



Gladman Developments Ltd

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Examination

Session 7 – Rural Service Centres

Qn7.1 If the level of housing identified in the Local Plan is confirmed at 18,560 (or a similar figure), what reasonable alternative strategy would be preferred by those who oppose the scale of housing development proposed at the rural service centres and why?

- 1 Gladman contend that there is capacity within the Rural Service Centres to not only deliver housing in accordance with the OAN promoted through the plan, but to deal with additional capacity arising from the need to find additional sites to meet the OAN put forward by Barton Willmore in their Matter 2b statement on behalf of Gladman. In addition there remains capacity in the rural service centres which could ensure the delivery of housing targets and which may not be met due to the uncertainty with the a number of the strategic allocations including Invicta Barracks and the office conversions within the town centre.
- 2 As Gladman have raised in previous representations we have concerns about the robustness of the SHEDLAA process and are concerned that shortcomings within it have meant that additional underlying and sustainable residential capacity within the Rural Service Centres has not been identified. We have identified specific issues in this regard with the sites we are promoting in both Headcorn and Marden.
- 3 There is therefore capacity within the Rural Service Centres to sustainably meet an increased level of housing provision required within the Local Plan, and to provide additional capacity to meet overall plan targets and ensure the delivery of the plan. The delivery of the overall plan target, even if there is found to be no need to uplift the OAN, is in jeopardy due to the uncertainty over the delivery of a number of key sites and the shortage of a meaningful overall buffer to the total supply requirement. These issues are considered in detail in our Matter 5(a) statement.
- 4 Examples of the above would be the approval of a site promoted by Gladman for 62 units in Headcorn and a planning application currently in front of the Council for 150 units in Marden.

In addition there is likely additional capacity in and around the main urban areas of Maidstone, such sites could readily be identified through a new call for sites and reconsideration of the SHEDLAA.

Qn7.10 Is it realistic to expect the remainder of the HS(3) Lenham Broad Allocation for 1,500 dwellings to be delivered within a 5 year period (2026-2031) at an average rate of 300 dwellings each year?

- 5 No. As Gladman contend in our Matter 5(a) statement the delivery of such a level of housing in a location such as Lenham is not realistic. Site development rates often ramp up and hit peaks in the middle of a cycle, a flat delivery rate of 300 dwellings per annum is unrealistic. It is worth noting that a development scheme in Canterbury for 4,000 units is envisaging a delivery rate of 300 units per annum and this has been the subject of objection from the development industry and a level of criticism from the Inspector examining the plan due to the unrealistic delivery rates. That scheme is also in a substantially larger settlement than this particular proposal in Lenham. Whilst it is entirely possible that the Lenham development will have more than one developer building at once it is simply not credible that even with multiple outlets the scheme will deliver in such numbers as advocated by the Council.

Qn7.11 If not, should at least part of that allocation be allocated at an earlier date either by the Local Plan or the Neighbourhood Plan?

- 6 The allocation should only be brought forward if there is evidence before the examination to ensure that such a development can be delivered within the period envisaged. The allocation should not be brought forward simply to justify the inclusion of all of its capacity within the current plan period. Any change will therefore need to be robustly evidenced.

Qn7.16 If the number of dwellings to be provided were to be reduced to that proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, what implications would that have for development elsewhere?

- 7 As Gladman have highlighted above should the capacity be reduced there is additional capacity elsewhere within the Borough to meet the needs identified. A further call for sites and reassessment of the SHEDLAA would identify such capacity.