

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/examination>

SESSION R2 –ALTERNATIVE SITES

Hearing Statements: Please refer to the Inspector's Procedural Guidance Notes for information on the provision of hearing statements.

Deadline: One electronic copy in pdf format and three hard copies to be sent to the PO by 6.00pm on 27th October.

Inspector's Agenda with Matters, Issues, and Questions

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This reserve session has been arranged primarily to accommodate a late request for an appearance at the Examination Hearings on behalf of Eco Build Partnership UK.
- 1.2. As with other alternative site proposals they are unlikely to progress any further unless the Inspector concludes that there is a shortfall in the development proposed in the plan or that other proposed development are unsuitable meaning that the Local Plan is unsound as submitted. In that event the Inspector would be likely to refer the issue back to the Council to consider whether they wished to identify alternative development sites to address the soundness issue.

2. BROOMFIELD PARK

- 2.1. Representation R19579 concerns a proposal for a major development at Broomfield Park adjacent to Kingswood. The representation is critical of the Plan's spatial strategy and of specific proposals in the plan.

QnR1.1 Does MBC wish to comment on the specific criticisms of the Plan set out in R19579?

- 2.2. Little supporting information is included about the development proposal at Broomfield Park. However the landowner apparently put forward a proposal

repeatedly in the call for sites. Those submissions are not included in the evidence before the Inspector. However the proposals were considered by the Council in the SHEDLAA Appendix A [Document HOU 007(C)] under Reference Number HO-154. That proposal concerned a development of 900 dwellings on 40ha of greenfield land. That would be a development of strategic scale.

QnR1.2 Can the Representor provide a plan showing the proposed location of the development and the suggested access route including the bypass?

- 2.3. The R19579 representations claim that the development would fund a Leeds-Langley Bypass and that access to Maidstone would be provided by electric minibuses. The development would also include a wide range of community facilities including a primary school, village hall, swimming pool and digital cinema.
- 2.4. The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 173 requires that plans should be deliverable and that careful consideration is given to viability.

QnR1.3 What if any evidence is there that this proposal would be viable and deliverable to include the funding of a Leeds-Langley Bypass and the proposed community facilities and public transport?

QnR1.3 If there were a funding shortfall for the road construction, what other sources of funding could be available?

QnR1. 4 Over what period could the development be delivered including the new road?

- 2.5. In the SHEDLAA 2016 MBC rejected the site concluding:

'This site is rejected for the reasons listed in the suitability category. The proposed Eco village at this site is simply inappropriate to add on to a settlement the size of Kingswood.'

The proposed development is reliant on the delivery of a link road that has not been built despite years of effort on the parts of the County Council and the Borough Council.

The combination of these factors alone means that this proposal would be unlikely to ever be delivered as outlined by the developers. However, the brief that the developers submitted also proposes the delivery of a cinema, a pub, a library, a medical centre, a new primary school, a new village hall and light industrial units. While it is unlikely that all of these facilities are required to sustain a village, even one that is proposed to expand to the size that the developers propose for Kingswood, the delivery of all of this community infrastructure is doubtful in viability terms.

The combination of these factors means that this site is not allocated for housing.'

QnR1.5 Does the Representor wish to comment on the SHEDLAA analysis and its conclusions?

- 2.6. In the Sustainability Appraisal the site scored red for: access to centres; access to a secondary school; proximity to employment sites; proximity to a bus stop; proximity to a railway station, cycle routes. The site scored yellow for proximity to a post office, proximity to play space, agricultural land, land use archaeology ancient woodland and local wildlife site.

QnR1.6 Does the Representor wish to comment on the Sustainability appraisal and its conclusions?

- 2.7. A Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted for Kingswood and Broomfield but was apparently withdrawn after advice that it did not meet the basic conditions. It included a proposal for a modest housing development and a new village green but did not refer to any large development at Broomfield Park.

QnR1.7 Is there any evidence of local support for the proposed development?