

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 4 February 2015

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - NEW AND AMENDED SITE ALLOCATIONS

Issue for Decision

- (1) To agree proposed amendments to the sites identified for housing (Policy H1) in the Regulation 18 Maidstone Borough Local Plan following the public consultation on the draft Plan held between March and May 2014;
- (2) To agree site allocation policies for proposed new additional housing sites and the proposed deletion of a housing site at Boughton Monchelsea to be the subject of public consultation (Regulation 18) in Spring 2015; and
- (3) The report also provides an update on the recent and planned Local Plan work streams.

Decision Made

- (1) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites as set out in Appendix D agreement agreed by the Committee with no changes to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (52) – Dunning Hall off Fremlin Walk, Week Street, Maidstone (14 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 - Agreed

H1 (53) – 18-21 Foster Street, Maidstone (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (54) – Slencrest House, 3 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (10 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (55) – Russell Hotel, Boxley Road, Maidstone (14 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (59) - Bearsted Station Goods Yard (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (63) - Land at Boughton Mount, Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to clarification of there being any legal covenants in place that would prevent matters proceeding.

6 – Agreed

H1 (69) – Land at Lodge Road, Staplehurst (60 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the Committee be rejected and that this new site should not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site should be retained for employment use given the economic upturn and that infrastructure must be improved to enable this to happen and the cumulative impact of residential development in Staplehurst on social balance.

6 - Agreed

H1 (72) – Land adj. The Windmill PH, Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 - Agreed

H1 (73) – Land at Brandy’s Bay, South Lane (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation.

6 - Agreed

- (2) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to new sites set out in Appendix D agreed by the Committee with some changes to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (51) – Bridge Industrial Centre, Wharf Road, Tovil (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendments:-

Amend Criterion 5 to:

'Vehicular access will be taken from Wharf Road only. A secondary pedestrian and cycle access capable of being used as an emergency access will be provided from Lower Tovil'.

Amend Criterion 9 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Tovil Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 - Agreed

H1 (56) – Land at 180-188 Union Street, Maidstone (30 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 10 to:

'Appropriate air quality mitigation measures to include appropriate planting and landscaping within the site will be implemented as part of the development'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (58) – Tovil Working Men’s Club, Tovil Hill, Tovil (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 13 to:

‘Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Tovil Parish will be provided where proven necessary’.

6 – Agreed

H1 (66) – Land South of the Parsonage, Goudhurst Road, Marden (50 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of the Committee be rejected and that this new site not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is too peripheral to Marden and on the grounds that the cumulative impact of sites already considered in the draft Local Plan would be unacceptable to the community in terms of highways and water infrastructure and social balance.

5 – Agreed
1 – Abstained

H1 (70) – Land at Junction of Church Street and Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 9 to:

‘Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Boughton Monchelsea Parish will be provided where proven necessary’.

6 – Agreed

H1 (71) – Lyewood Farm, Green Lane, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to the following amendment:-

Amend Criterion 13 to:

'Appropriate contributions towards community infrastructure including improvement to medical facilities in Boughton Monchelsea Parish will be provided where proven necessary'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (74) – Wren's Cross, Upper Stone Street, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to this site and others in the town centre and the locality benefiting from a comprehensive assessment as part of a wider master planning exercise.

6 – Agreed

- (3) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites set out in Appendix D agreed by the Committee which required further information before acceptance to go to Regulation 18 Consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (62) – Land at Boughton Lane, Loose/Boughton Monchelsea (75 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be approved to go forward to Regulation 18 Consultation subject to written confirmation on junction improvements being sought from the Highway Authority.

6 – Agreed

- (4) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the new sites set out in Appendix D, rejected by the Committee and made the following decisions:-

H1 (57) – Land at former Astor of Hever Community School, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not be taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is retained for education use and development would be unacceptably compromised by the lack of adequate access.

6 – Agreed

H1 (60) – Fant Farm, Maidstone (225 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the site is valuable for agriculture use, and would have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, including the overall shape of the urban area of Maidstone and the unacceptable highways impact for the local community.

6 – Agreed

H1 (61) – Land at Cross Keys, Bearsted (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that development of this site would have an unacceptable impact on hydrology and local flood risk.

3 – Agreed

3 – Against

(Chairman had the casting vote)

H1 (64) – Bell Farm North, East Street, Harrietsham (80 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that the cumulative impact of development having a detrimental effect on the character, size and shape of the village and community due to the increase in size and footprint of the village and unacceptable cumulative impact for the community for education provision, transport and other community infrastructure.

6 – Agreed

H1 (65) – Land at Lenham Road, Headcorn (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that development is in reality impractical due to current water conditions and community perception of failure of infrastructure providers to deliver infrastructure identified as required in the past, local knowledge of flood risk and community concern about the cumulative impact on local education provision and highways.

6 – Agreed

H1 (67) – Land to South of Marden Road, Staplehurst (100 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken

forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Staplehurst and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways.

6 – Agreed

H1 (68) – Land to the North of Henhurst Farm, Staplehurst (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this new site be rejected and not taken forward to Regulation 18 consultation on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Staplehurst and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways. In addition of community concerns that suitable highways access arrangements cannot be achieved at this point in time.

6 – Agreed

- (5) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 Consultation with no changes and made the following decisions:-

H1 (2) – East of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone (500 units)

RESOLVED: Members noted that this site was the subject of an appeal and whilst keen not to prejudice any outcome of the appeal, they were in agreement that the draft allocation should proceed to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (14) – American Golf, Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (60 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (15) – 6 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone (15 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (18) - Whitmore Street, Maidstone (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (23) – New Line Learning, Boughton Lane (220 units)

RESOLVED: Members noted that this site was the subject of an appeal and whilst keen not to prejudice any outcome of the appeal, they were in agreement that the draft allocation should proceed to Regulation 19 consultation.

