be provided - for example to achieve successful flood water management.
- c. Opportunities to design multi-functional open space into the development should be explored, and may include incorporating biodiversity areas into Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and including planting and permeable surfaces to minimise surface flooding.

Preferred Approach L 2 : Historic environment

To the west of the site is Albury Moat, a Scheduled Ancient Monument:

- a. Any proposals for development at the library site will need to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment, and should be sensitive to the heritage of the area.
- b. Consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer and English Heritage will be necessary and agreement of a scheme for archaeological investigation, monitoring and recording may be required.

Preferred Approach L 3 : Green belt

The western boundary of the site abuts the Green Belt:

- a. Any development at the library site should be designed to respect the adjoining area of Green Belt, and achieve an appropriate transition to it.

Preferred Approach L 4 : Residential densities

The residential density surrounding the library site is around 45-47 dwellings per hectare:

- a. Whilst houses or flats may be appropriate on the library site, any residential development will need to complement the design and scale of surrounding dwellings.
- b. The presence of the flood zone is likely to reduce the overall density below that of the surrounding area.

Preferred Approach L 5 : Building line

The building line on this side of Weldon Way is made up of the surgery, library, day centre and Baptist Church:

- a. Any redevelopment on the library site should complement the building line on adjoining plots.

Site description

- 10.1 The Church of the Epiphany site is situated to the north east of Portland Drive parade and comprises the church with single storey hall attached, and a detached two storey parish office/ vicarage set towards the north east of the site. The site is 0.33 hectares in area: there is a grassed area to the front of the vicarage and adjacent to the church, and another area of garden to the rear of the church and vicarage.
- 10.2 Vehicle and pedestrian access to the site is from Mansfield Drive, which bounds the site to the south west. Opposite the site, on the other side of Mansfield Drive, is an area of grassed open space, including a central mature oak tree and a youth shelter. A footpath runs along the north west boundary.

Church of the Epiphany : Future development

Continue to provide a community facility on the Church of the Epiphany site unless an equivalent community use can be provided elsewhere in the locality. Some additional development on the site to enable this to take place may be appropriate subject to resolution of existing legal issues and appropriate design and parking provision.

Policy designations and issues

- 10.3 The site is currently in residential and community use. In line with Policy Cf1 of the adopted Local Plan, loss of the community use is therefore unlikely to be acceptable unless alternative provision - to allow the community uses and functions provided by the existing site to be continued - is provided elsewhere in the locality²³. Subject to resolution of existing legal issues, some additional development on the site to enable the upgrading of community facilities may be appropriate.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach CE 1 : Residential densities

Housing development surrounding the Church of the Epiphany has a density of 42-44 dwellings per hectare; the surrounding flatted development has a density of 63-89 dwellings per hectare:

- a. Any residential development on the Church of the Epiphany site should reflect the scale and density of surrounding two storey housing development. Whilst there are three storey blocks of flats opposite the church site, these are set within a different character area and around an area of open space.

Preferred Approach CE 2 : Residential amenity

The site is surrounded to the south east, north west and north east by two storey semi-detached houses. The rear gardens of these dwellings abut the site. The area of grassed open space opposite is flanked on either side by three storey blocks of flats:

- a. Any new development on the Church of the Epiphany site will have to be sited so as not to create any overbearing or unneighbourly impact.
- b. The two properties on Mansfield Drive that abut the side boundaries have ground and first floor side windows, which will need to be taken into account when considering the internal layouts and proximity of any new buildings on site.

²³ This could, for example, be through the provision of new facilities, or by upgrading, extending or otherwise making better use of alternative facilities.

Preferred Approach CE 3 : Connectivity

The site is adjacent to the area of open space at Hildenley Close:

- a. Any new development on the Church of the Epiphany site must be designed to maximise pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Portland Drive and the new community/retail facilities and to integrate with the wider green infrastructure strategy.

Site description

- 11.1 The Moat House Surgery is located on Worsted Green and fronts the linear open space along Bletchingley Road. Development on the site currently comprises the surgery and clinic buildings with 4 flats above. The two storey flat roofed building with substantial pitched roof side extension covers almost the full width of site along the Worsted Green road frontage. There is a parking area to the rear of the building, accessed from Weldon Way.
- 11.2 The surgery site is located adjacent to the library site, which lies to the south. The area of the site is approx. 0.28 hectares.

