

Urgent Update for Policy and Resources Committee June 2015

A letter from Kent County Council (KCC) has been received today requesting that the Economic Development Strategy is not adopted at Policy and Resources Committee as KCC object to the location of Junction 8 for development.

The Council's response:

The Economic Development Strategy (EDS) reflects the evidence base produced in support of the Local Plan, namely the Qualitative Assessment of Employment Land (GVA September 2014). It sets out the need for a new employment site near the strategic road network. The report by the Head of Planning to a joint meeting of Planning, Transport and Development and Commercial and Economic Development Scrutiny Committees in October 2014 set out the site assessment work carried out by officers that demonstrates that Junction 8 was the only suitable location available for this type of use.

The quote referred to in the letter is taken from the EDS and the EDS reflects the October report to the Joint Scrutiny Committees produced by the Head of Planning. The recommendation of Scrutiny, back to Cabinet, was to support development at Junction 8 subject to the detail of a site specific policy mitigating landscape harm setting out suitable constraints. The EDS is simply repeating this up to date position.

The Strategy is a broad statement of our growth ambition for economic growth and the EDS makes it clear that it is not its role to allocate land, that is the job of the Local Plan. The final EDS reflects this at paragraphs 6.20 and 6.23. A proposed Junction 8 Local Plan Policy will be presented to Spatial Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee for consideration in August 2015. If accepted then it will be included in the next Regulation 18 consultation draft of the Local Plan expected in September 2015.

In Kent County Council's response to the draft EDS, the KCC states that it can't "accept unreservedly" a statement that future land allocations should prioritise space along the motorway corridor. It goes on to say that any decisions as to the geographical location would be a matter for the Local Plan. As set out above that is what is intended.

END