H1 (27) – Mayfield Nursery, Ashford Road, Harrietsham (50 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (35) - Marden Cricket & Hockey Club, Stanley Road, Marden (125 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

H1 (46) – Vicarage Road, Yalding (65 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to additional references to traffic analysis and provision of a community centre where proven necessary and adjustment of the housing yield should this become necessary.

6 – Agreed

H1 (47) – Hubbards Lane/Haste Hill Road, Boughton Monchelsea (20 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the addition of appropriate contribution improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads.

6 – Agreed

H1 (49) – East of Eyhorne Street, Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne (10 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation.

6 – Agreed

- (6) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 Consultation with changes recommended by Officers and made the following decisions:-

H1 (1) – Bridge Nursery, London Road, Maidstone (165 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being reduced to 140 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (3) – West of Hermitage Lane, Maidstone (300 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 330 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (5) - Langley Park, Sutton Road, Maidstone (600 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the following new criterion:-

'A separate cycle and pedestrian access will be provided to site H1 (10) South of Sutton Road subject to agreement with the highways authority and the Borough Council'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (6) – North of Sutton Road, Otham (285 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 286 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (16) – Laguna, Hart Street, Maidstone (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 76 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (19) – North Street, Barming (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the amended site plan which clarifies the linear development as set out in the papers.

6 - Agreed

H1 (21) – Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road (115 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being reduced to 112 as per the papers.

6 - Agreed

H1 (22) – Kent Police Training Centre, Sutton Road, Maidstone (70 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 90 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (28) – Church Road, Harrietsham (95 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 80 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (32) – Howland Road, Marden (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 44, from 55 as per Appendix B of the original agenda. Members noted that the supplementary papers contained a typing error and that the yield should have stated 44 instead of 80.

6 - Agreed

H1 (33) – Stanley Farm, Plain Road, Marden (170 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 85 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (34) – The Parsonage, Goudhurst Road, Marden (200 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 144 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (38) – Old School Nursery, Station Road, Headcorn (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being increased to 9 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

H1 (50) – West of Eyhorne Street, Eyhorne Street, Hollingbourne (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be approved to go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the revised yield being decreased to 14 as per the papers.

6 – Agreed

- (7) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed with changes recommended by Officers for further Regulation 18 consultation and made the following decisions:-

H1 (10) – South of Sutton Road (930 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Committee for this site to go forward to further Regulation 18 consultation be rejected and that this site go forward to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that:-

- (a) in the opinion of the Cabinet the eastern boundary of site H1 (5) forms a natural boundary to the edge of the urban area of Maidstone;

- (b) there should be no further encroachment of residential development into the countryside which would result in the loss of green space and a leisure facility;
- (c) there would be an unacceptable cumulative impact on traffic generations in the Sutton Road corridor;
- (d) there would be an unacceptable impact on conditions in the surrounding area where the environmental and amenity consequences for the community are unacceptable now; and
- (e) that development here would not command the consent of local people as reflected in the consultation response.

4 – Agreed

1 – Against

(Councillor Burton left the meeting at the start of this item after disclosing an other significant interest).

H1 (11) – Springfield, Royal Engineers Road and Mill Way (950 units)

RESOLVED: That the recommendation of Committee for this site to be put forward to Regulation 18 be rejected and instead go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised reduced yield of 500 units and subject to an amendment to Criterion 10 as set out in the Urgent Update Report which is as follows:-

‘Provision of publicly accessible open space to include the provision of a pocket park to the rear (west) of the existing Springfield Mansion on the former tennis court/car park area in addition to the existing area of public open space shown on the proposals map which shall be retained as part of the development and/or contributions.

4 – Agreed

2 – Against

H1 (40) Grigg Lane and Lenham Road, Headcorn (120 units)

RESOLVED: That Members opted to debate the allocated site as two separate considerations as follows:-

Southern portion of the site, consisting of two granted planning consents for 45 units go forward to Regulation 19 consultation; and

That the remaining northern portion of the site, where no

consents exist, go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion, on the grounds that it has not been demonstrated to the community's satisfaction that current foul water problems can be resolved and these will be exacerbated by any further development in this part of Headcorn and the unacceptable cumulative impact for the community and highways. In addition of community concerns that suitable highways access arrangements cannot be achieved at this point in time.

4 - Agreed
2 - Abstained

H1 (48) – Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea (25 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go back to Regulation 18 for deletion.

6 - Agreed

- (8) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee agreed for Regulation 19 consultation with changes and made the following decisions:-

H1 (4) – Land at Oakapple Lane, Barming (240 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation, if necessary reconsidered in the light of the outcome of the Public Inquiry for Site H1 (2) and continuing dialogue with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

6 - Agreed

H1 (7) – Land North of Bicknor Wood, Otham (190 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation, with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that the following be added to Criterion 12 as follows:-

'strategic transport requirements, adding in point vii:

strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'

5 - Agreed
1 - Against

H1 (8) – Land West of Church Road, Otham (440 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19

consultation with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that at Criterion 10, paragraph vii be added:

'strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'.

4 – Agreed
2 – Against

H1 (9) – Bicknor Farm, Sutton Road (335 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the criterion amended as set out in the papers and that at Criterion 12, paragraph vii be added:

'strategic road infrastructure to significantly relieve traffic congestion on Sutton Road and Willington Street'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (12) – Haynes, Ashford Road (250 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with a revised reduced yield of 200 units and incorporating the changes to the policy criterion as follows:-

'Provision will be made for publicly accessible open space within the development site as part of the development layout and contributions off-site where proven necessary'

And adding criterion:

'The layout will be designed to ensure built development is set-back from the Ashford Road frontage'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (13) – Medway Street, Maidstone (40 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation incorporating an additional criterion as follows:-

'The development layout will include significant landscaping including tree planting'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (24) – West of Eclipse Park, Sittingbourne Road (35 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation incorporating amended criterion 2 as follows:-

'A minimum 15 metre landscape buffer shall be provided along the site's western boundary adjacent to the ancient woodland and no footpath, cycle or track-way shall be provided within this safeguarded area'.

