

# Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee

18 August 2015

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

## Policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley (boundary options)

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|---|--|
| <b>Final Decision-Maker</b>             | Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee |
| <b>Lead Director or Head of Service</b> | Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development               |
| <b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>   | Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy   |
| <b>Classification</b>                   | Non-exempt   |
| <b>Wards affected</b>                   | Sutton Valence and Langley                                 |

### This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That draft policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley be approved for Regulation 18<sup>1</sup> public consultation in accordance with the policy and plan set out in Appendix 1 (Option B).

### This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough
- Planning for sufficient homes to meet our borough's needs

### Timetable

| <b>Meeting</b>   | <b>Date</b>    |
|--|----------------|
| Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee | 18 August 2015 |

<sup>1</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

# Policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley (boundary options)

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the adjourned meeting of 23 July 2015, the committee deferred a decision on site H1(10) South of Sutton Road until officers had had the opportunity to review the site boundaries and the addition of an anti-coalescence belt.
- 1.2 This report sets out two options for defining site boundaries, together with site allocation policies for further public consultation (Regulation 18), that will assist the Committee in considering the merits of open space and community facilities against the importance of design quality. With regard to reference to an “anti-coalescence belt”, Landscapes of Local Value are considered as a separate item on the agenda.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This site was deferred from the adjourned meeting of this committee on 23 July 2015. *“The decision on site H1 (10) Land South of Sutton Road, Langley be deferred to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee meeting on 18 August 2015 after officers have reviewed the site boundaries and the addition of an anti-coalescence belt on the site.”*

- 2.2 For clarity, the extract from the report (paragraphs 2.22 – 2.33) is set out below.

*“The final regulation 18 site recommended for deletion by Cabinet was site H1(10); Land south of Sutton Road Langley.*

*The reasons given, which were amended at the Cabinet meeting on 9 March 2015 following call-in of the decision made on 2 and 4 February, are as follows;*

- 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 impact on conditions in the surrounding area where the environmental and amenity consequences for the community are unacceptable now.*

*For Councillors’ information, a set of revised site development criteria were recommended to Cabinet at their original meetings on 2 and 4 February along with a revised indicative site yield of 850 units. The revised site criteria included the changes from the published Regulation 18 draft as well as an addition to criterion 19 (clause vii)), that was agreed at the meeting of Cabinet on 9 March are set out at Appendix Two;*

*It is necessary to re-assess each of the stated reasons for the recommended deletion of the allocation in-turn in considering whether the allocation should be retained.*

*Does the adjacent allocated housing site to the west (H1(5); Langley Park Farm) form a natural boundary to the edge of the urban area of Maidstone? It is acknowledged that the site at Langley Park Farm has a well-defined eastern boundary and that there is some change in character of land to the east of this. However, development along Sutton Road does not stop at this point. On the northern side of the road in particular, there is an almost continuous ribbon of development which extends as far eastwards as Rumwood Green Farm which is host to a number of large and visually prominent packing and storage sheds that dominate the skyline in medium to long distance views.*

*The second reason for recommending the site not be allocated relates to the fact that there should be no further encroachment of development into the countryside, which would result in the loss of green space and a leisure facility.*

*Councillors should note that as of July 2014, the additionally allocated greenfield sites outside the boundaries in the 2000 Borough-wide Local Plan amounted to some 207.4ha. The total area of countryside in the Borough based on the same 2000 boundaries amounted to 35,879ha. This means that 0.58% of the countryside is being lost to greenfield allocations across the Borough.*

*It is acknowledged that development of site H1(10) would result in the loss of the existing golf-driving range. The facility is not included within the list of community facilities for which full justification for loss or replacement is required in the current or emerging local plan. There are also alternative driving ranges available at The Ridge Golf Club, Marriott Tudor Park Golf Course and Staplehurst Golf Centre. It is not considered therefore that the loss of the facility is an overriding factor that would lead to the non-allocation of the wider site.*

*The third ground put forward in support of the recommended deletion of the site states that; 'there would be an unacceptable impact on conditions in the surrounding area where the environmental and amenity consequences for the community are unacceptable now.' Cabinet were clearly concerned about the cumulative impact of this development in an area where they considered existing conditions to be unacceptable. No detail as to their specific concerns was given however.*

*An additional and sizeable strategic area of publicly accessible open space (approx. 10ha in area) would be secured as part of the development. This would provide not only an appropriate setting to the development but would also ensure that such provision is provided on a comprehensive rather than spread in a piecemeal basis across the development. It is considered that cumulative impact on both the environment and amenity would be addressed through any development proposals. For Councillors' information, the Council*

*has received a formal application seeking a Scoping Opinion for a potential Environmental Impact Assessment for proposed development on this site. (Application ref: 15/504183/EIASCO). If a planning application is submitted it would therefore be submitted with an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES would consider environmental issues as well as a range of other issues including the cumulative impact of the proposed development relative to other committed development in the vicinity.*

*There have been no representations from statutory consultees on applications already submitted and/or approved advising that conditions in the area are such that new development cannot be accepted as it cannot be adequately mitigated.*

*It is therefore considered that the site should be retained as an allocation and go forward to Regulation 19 Consultation.”*

- 2.3 An urgent update report of 14 July 2015 revised the site plan and policy criteria for the proposed site allocation, which is reproduced at Appendix 1.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 In view of Members concerns regarding the site boundaries and development towards the east of the site, two alternate options are proposed for policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, to assist the Committee in its consideration of the merits of limiting development towards the east and weighing this against the flexibility that a larger site would provide in terms of design quality and transition with the countryside.

