

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Examination

Inspector: Mr. Robert Mellor BSC DIPTRP DIPDBE DMS MRICS MRTPI

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Mr. Rob Jarman,
Head of Planning & Development,
Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House,
King Street,
Maidstone ME15 6JQ

11th July 2016

Dear Mr. Jarman,

INSPECTOR REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE UNDER PREPARATION

1. According to the Topic Papers and other information, a number of strands of additional evidence are currently being prepared. My present understanding is set out below. Would the Council please clarify and confirm what work is underway and what the relevant timelines are?

Integrated Transport Strategy

2. The Integrated Transport Strategy is intended to form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. Following consultation on the draft Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) the Minutes of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee (SPSTC) Meeting on 14 June 2016 record that the ITS is to be separated from the Walking and Cycling Strategy. Amended versions of both documents would be presented to the Joint Transport Board in July and then come back to the SPSTC for final approval for adoption and published 'later in 2016'.

Qn 1 Is that final approval and adoption expected to be before or after the examination hearings in October-December?

Further Transport Modelling

3. According to the Transport Topic Paper at paragraph 3.62 [SUB006], further transport modelling is to be undertaken using the Do Minimum (DM) scenario at the year 2031 but with the development of 18,560 dwellings in accordance with the Local Plan assessment of Objectively Assessed Needs. This would allow comparison with the Do Something 4a and 4b scenarios. The model run is scheduled 'prior to September 2016'.
4. Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.67 of the Transport Topic Paper acknowledges that Highways England had indicated that the VISUM model was unsuitable for assessing the impacts of the Local Plan on the motorway network. Following a meeting on 18 May 2016 MBC was working towards the agreement of alternative methodology with HE and Kent CC involving localised modelling at M20 Junctions 5-8. This work is to be completed 'prior to September 2016'.

Qn 2 When would the results of that modelling be available in a report?

Local Transport Plan 4 and 'Growth without Gridlock' document

5. The Kent CC Local Transport Plan 3 runs until December 2016 and is to be replaced by Local Transport Plan 4. The Kent CC document 'Growth without Gridlock' is also to be 'refreshed'.

Qn 3 What are relevant dates for publication and or consultation on these documents?

Transport Seminar

6. As it appears that there will be significant new transport evidence that will not be available until September the draft hearings programme now includes a Transport Seminar at which the new evidence can be presented and explained. The seminar will be held in public but will not involve discussion by Representors. That will be held over to subsequent hearings.

Qn 4 Would MBC and KCC/HE please prepare a Statement of Common Ground as soon as they are in a position to do so and before that seminar?

Housing Numbers

7. In an email of 22 June 2016 the Council informed me that a revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was in preparation with a final report due by 5 August 2016.

Qn 5 Is that still on track?

Heritage

8. Historic England did not make detailed representations on heritage matters, citing a lack of time. In an email on 18 June 2016 I was informed that MBC is in active discussion with Historic England with matters to be resolved by 'early July'.

Qn 6 What progress has there been with such discussions and when will their outcome be made available?

Floodrisk

9. The Environment Agency has objected to the allocation of housing on the former Syngenta site at Yalding and has stated that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2008 is out of date. The SPSTC meeting on 18 April 2016 was informed that the SFRA is to be updated.

Qn 7 What progress has there been with the SFRA update and when will it be available?

Minerals

10. Kent CC is concerned about the possibility of development sterilising mineral reserves and conflicting with the provisions of the adopted Minerals Plan. The SPSTC meeting of 14 June 2016 was told that a Joint Position Statement is to be prepared.

Qn 8 When will that statement be available?

Yours sincerely,

Robert Mellor

Inspector.