Additional criterion:

'The layout and landscaping of the site shall be designed to minimise the impact of development on the adjacent ancient woodland to the west of the site through appropriate siting of the built development'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (29) – Tanyard Farm, Old Ashford Road, Lenham (155 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to the amended and additional criteria as per the papers and subject to Ward Members being consulted on the landscaping issues:-

'The hedgerow and line of trees along the northern and southern boundaries of the site will be retained and substantially enhanced by new planting in order to protect the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, and to provide a suitable buffer between new housing and the A20 Ashford Road and Old Ashford Road'.

'The development proposals shall be designed to maintain existing vistas and views of the Lenham Cross from Old Ashford Road, through the site and along PROW KH433.

Development proposals shall incorporate substantial areas of internal landscaping within the site to provide an appropriate landscape framework for the site to protect the setting of the Kent Downs AONB. Development proposals will be of a highway standard of design and sustainability reflecting the location of the site as part of the setting of the Kent Downs AONB incorporating the use of vernacular materials and demonstrating compliance with the requirements of policies DM2, DM3 and DM4.

The development proposals are designed to take into account the results of a landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken in accordance with the principles of current guidance that particularly addresses the impact of development on the character and setting of the Kent Downs AONB'.

6 – Agreed

H1 (36) – Hen and Duckhurst Farm, Marden Road, Staplehurst (370 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of 250 units as per the papers. In addition amend the Criterion 11 to:

‘appropriate contributions towards community strategic infrastructure in particular foul water drainage will be provided where proven necessary so that there is nil detriment to existing infrastructure capacity’.

4 – Agreed
1 – Against
1 – Abstained

H1 (37) – Fishers Farm, Fishers Road, Staplehurst (535 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of a maximum of 400 units. In addition amend the Criterion 11 to:

‘appropriate contributions towards community strategic infrastructure in particular foul water drainage will be provided where proven necessary so that there is nil detriment to existing infrastructure capacity’.

An additional criterion as follows:-

‘The proposals will be designed to include areas of open space that retain the integrity and connectivity of the existing framework of ponds, hedgerows and trees within the site’.

6 - Agreed

H1 (43) – Linden Farm, Stockett Lane, Coxheath (85 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on a revised reduced yield of 40 with an additional criterion as per the papers of appropriate contributions towards improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road, with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads and a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

6 – Agreed

H1 (44) – Heathfield, Heath Road, Coxheath (130 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to amended criterion as per the papers and

a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

H1 (26) – South of Ashford Road, Harrietsham (70 units)

RESOLVED: That this site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised increased yield of 117 units and that an additional criterion be added as follows:-

‘The site layout is designed to fully integrate the development and the proposed improvements to the A20 Ashford Road to ensure a comprehensive approach to the improvements of the public realm and highways safety’

4 – Agreed

2 – Against

- (9) Cabinet noted the recommendations of Planning, Transportation and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the tables of recommendations circulated as an Urgent Update to the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Regulation 18 Sites set out in Appendix D which Committee recommended for further Regulation 18 consultation on deletion of the site from the Local Plan and made the following decisions:-

H1 (17) – Barty Farm, Roundwell (122 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation subject to amendment of the site policy to respond to concerns about future primary education provision and an additional criterion that Section 106 contributions are spent in Thurnham and Bearsted first unless proven otherwise.

5 – Agreed

1 – Against

H1 (20) – Postley Road, Tovil (80 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation on the revised reduced yield of 62 as per the papers.

4 – Agreed

1 - Against

1 - Abstained

6 – Agreed

H1 (25) – Tongs Meadow, West Street, Harrietsham (100 units)

RESOLVED: That Members, whilst noting the concerns about ecology, were satisfied that there was sufficient protection in the site policy and moved to reject the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the amendments to criterion 4 as per the papers and for a revised increased yield of 105.

5 – Agreed
1 – Against

H1 (30) – Glebe Gardens, Lenham (10 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation. It was noted that the current planning application for this site provided details of the proposed works to the pond and its environs and other ecological surveys. These will be considered as part of the application process by appropriate consultees including the Environment Agency and KCC Ecology, to-date no fundamental objections have been raised to the principle of development as set out in the policy.

6 – Agreed

H1 (31) – Ham Lane, Lenham (80 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds of unacceptably adverse impact on the AONB and on the character of the village because it is peripheral to the settlement and beyond the open space occupied by Swadelands School playing field.

4 – Agreed
2 – Against

H1 (39) – Ulcombe Road and Mill Bank, Headcorn (240 units)

RESOLVED: That Members reject this site after further information was received at the adjourned meeting which related to a drainage survey undertaken by Headcorn Parish Council that detailed all the pipework across the Headcorn area. It was noted that a copy had been passed to Southern Water. It was agreed to go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion .

3 – Agreed

3 – Against

(Chairman had the casting vote)

H1 (41) – South of Grigg Lane, Headcorn (55 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion.

3 – Agreed

2 – Against

1 – Abstained

H1 (42) Knaves Acre, Headcorn (5 units)

RESOLVED: That this site be rejected and go back to Regulation 18 consultation for deletion on the grounds that local infrastructure is insufficient, in particular for foul water sewerage, flood risk and highway congestion.

3 – Agreed

2 – Against

1 – Abstained

H1 (45) – Forstal Lane, Coxheath (195 units)

RESOLVED: That Members rejected the recommendation of the Committee and that the site go forward to Regulation 19 consultation with the amended criterion as per the papers of appropriate contributions towards improvements at the junction of the B2163 Heath Road, with the A229 Linton Road/Linton Hill at Linton Crossroads and a cascade criterion for community infrastructure with investment in Coxheath first unless proven otherwise.