The Moat House Surgery : Future development

The surgery will be retained and improved on its existing site. Some additional development on part of the site to enable this to take place may be appropriate subject to design and provision of appropriate parking.

Policy designations and issues

- 11.3 The majority of the site is currently in community use. Policy Cf1 of the adopted Local Plan resists the loss of community buildings or uses unless:
- There is no longer a need for them, or
 - Adequate alternative provision is to be made elsewhere in the locality, and
 - No other community facility or service can make use of the premises or site.
- 11.4 Loss of the community use (surgery) on this site to other uses without relocation elsewhere in the local centre would not therefore be acceptable. The Surgery recognises the need to upgrade facilities on the site, through improvements/ expansion of the existing building or redevelopment to enhance the level and range of services it provides patients in the future. Any proposals for alternative uses on part of the site would need to be considered on their own merits, and alongside wider regeneration proposals for the Estate local centre.

Overcoming site constraints

Preferred Approach MH 1 : Historic environment

The south west corner of the site abuts the Scheduled Ancient Monument, Albury Moat:

- a. Any proposals for new development on the Moat House Surgery site will need to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment, and should be sensitive to the heritage of the area.
- b. Consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer and English Heritage will be necessary and agreement of a scheme for archaeological investigation, monitoring and recording may be required.

Preferred Approach MH 2 : Design and density

Residential densities: the density of the residential development surrounding the Surgery site is around 45-47 dwellings per hectare:

- a. Any development will need to complement the design, density and scale of surrounding buildings.
- b. Any residential development will need to reflect surrounding densities.

Preferred Approach MH 3 : Residential amenity

A mix of semi-detached and terraced two storey dwellings are located immediately to the west of the Surgery site. The adjacent dwelling has a first floor side window:

- a. It will be important to minimise the impact of any new development at the Surgery site on the adjoining residential properties.

Preferred Approach MH 4 : Flood risk

Flood risk: a small part of the Surgery site falls within Flood Zone 2:

- a. The impact of the Flood Zone on the development potential of the Surgery site should be considered, and if appropriate, a Flood Risk Assessment should be provided alongside any application to redevelop the site.

Preferred Approach MH 5 : Building line and local character

The building line on this side of Weldon Way is made up of the surgery, library, day centre and Baptist Church. The buildings are set slightly back from the road and this contributes to the open character of the area:

- a. Extension behind the existing building down Weldon Way is likely to be preferred. Any (re) development on the Surgery site should as far as possible take account of the building line on adjoining plots.
- b. Any (re)development on the site should be designed and landscaped to a high quality, to maintain the open character of the Estate local centre.

Preferred Approach MH 6 : Connectivity

An area of grassed open space lies between the Surgery and Bletchingley Road:

- a. Any new development on the Surgery site must be designed to complement and contribute to public realm improvements on this space and measures to improve accessibility across Bletchingley Road.

Regeneration Plan objective	Relevant proposal
To increase the accessibility and maximise the benefit of existing service provision to Merstham estate residents	Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes
To increase the life chances of young people and families, in particular vulnerable young people and families	Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities Provision of improved public open space
To reduce childhood obesity and encourage healthy lifestyles	Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes Provision of new retail units including foodstore
To increase educational attainment and employability of young people	Provision of community hub
To improve the health of Merstham estate residents	Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities Provision of new retail units including foodstore Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes
To improve the mental health of residents of the Merstham estate	Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes
To support vulnerable residents of the Merstham estate, including older adult residents	Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities
To increase skills, aspirations employability and entrepreneurialism of Merstham estate residents	Provision of community hub
To reduce unemployment and benefits dependency	Provision of community hub
To improve the public realm in the Portland Drive area	Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes
To improve the quality of housing	Provision of new housing
To reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime and increase residents' feelings of influence and satisfaction with their local area	Provision of community hub Improved environment, open space and pedestrian/cycle-friendly routes
To develop a stronger community	Provision of new housing Provision of community hub Improvement of other community facilities