#### **3.2 Option A**

Option A would be to retain the maximum net capacity of 850 dwellings but restrict housing to the central and western parts of the site. This would not preclude an access and a potential primary school or other community infrastructure (such as a community hall), on the eastern part of the site only. This would serve to concentrate development within the western and central parts of the site, and limit the amount of development on the east part of the site to a potential primary school or other infrastructure, which would be likely to be single storey with associated outdoor space, and an access only. Any land not required for such development would be retained for open space and/or landscaping. Within the eastern parcel, any such infrastructure development would be restricted to the north part of the site, well away from the group of buildings and St Marys Church on the A274/Horseshoes Lane junction. This Option would result in a higher density of housing because the houses are being provided in a smaller area, and the result would be a much-reduced ability to achieve a spacious design and reduced ability to achieve a gentler and potentially more sympathetic eastern boundary so as to reflect the edge of an urban location. The policy criteria and site plan for Option A are set out in Appendices 2 and 3, respectively. The policy criteria for H1(10) is that recommended in the urgent update report of 14 July 2015, considered at the

adjourned meeting of 23 July, but with reference to community infrastructure/ open space only within the eastern parcel, and a requirement of a minimum of 11ha of natural/semi-natural open space outside of this area.

### 3.3 Option B

Option B is the proposal for policy H1(10) that was recommended in the urgent update report of 14 July 2015, which was considered at the adjourned meeting of 23 July, with amended layout and criteria (Appendix 1). This Option recognises the sensitive nature of the eastern section of the site but in such a way that would allow for some flexibility in site master planning with the aim of achieving a landscape-led design for any development, and provides scope for a more spacious layout potentially allowing a better transition with the countryside and open space to the east, and potential for a softer eastern edge to the development.

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## 4. **PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Option B (Appendix 1) is recommended to the Committee as this would allow for some flexibility in site master planning with the aim of achieving a landscape-led design for any development, and provides scope for a more spacious layout potentially allowing a better transition with the countryside and open space to the east, and potential for a softer eastern edge to the development.

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## 5. **CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The site was subject to Regulation 18 public consultation on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan between March and May 2014.

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## 6. **NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 Policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley will be the subject of further public consultation on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan (Regulation 18) with a revised policy and site layout. Should the Committee ultimately not confirm the reinstatement of the draft allocation, the site will be subject to consultation on its proposed deletion.

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## 7. **CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

| Issue                          | Implications  | Sign-off                         |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | The local plan, once adopted will assist the council in delivering its priorities of keeping Maidstone borough an attractive place for all, and securing a successful economy for Maidstone borough, and will | Head of Planning and Development |

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|  | support all of the action areas that support the priorities and mission of the council.   |   |
| <b>Risk Management</b>                       | Should the allocation as proposed not be taken forward, the council would still be left with a significant shortfall against its objectively assessed need for housing, and the local plan would be unlikely to be found sound at examination. The inclusion of the site would result in a much lower shortfall that is not anticipated to cause great risk to the soundness of the plan and would provide a defensible position. | Head of Planning and Development                  |
| <b>Financial</b>                             | Indirectly there may be future cost implications regarding the on-going revenue costs of maintaining any community infrastructure such as a community hall if this is subsequently taken on by the council as opposed a trust or community organisation. Some initial costs may be secured through developer contributions however this will be a matter for negotiation and will be a finite sum.                                | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team                |
| <b>Staffing</b>                              | N/A   | Head of Planning and Development                  |
| <b>Legal</b>                                 | The Council is required to consult on site allocations proposed in its local plan in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.   | Kate Jardine, Mid Kent Legal Services Team Leader |
| <b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>      | N/A   | Policy & Information Manager                      |
| <b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b> | The site will form a part of the local plan which aims to deliver sustainable growth for Maidstone as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and will be supported by the provision of open space and landscaping.   | Head of Planning and Development                  |
| <b>Community Safety</b>                      | N/A   | Head of Planning and Development                  |
| <b>Human Rights Act</b>                      | N/A   | Head of Planning and Development                  |
| <b>Procurement</b>                           | N/A   | Head of Planning and Development &                |

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|-------------------------|-----|--|
|                         |     | Section 151<br>Officer                 |
| <b>Asset Management</b> | N/A | Head of<br>Planning and<br>Development |

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Extract from urgent update report dated 14 July 2015 - Option B Policy Criteria and Site Plan
- Appendix II: Option A Policy Criteria
- Appendix III: Option A Site Plan

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## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None