3 – Agreed

2 – Against

1 – Abstained

- (10) That the shortfall of 2,556 homes against the already agreed housing objectively assessed need of 18,600 was noted (for clarity attached as Appendix A to this decision is a table setting out the decision for the yield on each site) and Officers were asked to bring a further report to Cabinet as soon as possible which outlines the associated risks to the delivery of a sound Local Plan; and

That Officers urgently progress dialogue with infrastructure providers, particularly in relation to foul water, specifically for Headcorn and Staplehurst, to ensure that existing infrastructure concerns are addressed and works are progressed with the

utmost urgency.

Reasons for Decision

Introduction

The draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan was approved by Cabinet for its first full stage of public consultation (Regulation 18) in February 2014. The public consultation took place between 21 March and 7 May 2014.

The draft Local Plan comprises spatial policies which set out the overall strategy for development in different parts of the borough, site allocation policies which identify specific sites and locations for development and development management policies which are topic based policies which have a particular role in the determination of planning applications.

Approximately 1,700 individual submissions were made to the draft Local Plan by the public, agencies, local authorities, developers, landowners and their agents and other stakeholders during the consultation period. Additionally, six petitions were presented that contained a total of 10,700 signatures, bringing the total number of respondents to the local plan consultation to 12,400. All these representations are available on the Council's website.

The representations and proposed responses would be brought forward for Members' consideration in batches over the coming months. It was recommended that one or more 'informal' Regulation 18 consultation stages be undertaken on new and certain amended parts of the Plan, for example, proposed new housing site allocations, before the further full draft of the Local Plan is prepared for Regulation 19 public consultation.

The immediate timetable for considering the issues raised by the representations and for additional public consultation on select aspects of the Local Plan is set out below:

Local plan section	Member consideration	Decision being sought
Representations on/amendments to Development management policies	Planning Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee 16 th December and Cabinet 14 th January 2015	Agreement to policy amendments ready for incorporation in the next full draft of the Local Plan (Regulation 19)
Representations on/amendments to Housing sites (policy H1)	Planning Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 th January and 28 th January and Cabinet 2 February, adjourned to 4 February 2015	Agreement to policy amendments ready for incorporation in the next full draft of the Local Plan (Regulation 19)
Proposed additional/omitted housing sites	Planning Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 th January and 28 th January Cabinet 2 and 4 February 2015	Approval of additional/deleted housing site allocations for focused Reg 18 consultation starting in February 2015
Representations on/amendments to	Planning Transport & Development Overview &	Approval of additional/deleted allocations for

employment and mixed use sites (Policies EMP1 and RMX1)	Scrutiny Committee (date tbc) and Cabinet tbc	focused Reg 18 consultation starting (tbc)
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The content of the report were considered by Planning, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meetings on 20th, 22nd and 28th January 2015. The recommendations of the Committee were made available to Cabinet at their meeting.

The representations made regarding the proposed housing sites included in Policy H1 of the draft Local Plan were considered in more depth below. The housing sites and broad locations that were identified in the draft Local Plan provide for some 10,000 new homes. Coupled with the houses that had already been built between 1st April 2011 and 2013 and those with planning permission, at the time the draft local Plan was prepared there was an identified shortfall of some 2,500 dwellings against the objectively assessed need figure of 19,600 (2011-31) in place at the time¹. The NPPF² directs that Local Plans should meet their full, objectively assessed need for homes.

Further, at the time of the deadline of the original Call for Sites exercise (31st March 2013), the agreed 'working' housing target was some 14,800 dwellings (2011-31). This is appreciably below the 19,600 objectively assessed need figure and it could be argued that more sites would have been submitted for assessment if the higher objectively assessed need figure had been known at this point. To mitigate the risk of future challenge to the Local Plan, it was important that a further Call for Sites exercise was undertaken in full knowledge of the 19,600 new homes figure.

The submission deadline for this further Call for Sites was 4th April 2014. The outcomes of the assessments of the submitted sites are explained further below.

As further inputs to the assessment of sites, additional evidential studies have been undertaken on agricultural land quality and landscape quality. The Agricultural Land Classification Study is needed to give a definitive view on the agricultural land quality of individual sites proposed for development. The purpose of the Landscape Capacity Study is to determine the broad comparative sensitivity of landscape character areas within the borough and to assess individual sites' landscape constraints.

Updates on these two studies were presented to 16th December 2014 meeting of the Planning, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Both emerging studies have been used by officers in making the site recommendations set out in this report to help direct development to the least sensitive locations

Members were aware that in September 2014 a revised objectively assessed housing need figure of 18,600 homes (2011-31) was agreed by

¹ See PT&D O&S Committee 21st January 2014 Report on the 'Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy' (paragraph 1.3.25)

² Paragraph 47

Cabinet. This updated figure stemmed from the publication of new sub-national population projections by the ONS in May 2014. Cabinet also agreed the Strategic Housing Market Assessment reports³ themselves which were undertaken jointly with Ashford and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils and implicitly the methodology used to derive the objectively assessed need figure.

Representations and proposed amendments to Policy H1

Policy H1 of the draft Local Plan identifies 50 sites for housing development. The draft Local Plan document sets out the specific development criteria and includes a site plan for each of the allocated sites.

In addition to the issues raised in respect of individual sites, a significant number of objections to Policy H1 raised wider, overarching issues relating to the Local Plan's overall approach to the number and location of new homes. Such issues relate to the overall strategy of the Local Plan and the overall distribution of development (Policy SS1 and Policies SP1 – SP5). The issues were presented and summarised for the Planning, Transport & Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19th August 2014. These strategic points were considered and addressed as part of the preparation of the next full draft of the Local Plan (Regulation 19 stage). The specific key issues were highlighted which were of particular significance to the allocation of housing sites.

