

Session 5B – South East Maidstone Strategic Development.

Inspector's Question 5.11

When does the Council anticipate that the S106 obligations for sites H1(7) and H1(10) will be completed and planning permissions issued?

Council's response:

5.11.1 It is anticipated that the S106 obligations will be completed and planning permissions issued in autumn 2016.

Planning Applications Update

H1(9) Bicknor Farm:

5.11.2 For the appeal against non-determination (Ref. 14/506264 full application 272 dwellings) the Council resolved that it would have granted planning permission on 14 July 2016. The Council will therefore not contest the appeal.

5.11.3 A new application has been submitted at the site - application Ref. 16/503775 (full application for 271 dwellings). This is a duplicate application albeit with one less dwelling. The Council resolved to grant planning permission subject to conditions and a legal agreement on 25 August 2016. It is anticipated that the S106 obligation will be completed and planning permission issued in autumn 2016.

Inspector's Question 5.12

Can the Council provide an update on whether and when an application on site H1(8) may come forward?

Council's response:

5.12.1 The developer is currently holding pre-application discussions with the Council for the site and has stated that an application is anticipated to be submitted in October/November this year.

Inspector's Question 5.13

Given the amount and location of development that is already committed what would be the marginal impacts in these regards of the developments that have not as yet been granted planning permission?

Council's response

5.13.1 The allocation without planning consent within the South East Strategic Location is H1(8) West of Church. However, pre application discussions are taking place with a planning application anticipated for late autumn/early winter.

5.13.2 Otham village and its conservation area are located to the east of the allocated site West of Church Road, separated by farmland and woodland. Langley village lies some distance to the south-east of the allocation. The site is well-related to the urban area and represents a logical extension of the urban boundary, and its development will not cause undue coalescence with the settlements of Langley and Otham, and will have minimal impact on Otham conservation area. Given the extent of borough's best and most versatile agricultural land coverage it is difficult to avoid some loss and, in the context of an overriding need for sites in sustainable locations to meet the borough's objectively assessed housing needs, the loss of this Grade 2 agricultural land classification site is acceptable.

5.13.3 St Nicholas Church, located to the north-east of the allocated housing site is Grade I listed. The impact of development on the listed building and its setting is mitigated by the requirements of policy H1(8): criterion 3 seeks lower density development along the Church Road frontage to provide an open setting to the church, and criterion 4 retains non-arable land to the north and east of the church to protect its setting. There is a fragment of ancient woodland (part of East Wood) beyond the allocation to the south-east. Consequently the policy requires provision of a 15m landscape buffer in the vicinity in order to secure the protection of the woodland. Policy H1(1)(i) is clear that development proposals will be subject to the results and recommendations of a Phase 1 ecological survey. The sustainability appraisal concludes that the mitigation measures identified for the development of the site are likely to address the issues raised by the sustainability appraisal.

5.13.4 Although the site is some distance from the A274 it is likely to have a significant impact on traffic flows.

5.13.5 A Transport Assessment (TA) was submitted in October 2015 (and TA Addendum in April 2016) to accompany the planning application for residential development at Land South of Sutton Road (allocation H1(10), application MA/15/509015/OUT) by Countryside Properties (the Countryside TA).

5.13.6 The Countryside TA tested the cumulative impacts of all housing development within the South East Strategic Development Location and nearby allocations H1(27) and H1(28) for a 2029 assessment year. Of these allocation sites, only H1(8) (West of Church Road, Otham) has not yet been granted planning permission. An application is anticipated during 2016/17. The Local Plan indicative yield for H1(8) is 440 units; this compares with the 2,409 units associated with the applications already granted planning permission and tested in the Countryside TA.

5.13.7 The methodology and outputs from the Countryside TA were independently reviewed by Mott MacDonald. Technical issues raised by this review and by KCC Highways and Transportation were addressed in the April 2016 TA Addendum. As such the transport impacts of H1(8) have already been robustly tested within the Countryside TA with respect to junctions on the A274/A229 corridor as well as the A20/Willington Street junction. The only marginal aspects of H1(8) with respect to transport therefore relate to the network to the north of the South East Strategic Development Location, namely Church Road, Deringwood Drive and along the A20 corridor.

5.13.8 Considerable sums of monies from S106 are allocated for improvements to this corridor consisting of junction improvements and bus transport etc. In addition Local Growth Fund money is allocated towards improving priority junctions, which include the Wheatsheaf and Willington Street. Depending on the transport assessment that would accompany any planning application it is likely that further S106 monies will be sought towards corridor improvements but these will clearly have to be proportional. It may be the case that monies are also sought towards mitigating any cumulative impact on J7 of the M20 and perhaps local roads (this was the case with the H1(10) resolution and for this to be incorporated into the S106 agreement).

5.13.9 In conclusion, the residual cumulative impacts of development are not evaluated as severe following improvements undertaken within the transport network. It is considered that the marginal impacts can be mitigated.

Inspector's Question 5.14

Have the Proposed Changes suitably addressed relevant concerns about the matters that they seek to address?

Council's response

5.14.1 The proposed changes in respect of Policy SP3 (and to relevant site allocation policies H1 (5) and H1 (8)) are primarily in response to additional information being made available between the Publication of the Local Plan in February 2016, and its submission in May 2016. It is considered that the changes are necessary and will suitably address relevant concerns, to form part of the wider package of infrastructure measures necessary to support development in South East Maidstone.

5.14.2 During this period, the NHS Property Services and West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) provided a comprehensive update in respect of the infrastructure schemes necessary to accommodate the growth proposed in the Local Plan, and this is reflected in the submission version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SUB 011) and in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes (SUB 010). The NHS/CCG have identified schemes to provide additional capacity at four GP surgeries in the vicinity of the South East Maidstone Strategic Development Location as an appropriate mitigation package, and indeed significant funding towards these schemes has already been secured through S106 planning obligations. It is considered that these health infrastructure requirements should be included within Policy SP3, as part of the package of key infrastructure requirements necessary to support development in this area of Maidstone, and this is proposed at PC/6. (SUB 010)

5.14.3 KCC's Regulation 20 representations provided some clarification on the education infrastructure requirements identified as necessary to support the South East Maidstone Strategic Development Location. These amended requirements are reflected in the submission version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SUB 011) and in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes (SUB 010). KCC has identified a need for a minimum 1 form of entry new primary school to support development at site H1 (10) and a minimum 0.5 form of entry expansion at Greenfields Community Primary School to support development at site H1 (8). It is considered that these changes are necessary to reflect the amended education requirements identified by the Local Education Authority.

5.14.4 It is considered that proposed change PC/24 (SUB 010) is necessary to ensure

cohesion between site policy criteria for H1 (5) and H1 (10) for the provision of good connectivity, including for public transport, between these two sites. This change will support wider measures to deliver public transport improvements along the A274 corridor, as set out in Local Plan Policies SP3 and H1 (5), (6), (7), (8), (9) and (10) (and Policy T2 of the adopted Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000) and for which significant developer contributions have already been secured through S106 planning obligations. In turn, this supports key objectives of the Local Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy to improve public transport functionality on radial routes into Maidstone.