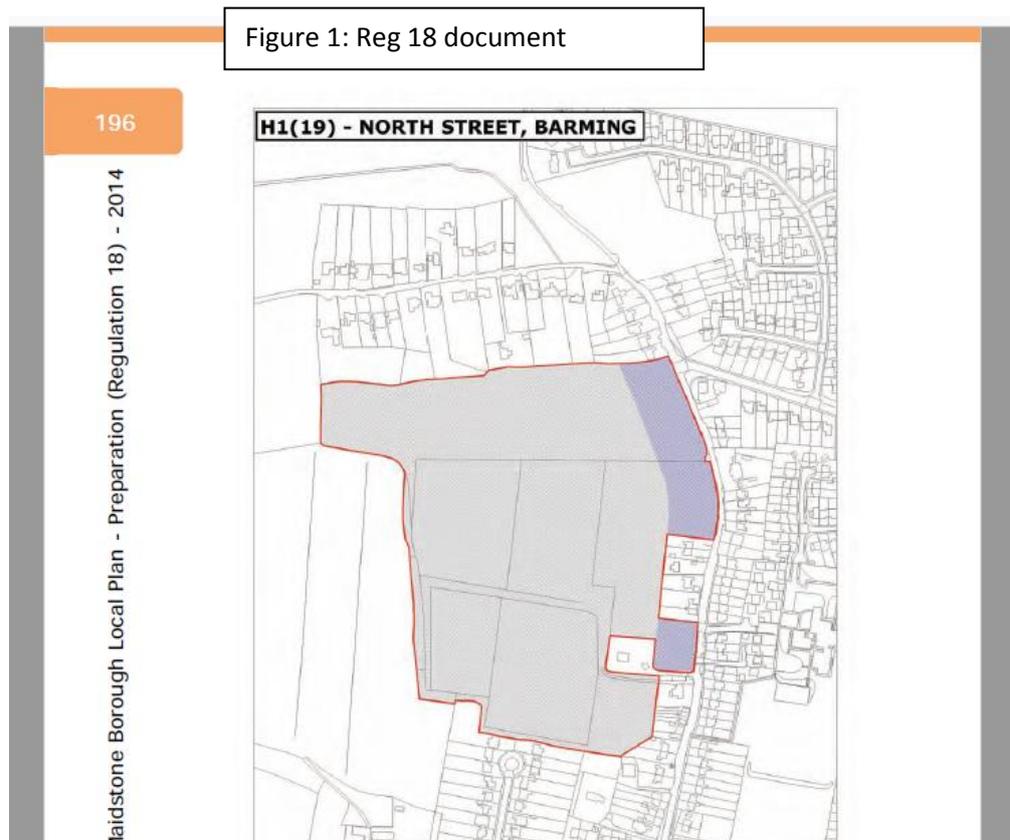


Policy H1(23) North Street, Barming

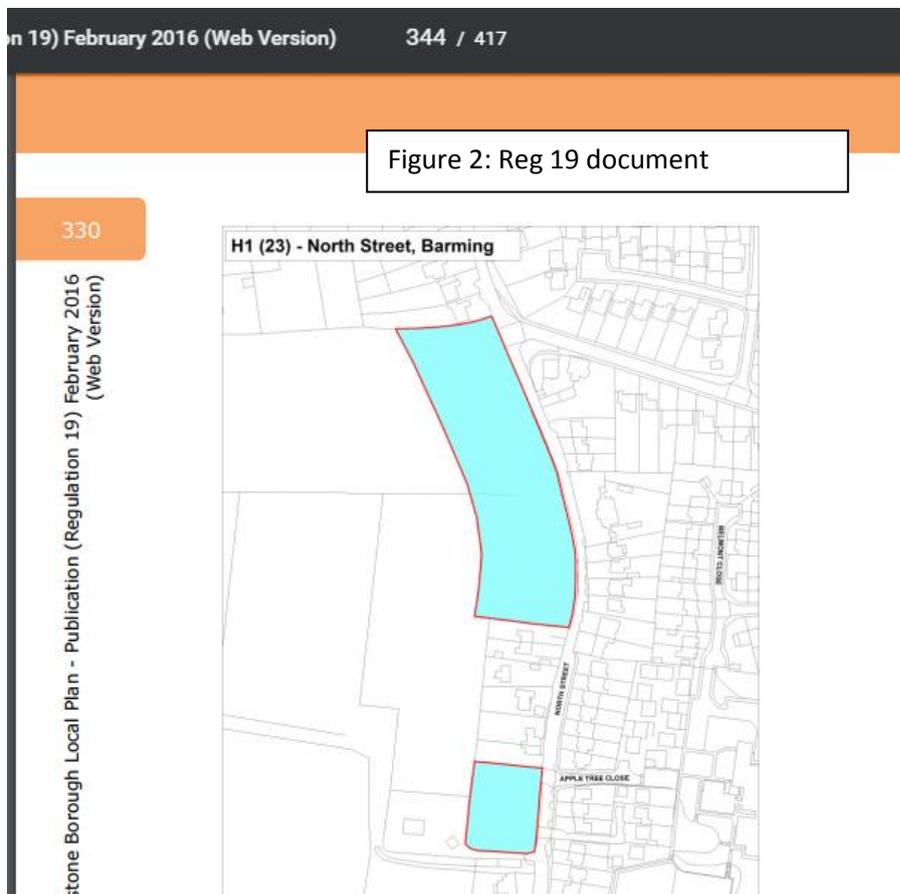
I have grave concerns that the process of enlarging the size of this site by an additional 5 metres on the western boundary was done in a manner inconsistent with the preparation of the Local Plan.

The Regulation 18 document showed this site as an infill on the west side of North Street (darker shaded area) in line with the current housing to the south of the site. See figure 1



The site was subject to a planning application 14/506419/FULL. When this application was first brought to the planning committee it was deferred without being publicly heard. It subsequently came to my knowledge that the developer had been asked to move the frontage back by 5 metres from the road and remove "the active frontage" (drives entering directly onto North street). This was to retain the hedge on North Street. The developer moved the frontage back 5 metres by increasing the site, they did not address the issue of "the active frontage" and proposed to remove the hedge on North Street. This planning application was subsequently refused.

Without any further public consultation the site had been increased in the Regulation 19 document (see Figure 2). This was not mentioned in MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - NEW AND AMENDED SITE ALLOCATIONS. I am concerned that **due process has not been followed**, when increasing the size of this site.



The developer, Taylor Wimpey has since submitted a new application for this site 16/505427/FULL. This has pushed the boundary of the site back a further 5 metres, increasing it once again so it goes back by a total of 10 metres.

It is clear from Taylor Wimpey's agent's submission to the consultation Regulation 18 document that they wanted the whole site to be included i.e. the lighter shaded area in Figure 1. They are now doing this by stealth and creep.

The planning application 14/506419/FULL was refused for reasons related to character, location in the countryside, habitat loss and harm to the setting of a listed building. The council concentrated on harm to the rural setting of one listed building namely Broumfield, but a further two listed buildings are also affected - St Cuthbert's and the Oast House. It is vitally important that we preserve the setting of all these listed buildings within an agricultural rural heritage. This site cannot deliver 35 houses and retain the its rural nature. The site should be removed from the local plan

Removing the policy requirement for 0.77ha of open space will further urbanise the site and if the site is to be maintained within the local plan then open space must be included and increased to protect the rural nature of the site.

The rural setting of this site has been overlooked by the local plan. The urban boundary historically ran up the middle of North Street, with this site in the rural area. Any building on this site should therefore be at a density which matches that in this rural area, which is approximately 17 houses on the site.

The site should never have been included if the Officers' Site Assessment conducted in 2012 had been followed:

In conclusion, although this site is open and in itself would be developable, its location in a semi-rural setting with limited access means that if it were allocated, the existing character of the area would be negatively affected. Mitigation measures to improve access to the site would in themselves urbanise the character of this location beyond an acceptable level. Heath Road is an inappropriate route to access the site, however, in reality it would be substantially used. The site is therefore not allocated.