It was noted that residents in particular felt that **the overall number of houses** allocated in Policy H1 was too high and would result in the loss of greenfield land, including productive agricultural land, which would have an adverse effect on the borough's and individual settlements' character. In contrast, others noted that there were insufficient allocations to meet the objectively assessed need figure and that more sites should be identified.

In response, Members agreed that there was an objectively assessed need for some 18,600 new homes⁴. A rigorous approach has been taken to identifying the most suitable housing sites through the comprehensive assessment in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, drawing on evidence and the expert inputs from statutory agencies. Further, the site allocation policies identify specific mitigation measures to address the impacts of development where possible. The sustainability appraisal (SA) provides a valuable cross check for the site selection process when relevant sustainability factors are weighed together.

There had been strongly expressed concern about the **impacts of development on local infrastructure** linked to the overall scale of development proposed in a given location. This concern is widespread and is explicitly raised in objections for every settlement where development has been proposed and by other communities which will be impacted by

³ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (January 2014) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum (August 2014)

⁴ 10th September 2014

development. Concerns related to transport infrastructure, including public transport, schools and pre-schools, health facilities, water supply, sewerage capacity, refuse collections and the adequacy of local shops. Respondents are concerned that infrastructure and facilities were insufficient to cope with current demand and that they would fail under the pressure of the proposed additional development. There is also the view that infrastructure improvements should be implemented before development takes place.

In respect of transport infrastructure specifically, it was expressed that traffic congestion, noise, road safety including for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and air quality would worsen without new road schemes. This concern was raised both for settlements where development is proposed and by communities who were concerned about the highway impacts of development elsewhere on their local roads. The sufficiency of existing transport evidence was questioned as was how the cumulative impacts of development inside and outside the borough would be assessed. The value of any future revised Integrated Transport Strategy which does not have the support of Kent County Council as highways authority was questioned. There are general and specific concerns that there would be an increase in rat running on unsuitable routes.

In response, there has been concerted and on-going dialogue with infrastructure providers as the Local Plan has progressed as part of the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Infrastructure providers have been provided with information on the development proposals set out in the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) and potential additional sites and have been asked to advise on the implications for infrastructure provision. This is inevitably an iterative process; decisions need to be made on sites before the infrastructure providers can give a firm response on the implications.

Kent County Council (KCC) uses its Infrastructure Investment Finance Model (IIFM) to determine the implications of development for the services it is responsible for, with the exception of transport. KCC has been asked to run the model to include the additional sites recommended for allocation in the section below. At the time of writing, the full outputs of the model are still awaited from KCC. An update will be provided at the meeting. There has been, however, no indication to date that education, adult education, libraries and social services requirements are a 'show-stopper' to the scale and distribution of development included, or proposed to be included, in the draft Local Plan.

NHS property reports that all GP surgeries in Maidstone town have capacity although some would benefit from an upgrade in their facilities. In Coxheath there are proposals to relocate the surgery to the Clockhouse Farm site. There is a already planned extension to the surgery at Marden whilst Harrietsham surgery would require extension based on the number of new homes proposed in the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18). Staplehurst, Headcorn and Lenham are reported to have sufficient capacity for the planned growth. The NHS's response on the proposals for the Larger Villages is awaited.

Southern Water (waste water) has advised that it does not consider that any development proposals will result in a situation where development cannot be accommodated. With regard to the proposed housing sites in Policy H1 Southern Water's response to the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation states (emphasis added) "The assessment indicates that capacity is insufficient in the immediate vicinity of some of the sites. *This is not a fundamental constraint to development.* However, new or improved infrastructure would need to be provided in parallel with the development". This would be partially funded by the developer of a given site and partially by Southern Water in expectation of the future income it would gain from households moving into the new homes. Southern Water's response to the proposed additional sites should be available for Members at the meeting.

Notwithstanding this position, local experience is that there are current failings in the management of waste water. This issue is particularly acute in a number of locations including Marden, Headcorn and Staplehurst where sewerage overflows are reported in times of heavy or prolonged rainfall. The Council is actively working with Southern Water and KCC amongst others to address these concerns, recognising that responsibilities rest with private landowners as well as public agencies. In its response to the Local Plan the Environment Agency also advises of the need to take a strategic approach to surface water drainage infrastructure associated with new development at Headcorn, Marden and Langley (although no new development is being proposed at the edge of the latter), recommending that this can achieve a more efficient overall system.

Southern Water's response to the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) also requested that additional criteria be added to the housing site allocation policies in Policy H1 to ensure connection to the sewerage network at the nearest point of capacity and to ensure that existing sewerage infrastructure is protected and not built over (including reference to easements for future maintenance). Whilst supported, both of these issues are detailed development design, delivery and implementation issues which would be dealt with at the planning application stage and it is not necessary to include additional, specific reference in the site allocation policies.

South East water (clean water) responded to the draft Local Plan confirming that the scale of growth proposed in the Local Plan can be serviced: "we can confirm that our published planned programme will be fully able to satisfy the growth demands within the zones, assuming the required new resources are in place and demand management resources are encouraged."

KCC Highways: Visum strategic transport modelling for Maidstone is underway. The model covers the urban area, extending to M20 J5-J8 and to B2163 to the south. The model has been updated to a base date of 2014 and so reflects current traffic conditions. The model is being used to test a number of forecast options to determine how the highway network will perform at 2031 when, in addition to background growth, the

developments proposed in the draft Local Plan, including the additional housing sites proposed in this report, will have been implemented.

The first scenario is a 'do minimum' option which considers the system to be largely unaltered except for two interventions:

- Capacity enhancements to the Bridges Gyratory in the town centres; and
- Enhancements to the Thameslink rail network through Maidstone.

