

To: Head of Change and Scrutiny

CALL IN FORM

I would like to call in the decision as detailed below:

Decision making body or individual

Cabinet

Decision made

1. That the three options 1-3, as outlined in sections 1.3 E and F of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, be agreed as the basis for the further more detailed testing outlined in the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment, without any preconceptions, in order to identify the most suitable housing target for the borough.

2. That all of the options plan for the balance of housing necessary after the existing development pipeline of 5,800 dwellings is completed, to achieve total housing target figures of:-

Option 1 – 8,200 dwellings;

Option 2 – 10,080 dwellings; and

Option 3 – 11,000 dwellings

The spatial distribution that needs to be objectively considered and tested for each option should be a dispersal model and a strategic development area.

3. That the methodology and approach to testing each of the housing options should be that outlined in Diagram A and Section 1.3 of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment be endorsed with the addition of the specific amendments to Appendix A of the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment as highlighted by the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee, namely

- The diagram of methodology and approach be reformatted to depict priorities, such as by using a pyramid shape;
- The environmental capacity and land availability be listed separately in the diagram to ensure that environmental capacity was not overlooked;
- The Local Development Document Advisory Group's spatial planning exercise be included in the diagram;
- A broader geographical context be considered to include Maidstone's relationship with travel to work areas;
- Less emphasis be placed on historical evidence, more emphasis given to infrastructure and place shaping, including an emphasis on regeneration; and
- Higher and lower density dispersal patterns be applied to all three options.

4. That further work is undertaken on the weighting of the various elements; particular attention being paid to the economic and environmental factors, but considered within the context of the need for, and likelihood of, supporting housing and transportation infrastructure.

5. That any option considered should have an emphasis on incentivising regeneration and renewal.
6. That a further report be presented to the Cabinet on 10 November 2010.

Date decision made

15th September 2010

Reason for calling in the decision

The tone and degree of pre-determination apparent within the officer report is counter-productive to the spatial planning process, in that it may well be used in evidence against the council at examination by the Inspector.

The testing of the 11,000 housing figure bestows an unwarranted dignity onto a number with no rigorous under-pinning by research. The 8,200 figure was recommended and justified by research within the KCC structure plan and the 10,080 figure was recommended by MBC for Growth Point funding. The 11,000 figure has no empirical under-pinning – other than being contested actively by MBC in relation to the now defunct South East Plan. In fact if the South East Plan figure is to be used despite the arguments against it during consultation it should at least be accurate at 11,080.

The Local Development Document Advisory Group and Leisure and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee recommendations to jettison the strategic development area aka South East Extension must be respected. Back bench members understand that development on a scale of 5000 to 6000 properties plus commercial and economic infrastructure will inevitably swamp existing communities and destroy historic countryside and biodiversity to the South East of the town. Further, inadequate transportation links and other infrastructure to the South East of the town will cause unacceptable strain upon established communities. Regeneration and renewal must be at the very centre of spatial planning in Maidstone Borough if an economic and social renaissance is to be delivered.

The spatial direction of neglect currently being pursued will condemn large tracts of our borough to inevitable decline.

Desired Outcome

The officer report should be re-drafted as a balanced evidence under-pinned document. The existing report must be withdrawn.

Meaningful data on population growth dynamics in the Borough informed by realistic assumptions must be utilised by this local authority to underpin spatial planning – current ‘predict and provide’ theory will condemn residents to a poor quality of life and the Borough to unsustainable urban sprawl.

Detailed testing should be used upon the housing figures of 8,200 and 10,080 units.

The Strategic Development Area aka South East Extension must be dropped at this stage and replaced with a clear instruction to pursue a dispersal pattern of development.

Regeneration and renewal must be explicitly and energetically championed and pursued by Maidstone Borough Council.

Rigorous Planning must inform the spatial growth configuration for the Borough. We have no confidence in the current approach which is entirely led by developer/landowner aspirations as apparent within the SHLAA document and Strategic Development Area/South East Extension proposals. We must have the courage to shape the future pattern of growth within our Borough to deliver our long-held social and economic aspirations, grasping the opportunity offered by the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition in Westminster. We must actively engage with landowners in areas where we may decide growth is to be encouraged due to existing infrastructure and existing land-uses rather than continuing with our current reactive stance.

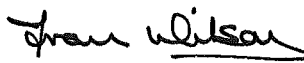
Desired Witnesses

Cllr. Christopher Garland
Cllr. Malcolm Greer
Alison Broom

Members calling in decision

Signed

1. Cllr. Fran Wilson

1. 

2. Cllr. Tony Harwood

2. 

Overview and Scrutiny Committee responsible for examining this decision

.Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee