

Position of the Planning Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting on 17 September 2013 in response to the instruction of Council, 2 September 2013.

The following motion was agreed at full council:

“Elected members are provided with the opportunity to both scrutinise the methodology and judgements that need to be made in calculating the five year housing land supply through Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.”

As you know the Planning Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee met last night and we called as witnesses Rob Jarman, Sue Whiteside, Cllr Garland, Cllr Paine and representatives from Boughton Monchelsea Cllr Doug Smith, Cllr Sara Evans and Mr Paul McCreery. It should be noted that Cllr Paine, Cllr Smith and Mrs Whiteside did not speak at the meeting.

Having heard evidence from the witnesses, the Committee was not satisfied that any of the witnesses had yet sufficiently evidenced their methodology and judgements regarding windfall sites in relation to the 5 year housing land supply.

The methodology in relation to the SHLAA appears to have been rigorously applied.

The Committee have raised the following concerns to be investigated at a further meeting:

- The statement was made at the meeting “That if a local authority goes to great lengths to quantify the unexpected windfall contribution, then it should be reasonable to factor in a discount to account for the non-completion of planning permissions” – the committee seeks to find out what the consequences of this would be and to obtain greater clarity.
- Endeavour to find other councils and invite officers where appropriate that have included windfall sites in their 5 year housing land supply, and had this tested and since the NPPF was introduced, in order to give a comparison, taking into account Maidstone’s unique position.
- How the possibility of windfall sites has been tested and evaluated in the judgement currently made.

The Committee recognises the urgency of this matter and will be aiming to conclude as soon as possible to report to full Council and if necessary an extraordinary meeting will be called.