Furthermore, 2 "do something" scenarios are being tested. The first, adds a series of highways packages to the "do minimum", which include various junction upgrades and the implementation of the Leeds-Langley relief road.

The second "do something" scenario applies a package of public transport and sustainable transport measures to the "do minimum" test. This run is being established presently, and will be completed by late January by Kent County Council and their consultants Amey.

Dependent upon the outcomes of this run, there may then be a desire to undertake "hybrid" tests – whereby a mix of previous runs are tested in their totality. Such decisions will be undertaken in due course, with the results to follow. The completion of the work would enable a more informed decision on the most effective and deliverable transport solution to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan.

It was important to note that KCC Highways had not objected to the housing sites included in the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) or the additional housing sites proposed in this report. Further, junction-specific VISIM transport modelling is being undertaken for Staplehurst and Coxheath.

Highways Agency: In its response to the draft Local Plan the Highways Agency did not make any detailed comments on the sites proposed but did report a general concern that a robust transport evidence base is not yet in place to test the quantum of development, nor to sufficiently assess the timing or location of any impacts or the form and funding of any necessary mitigation. This known issue is being addressed through the progression of the transport modelling work.

Environment Agency: The Environment Agency has not objected to the specific housing proposals in the draft Local Plan other than to make a detailed comment in respect of H1(32) land at Howland Road, Marden. A recommended amendment as a result of the EA's comment was included in the urgent update circulated at the meeting to the report of the Head of Planning and Development.

Open space: work is progressing on the audit of the quality, quantity and accessibility of the different types of existing public open space in the borough. This work will inform the setting of open space standards and it

is proposed that public consultation on draft open space standards could be undertaken after May. Thereafter the standards, and any site or settlement specific implications arising from them, will be incorporated into the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

Overall, there is no firm evidence from the statutory providers that the scale of development proposed in the Plan cannot be accommodated.

Representations have made specific reference to **neighbourhood plans** and how proposals in the draft Local Plan do not match emerging proposals in neighbourhood plans.

In response, it is noted that neighbourhood plans in the borough are at varying stages of preparation. Whilst some communities are making good progress, no plans have yet been adopted or submitted for examination.

As stated, in some cases the selection of sites and/or their capacity in emerging neighbourhood plans do not match those in the emerging Local Plan. Neighbourhood plans do not have to include the same sites as the Local Plan and vice versa.

Crucial to the success of the emerging Local Plan will be the robustness of the evidence base and, more particularly, how this extensive evidence has been used to determine the plan's strategy and detailed policies. This is the same for neighbourhood plans which must have regard to national policy (NPPF), being based on evidence, and deliver sustainable development. Local communities should make use of the Local Plan's evidence base as well as their own evidence to substantiate the content of their neighbourhood plans and thereby to give the plans the best chance of succeeding at examination. The Local Plan evidence includes the objectively assessed need figure which the council must work assiduously to meet, taking a borough-wide perspective of the most sustainable locations and sites for growth. This is resulting in some settlements being proposed for more housing than the neighbourhood plan groups consider appropriate.

This being the case it is likely that some neighbourhood plans and the Local Plan may continue not to align in all respects. Ultimately, differences which remain will be tested at the plans' respective examinations.

Site-specific issues

Policy H1 allocates 50 sites for housing development. Objections were received to each of these sites. Appendix A of the report contained a summary schedule of the site-specific issues raised and responses to them including proposed amendments to the policy. For ease, the proposed amendments were extracted into a single document in the urgent update.

Some respondents considered that the proposed **site capacities had been overestimated** and that many of the allocated sites would not achieve the yield that had been proposed. It was felt by some that the application of standard densities disregards local context.

In response, the policy for each housing site includes information on the number of houses each site can accommodate. This capacity judgment has been based on an assessment of the site by officers; it does not represent an absolute minimum or maximum, rather an informed indication of the scale of development which is likely to be acceptable. Clearly the actual number of homes a site delivers is dependent on the type and mix of units and is only confirmed when a detailed scheme is consented and implemented. Since the draft Local Plan was published, a number of the proposed allocations have gained planning permission or been approved subject to a section 106 agreement. Generally, although not exclusively, this has been for lower numbers of homes than signalled in the draft Plan. It is important that these variances are tracked as a continuing trend for lower housing numbers on these sites could create an upward pressure for additional sites to be needed. Officers will continue to monitor the position.

Officers have taken the opportunity to review all the sites listed in Policy H1 to determine whether a revision to the indicative site capacity is merited. Revisions were proposed for 21 sites which were also set out in the urgent update.

A review of the 50 sites has also highlighted 8 instances where an amendment to the site allocation plan is needed. The list of sites, reasons for the proposed change and the amended site plans were included in the urgent update. One instance to highlight is site H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley where extent and overall capacity of the site has been reduced to reflect the more sensitive landscape at the eastern edge of the site. It is now proposed that the site yield would be 850 dwellings. Additionally the policy wording is proposed to be amended to clarify that a lower density form of development on the eastern section of the site would be appropriate and the development criteria further amended to better reflect the site's context.

Subject to Members' consideration, it was recommended that the specific amendments to the housing site allocations in Policy H1 listed in the urgent update be agreed for incorporation into the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan in due course.

Land at Heath Road, Boughton Monchelsea (H1(48)) was identified in the draft Local Plan as a site for some 25 dwellings. Subsequently it has been confirmed that access to the site is not within the control of the promoter of the site. On that basis the site is no longer deliverable and it was recommended that it be deleted as an allocation in the Plan. This change is considered sufficiently significant to include it as part of the Regulation 18 consultation on the proposed new housing sites and was included in Appendix D for approval.

Additional Housing sites

162 potential housing site submissions were received in response to the latest Call for Sites. Of these, some 42 were resubmissions of sites which had previously been considered in the Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessment (2013).

Sites submitted by landowners as representations to the Local Plan have also been assessed where these had not already been submitted through the Call for Sites exercise. These are included in the above numbers.

Each site was assessed using the same proforma format as was followed for the 2013 assessments to help ensure a consistency of approach. The completed proforma will be available on the Council's website as part of the public consultation. The Environment Agency, KCC Highways, KCC Ecology and KCC Archaeology were all consulted on the submitted sites. The views of parish councils and local residents' groups were also gathered during the 26 dedicated Local Plan meetings held between September and November. There have also been a number of separate, but related, meetings with neighbourhood plan groups.

The submitted sites have all been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This has been undertaken in the same way and by the same expert consultants as have undertaken previous stages of SA to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach. The outcome of the SA has been used by officers to inform and test the selection of new sites being put forward for allocation. A summary of the outcomes of the SA was attached as Appendix C to the report of the Head of Planning and Development and the SA will be published on the Council's website at the same time as the Regulation 18 consultation on the proposed additional sites .

Additionally Wrens Cross was put forward as a suitable site for development by a local respondent but not by the landowner Kent County Council. KCC has now confirmed that the site is being put forward as a proposed development site. Members were referred to the list of sites proposed to be allocated and the draft site allocation policies at Appendix D.

Further, a number of respondents propose that Detling Aerodrome and/or Detling Showground should be allocated for development in the Local Plan. Kent County Council's submission to the draft Local Plan supports a mixed use development of 1000 dwellings at Detling, citing this as part of its alternative development strategy whereby increased development (some 1000 units) would be directed to the rural parts of the borough at unspecified locations plus Leeds/Kingswood (750 dwellings) and land east of Church Road Otham (450units).

The suggested sites at Detling are located within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Such areas are afforded a very high level of protection in National Policy and development at the level suggested in the representations would not be acceptable in principle, particularly in the face of there being alternative, suitable sites in less constrained locations.

In addition, the location of both sites is relatively unsustainable as they are poorly related to the services that future residents would require and are not served by good public transport links, such that future occupiers would be reliant on the use of the private car for their day-to-day needs.

The outcome of the sites' assessment is that 24 additional sites are recommended for allocation for housing in the Local Plan. The allocation of these sites could provide some 1,143 dwellings. These sites are:

- H1 (51) Bridge Industrial Centre Wharf Road Tovil - 15 dwellings
- H1 (52) The Dunning Hall off Fremlin Walk Maidstone - 14 dwellings
- H1 (53) 18-21 Foster Street Maidstone - 5 dwellings
- H1 (54) Slencrest House Tonbridge Road Maidstone - 10 dwellings
- H1 (55) The Russell Hotel Boxley Road Maidstone - 14 dwellings
- H1 (56) 180-188 Union Street Maidstone - 30 dwellings
- H1 (57) Land at Former Astor of Hever Community School Maidstone - 60 dwellings
- H1 (58) Tovil Working Men's Club Tovil Hill Maidstone - 20 dwellings
- H1 (59) Bearsted Station Goods Yard Bearsted - 20 dwellings
- H1 (60) Fant Farm Maidstone - 225 dwellings
- H1 (61) Land at Cross Keys Roundwell Bearsted - 50 dwellings
- H1 (62) Land at Boughton Lane Loose/Boughton Monchelsea - 75 dwellings
- H1 (63) Boughton Mount Boughton Lane Boughton Monchelsea - 25 dwellings
- H1 (64) Bell Farm North West Street Harrietsham - 80 dwellings
- H1 (65) Land at Lenham Road Headcorn - 50 dwellings
- H1 (66) Land south of The Parsonage Goudhurst Road Marden - 50 dwellings
- H1 (67) Land south of Marden Road Staplehurst - 100 dwellings
- H1 (68) Land to the north of Henhurst Farm Staplehurst - 60 dwellings
- H1 (69) Land at Lodge Road Staplehurst - 60 dwellings
- H1 (70) Land at Church Street/Heath Road Boughton Monchelsea - 40 dwellings
- H1 (71) Lyewood Farm Green Lane Boughton Monchelsea - 25 dwellings
- H1 (72) Land adj. The Windmill PH Eythorne Street Hollingbourne - 15 dwellings
- H1 (73) Brandy's Bay South Lane Sutton Valence - 40 dwellings
- H1 (74) Wren's Cross Upper Stone Street Maidstone - 60 dwellings

Proposed allocation policies with specific development criteria and site plans for these sites were included in Appendix D. 10 additional sites were being proposed in the Maidstone urban area which would deliver some 248 additional dwellings. This included Wrens Cross, mentioned above, where development would see this prominent, dilapidated site regenerated. Elsewhere, Fant Farm was proposed for allocation for 225 new houses. The Agricultural Land Classification Study has now confirmed that the area of land proposed for housing is predominantly grade 3a and this development would also secure a 38ha country park. Land at Cross Keys, Roundwell, Bearsted is also proposed for inclusion; flooding concerns have now been addressed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency as part of the current planning application.

The representations made to the employment site allocations (Policy EMP1) are being considered by Cabinet at a later stage. Ahead of this consideration, Members were made aware that the proposed allocation of

H1(69) Land at Lodge Road, Staplehurst for housing would result in a net loss in the overall supply of B class employment land.

The allocation of these 24 housing sites would maintain the dispersed development strategy that has been followed in the Local Plan to date whereby development is focused in and at the edge of the most sustainable settlements in the borough. This approach enables the best use to be made of existing infrastructure. It is also considered to be an inherently deliverable development strategy; of the 8,126 dwellings provided for on sites currently allocated in Policy H1 of the draft Local Plan, more than 4,050 are already the subject of planning applications and/or permissions.

Members were aware that Golding Homes re-submitted the previously proposed urban extension to Maidstone (based on garden city design principles) for some 4,500 dwellings to the latest Call for Sites. This proposal was rejected following assessment at the previous Call for Sites for the following reasons;

'The development of this large site for 4,500 new dwellings and associated development would fundamentally change the character of the rural hamlets to the south east of Maidstone. This change in character would result in considerable harm to the countryside and would spread the town of Maidstone considerably into the countryside. Furthermore, given the fact that the site is not immediately adjacent to the urban boundary it would result in an awkward gap of rural sporadic development between significant areas of development that would emphasise the harm to the character and pattern of the area.

There are significant issues to be overcome in relation to highways, noise and air quality if development were to take place on this site. Some of the land is of high value, and there are likely to be significant ecological impacts. Throughout the site there are pockets of ancient woodland as well as a number of listed buildings and areas with archaeological potential which may be unacceptably impacted by any development.

The multiple land ownerships may ultimately affect deliverability of the site despite the assertions of the proposer.

There is concern raised by Kent Highways with regard to the level of investment required for the infrastructure in relation to both the development of the site and the strategic link road between the A274 Sutton Road and the A20 Ashford Road being prohibitive to the achievability of development. There have been no submissions that give a clear demonstration that the strategic road link is achievable to counter these concerns. The conclusions lead to questions in relation to the achievability of the development.

Furthermore, the site does not accord with the agreed spatial distribution.'

It is not considered that there have been any significant or material changes since the previous assessment and that the previous decision to reject the site is justified.

Housing land position

The potential housing supply that the Local Plan could deliver was tabulated in Appendix E. The elements of supply comprises dwellings completed since 1st April 2011, those with planning permission (or a resolution to grant consent), sites allocated and broad locations identified in the Local Plan plus a windfall allowance for the last 10 years of the Plan.

These figures represented a 'snap shot' as applications are received and determined on a virtually daily basis so the position is constantly evolving. The table's prime purpose is to show in overall terms the scale of housing that the Local Plan can deliver and how this compares with the objectively assessed need.

The 24 proposed additional housing sites recommended in this report could deliver some 1,143 new dwellings. With the approval of these sites for Regulation 18 consultation, the overall shortfall against the objectively assessed need for 18,600 homes would be some 421 dwellings equating to 2.3% of the objective figure.

The table included a windfall allowance of 880 dwellings. National Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 24) allows local planning authorities to make a windfall allowance for years 6-15 of the Plan measured from the date of adoption which for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan would equate to the last ten years of the plan period from 2021-31, assuming the Plan is adopted in 2016. Six years' worth of data has been analysed to evidence a robust rate for the windfall allowance. In this analysis, sites have been excluded which would not meet the NPPF definition of a windfall, such as previously identified sites, green field sites and garden sites, to see what the supply of genuine windfalls has been over the past six years. This analysis revealed that a range of different types of site have come forward as windfalls such as redevelopment from institutions, retail and business sites as well as residential intensification and that no one particular category has been dominant.

Officers have reviewed the approach of other authorities to windfall calculations including that of Shepway District Council whose approach was supported by the Inspector at their Core Strategy Examination.

Small sites (<5 dwellings) have represented a consistent source of supply in the past delivering some 35 dwellings/annum. Sites of this size are not being allocated in the Local Plan and there can be some considerable confidence that they can be relied upon to come forward at a similar rate in the future. Large sites (5+ dwellings) have made a significant contribution to housing land supply over recent years equating to 105 dwellings per annum. It would be unreasonable to make no allowance for a future supply from such sites but this must be tempered by the fact that

the supply of such sites will be finite. The majority of large windfall sites have come forward in urban area where concerted efforts have been made to identify and allocate appropriate brownfield sites in the Local Plan. It is not credible that future supply will match past supply for large sites. Further, a significant source of 'windfall' supply from office conversions have already been accounted for in the town centre 'broad location' (600 dwellings). On this basis, a discount of 50% is recommended on previous rates for large sites.

The small sites rate (35 dwellings/ annum) plus 50% of the large sites rate ($50\% \times 106 = 53$ dwellings/annum) equates to a windfall allowance rate of 88 dwellings/ annum. This results in a total windfall allowance of 880 dwellings for the last 10 years of the plan.

Next Steps

A consolidated consultation document will be prepared which will include the agreed new and housing site policies (Appendix D) and proposed deletion (Appendix D) and, as appropriate, the outcomes of Members decision making on employment and mixed use sites.

These policies will be consulted on (Regulation 18 consultation) at a later date to be confirmed. All the consultees on the Local Plan database will be notified of the consultation and invited to make representations. Publicity and promotional material will be particularly directed to the locations and parishes impacted by the proposed changes, and local newspapers will include public notices setting out the details of the consultation and how to comment.

It is the intention that a further Regulation 18 consultation be undertaken on proposed Gypsy sites, open space standards and, if necessary, the affordable housing policy after May.

Thereafter, a full revised version of the Local Plan will be prepared. This revised plan will incorporate the changes to the development management and site allocation policies which will have been agreed by Members and will also take account of the representations made to the strategy and spatial policies in the draft Local Plan (Policies SS1, SP1-5). It is expected that some restructuring of the Plan is likely to be proposed at this stage to draw out key strategic issues in a readily accessible form to guide prospective developers and agencies in making and responding to planning applications. It was noted that some of this restructuring was signposted in the responses to the specific representations to the Policy H1 sites in Appendix A. This restructuring of the Plan will also enable the infrastructure requirements for each settlement to be more clearly expressed in the Plan.

The full revised version of the Plan will be published for Regulation 19 public consultation. Thereafter, assuming no fundamental issues come to light during the consultation, the Plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

A feasible option would be to identify no additional housing sites and to progress the Local Plan on the basis of the sites allocated in the draft Local Plan alone. This would put the plan at risk of being found unsound at Examination as national planning guidance in the NPPF directs that Local Plan should aim to meet the objectively assessed need for new homes.

Background Papers

Draft Local Plan

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 18 February 2015.
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